



# Survival Guide

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# Directory A-Z

This chapter gives a general overview of the entire Scandinavian region. For information relevant to a particular country, see the Directory section at the end of each country chapter.

Some subjects are covered in *both* places (eg general accommodation options are discussed following, but price ranges and contact details for useful accommodation organisations appear in each country Directory).

## Accommodation

Throughout this book, accommodation is divided into budget, midrange and top-end categories. Our choices are listed in order of preference, with our favourites first. See each individual country Directory for an overview of local options, prices and useful associations.

Cheap hotels are virtually unknown in far-northern Europe, but hostels, guesthouses, pensions, private rooms, farm accommodation and B&Bs can be good value. Self-catering cottages and flats are an excellent option if travelling in a family or group.

If you arrive in a country by train, there's often a hotel-booking desk at the station. Tourist offices tend to have extensive accommodation lists and the more helpful ones will go out of their way to find you somewhere to stay. There's usually a small fee for this service, but it can save a lot of running around.

Agencies offering private rooms can be good value; you may lack privacy, but staying with a local family brings you closer to the spirit of the country.

## B&Bs, Guesthouses & Hotels

There's a huge range of accommodation above the hostel level. B&Bs, where you get a room and breakfast in a private home, can often be real bargains. Pensions and guesthouses are similar but usually slightly more upmarket.

Most Scandinavian hotels are geared to business travellers and have prices to match. However, excellent hotel discounts are often available at certain times (eg at weekends and in summer in Finland, Norway and Sweden) and for longer stays.

Breakfast in hotels is usually included in the price of the room.

If you think a hotel is too expensive, ask if they have a cheaper room. In nonchain places it can be easy to negotiate a discount in quiet periods if you're with a group or are planning to stay for any length of time.

## Camping

Camping is cheap and immensely popular throughout the region. There's usually a charge per tent or campsite, per vehicle and per person. National tourist offices have booklets or brochures listing camping grounds all over their country. See p518 for information on camping cards that offer good benefits and discounts.

In most larger towns and cities, camping grounds are some distance from the centre. If you're on foot, the money you save by camping can quickly be outweighed by the money spent commuting in and out of town.

Nearly all mainland Scandinavian camping grounds rent simple cabins and sometimes more upmarket cottages – a good budget option if you're not carrying a tent.

Camping other than in designated camping grounds is not always straightforward but in many countries there's a right of common access that applies. See the Directory of the relevant country chapter for additional information. Tourist offices usually stock official publications in English explaining your rights and responsibilities.

## Hostels

Hostels generally offer the cheapest roof over your head in Scandinavia, and you don't have to be young to use them. In Scandinavian countries, hostels are geared for budget travellers of all ages, including families with kids, and most have dorms and private rooms.