

Survival Guide

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Directory A-Z

Accommodation

Where you stay in Western Europe may be one of the highlights of your trip. Quirky family-run inns, manic city hostels and low-key beach resorts are just some of the places where you'll make both new memories and, more than likely, new friends.

During peak holiday periods, accommodation can be hard to find, and it's advisable to book ahead.

B&Bs & Guesthouses

In Britain and Ireland, B&Bs – where you get bed and breakfast in a private home – can be real bargains.

Elsewhere, similar private accommodation – though often without breakfast – may go under the name of pension, guesthouse, *Gasthaus*, *Zimmerfrei*, *chambre d'hôte* and so on. Although the majority of guesthouses are simple affairs, there are more luxurious ones around.

Check that the place is centrally located and not in some dull and distant suburb.

Camping

Camping is immensely popular in Western Europe and provides the cheapest form of accommodation.

➔ There's usually a charge per tent or site, per person and per vehicle.

➔ National tourist offices often provide booklets or brochures listing camping grounds throughout their countries.

➔ In large cities, most camping grounds will be some distance from the centre of town. For this reason camping is most popular with people who have their own transport. If you're on foot, the money you save by camping can quickly be eaten up by the cost of commuting to and from a town centre.

➔ Many camping grounds rent bungalows or cottages accommodating two to eight people.

➔ Camping other than at designated camping grounds is difficult; you usually need permission from the local authorities (the police or

local council office) or from the owner of the land.

➔ In some countries, such as Austria, France and Germany, free camping (aka wild camping) is illegal on all but private land; in Greece it's illegal altogether. Free camping is permissible anywhere in Scotland but not the rest of Britain.

Hostels

Hostels offer the cheapest (secure) roof over your head in Western Europe, and you generally don't have to be a youngster to use them.

HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL

Most hostels are part of the national Youth Hostel Association (YHA), which is affiliated with **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com).

➔ The HI website has links to all the national organisations and you can use it to book beds or rooms in advance.

➔ You can join YHA or HI in advance or at the hostels. Members usually pay about 10% less on rates.

➔ At a hostel, you get a bed in a dorm or a private room plus the use of communal facilities, which often include a kitchen where you can prepare your own meals.

➔ Hostels vary widely in character, but increased competition from other

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews by Lonely Planet authors, check out <http://lonelyplanet.com/hotels/>.

You'll find independent reviews, as well as recommendations on the best places to stay. Best of all, you can book online.