

Directory

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ACCOMMODATIONS

The Southwest provides a vast array of accommodation options: from pitching a tent under a starlit sky and budget motels to mid-range B&Bs, adobe inns and historical hotels to four-star lodgings, luxurious spas, dude ranches and over-the-top casinos. The most comfortable accommodations for the lowest price are usually found in that great American invention, the roadside motel.

For last-minute deals, check www.triporati.com, www.sidestep.com, www.expedia.com, www.travelocity.com, www.orbitz.com, www.priceline.com and www.hotels.com. For more on discounts, see p23 and p521.

Accommodation listings in this book are ordered by price. A double room in the budget category costs \$80 or less; midrange doubles cost \$80 to \$175; top-end rooms start at \$175

(except in Las Vegas, where they generally start at \$300 a night).

Unless otherwise noted, breakfast is *not* included, bathrooms are private and all lodging is open year-round. Rates generally don't include taxes, which vary considerably between towns and states (see p529).

As for icons (see the inside front cover), a parking icon is only used in the biggest cities. The internet icon appears where a place has computers available for public use or where an innkeeper is OK with people using their personal computer for an hour or so. If you're carrying a laptop, look for the wi-fi icon. Child-friendly hotels now have their own icon, and the Our Pick icon indicates a place is the author's favorite.

High season varies depending on the region within the Southwest. In general, the peak travel season runs June through August, except in the hottest parts of Arizona, when some places slash their prices in half because it's just too darn hot. The peak travel season for southern Arizona and the ski areas of northern Utah (for different reasons) and other mountainous areas are mid-December to mid-April. Throughout the book, when it is not obvious, we define which months constitute high season. Generally, we only list high-season rates. For more seasonal discussions, see p23.

Holidays (p524) command premium prices. When demand peaks, and during special events no matter the time of year, book lodgings well in advance.

If you're traveling with children, be sure to inquire about child-related policies before making reservations (see p92).

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- Major newspapers are published in Salt Lake City (*Desert News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*), Albuquerque (*Albuquerque Journal*), Phoenix (*Arizona Republic*), Tucson (*Tucson Citizen*) and Las Vegas (*Las Vegas Sun* and *Las Vegas Review-Journal*).
- National Public Radio (NPR) features a level-headed approach to news and talk radio and is found on the lower frequencies of your FM dial. In rural areas, country-and-western music, Christian programming and Spanish-language radio predominates.
- All the major US TV and cable networks are represented and readily available.
- Video systems use the NTSC color TV standard (not compatible with the PAL system).
- Distances are measured in feet, yards and miles; weights are tallied in ounces, pounds and tons.
- Voltage is 110/120V, 60 cycles.
- Self-service, coin-operated laundry facilities are located in all but the tiniest towns, most campgrounds and many motels.

B&Bs & Inns

In the Southwest, you'll find everything from cozy B&Bs to rambling old hostels that have sheltered travelers for several centuries. In smaller towns, guesthouses with simple rooms may charge \$75 to \$125 a night for rooms with shared bathroom, breakfast included. Some have more charming features, such as kiva fireplaces, courtyards or lounge areas. These fancier B&Bs tend to charge \$125 to \$175 per night with private bathroom. Other places may be ensconced in historical buildings, exquisite haciendas or luxurious urban homes. These tend to be equipped with every conceivable modern amenity and easily cost \$225 and up a night. Most inns require a minimum stay of two or three nights on weekends and advance reservations. Many don't accept children or pets. It's always best to call ahead.

Camping

Spending at least one night camping out under the stars – preferably many more – should be a mandatory part of your Southwest experience. This region is chock-full of fabulous places to pitch a tent – from the Grand Canyon and Arches National Park to national forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to lakes nestled in state parks. The more developed areas (especially national parks) usually require reservations in advance. To reserve a campsite on federal lands book through **Recreation.gov** (☎ 877-444-6777, 518-885-3639; www.recreation.gov).

Many state parks and federal lands allow camping, sometimes free, on a first-come,

first-served basis. Contact information for local ranger stations is interspersed throughout the book. Developed camping areas usually have toilets, water spouts, fire pits, picnic tables and even wireless internet. Some don't have access to drinking water. At any rate, it is always a good idea to have a few gallons of water in the vehicle when you're out on the road. Some camping areas are open year-round, while others are only open from May through to the first snowfall – check in advance if you're planning on slumbering outdoors in winter.

Basic tenting usually costs \$8 to \$25 a night and cabins and teepees are available too. More developed campgrounds may be geared to RV travel and cost \$25 to \$40 a night. For information on renting an RV, see p539. **Kampgrounds of America** (KOA; ☎ 406-248-7444; www.koa.com) is a national network of private campgrounds with sites averaging \$24 per night plus taxes.

Hostels

Staying in a private double at a hostel can be a great way to save money and still have privacy (although you'll usually have to share a bathroom), while a dorm bed allows those in search of the ultimate bargain to sleep cheap under a roof. Dorms cost between \$15 and \$22, depending on the city and whether or not you are an HI member. A private room in a Southwestern hostel costs between \$25 and \$45.

US citizens and residents can join **Hostelling International USA** (HI; ☎ 301-495-1240; www.hihostels.com; 8401 Colesville Rd, Suite 600, Silver Spring, MD 20910) by calling and requesting a membership form