

Survival Guide

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Directory A-Z

Accommodation

Accommodation listings have been divided into budget, midrange and top-end categories.

Cheap hotels are virtually unknown in far-northern Europe, but hostels, guesthouses, 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. The following options are useful for bookings:

Train stations Often have a hotel-booking desk.

Tourist offices Have extensive accommodation lists. Usually for a small fee, the more helpful offices will go out of their way to find you somewhere to stay.

Internet A powerful resource both for scope and discounted rooms.

B&Bs, Guesthouses & Hotels

➔ 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. But 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 it has a cheaper room. In non-chain places it can be easy to negotiate a discount in quiet periods.

Camping

➔ Camping is immensely popular throughout the region. The **Camping Key Europe** (www.campingkey.com) card offers good benefits and discounts.

➔ Campsites tend to charge per site, with a small extra charge per person. Tent sites are often cheaper than van sites.

➔ National tourist offices have booklets or brochures listing camping grounds all over their country.

➔ In most larger towns and cities, camping grounds are some distance from the centre. If you've got no transport, 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 – a great budget option if you're not carrying a tent. Many also have more upmarket cottages with bedrooms, bathrooms and proper

kitchens, perfect for families who want to self-cater.

➔ Camping other than in designated camping grounds is not always straightforward but in many countries there's a right of common access that applies. 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 hostels are geared for budget travellers of all ages, including families, and most have dorms and private rooms.

Most hostels are part of national Youth Hostel Associations (YHA), known collectively throughout the world as **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com).

You'll have to be a YHA or HI member to use some affiliated hostels (indicated by a blue triangle symbol) but most are open to anyone. Members get substantial discounts; it's worth joining, which you can do at any hostel, via your local hostelling organisation or online. There's a particularly huge network of HI hostels in Denmark and Sweden.

Comfort levels and facilities vary markedly. Some hostels charge extra if you don't want to sweep your room out when you leave.