

Survival Guide

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Directory A-Z

Accommodation

Price Ranges

Rates often drop outside high season by as much as 50%. Price categories are broken down differently for individual countries.

Reservations

- Reserving online or by phone is generally a good idea in high season.
- Hostels and cheap hotels fill up very quickly, especially in popular backpacker destinations such as Prague, Budapest and Kraków.
- Tourist offices, where they exist, may be able to make reservations on your behalf (some charge a small fee for this service). Bear in mind that the level of English spoken, and the quality of tourist-office services, varies enormously across Eastern Europe.
- In rural, less-touristed areas, email enquiries in English may not even receive a response; it's often better to ask a local to call ahead if you have your sights set on a remote guesthouse.

Seasons

- High season is usually in July and August (with a winter peak season in ski areas like the Tatras, typically December to March).
- Rates usually drop outside the high season, sometimes by as much as 50%.
- In mountainous areas, some hotels close during October and November (months that typically suit neither hikers nor skiers). Accommodation in beach destinations (like the Croatian and Black Sea coasts) may hibernate all winter.
- In business-oriented hotels in cities, rooms are most expensive from Monday to Friday and cheaper over the weekend.

Camping

Eastern Europe's numerous camping grounds are generally inexpensive and family-friendly places to stay. They are best suited to beach holidays or travellers with cars, as they tend to be far from city attractions (though most are accessible by public transport).

Many camping grounds in Eastern Europe rent small on-site cabins, bungalows or caravans for double or triple the regular camping fee; bungalows fill quickly for July and August. Generally, camping grounds charge per tent, plus an extra fee per person (as well as per car, per pet and other fees).

The standard of camping grounds in Eastern Europe varies from country to country. They're unreliable in Romania, crowded in Slovenia and Hungary (especially on Lake Balaton), and variable in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Some countries, including Moldova and Belarus, have very few official camping grounds, but you can usually find somewhere to pitch your tent. Croatia's coast has nudist camping grounds galore (signposted FKK, the German acronym for naturist), which enjoy secluded locations.

- Camping grounds may be open from April to October, May to September, or perhaps only June to August, depending on location and demand.
- A few private camping grounds are open year-round.
- Camping in the wild is usually illegal; ask local people about the situation before you pitch your tent on a beach or an open field.
- In Eastern Europe you are sometimes allowed to build a campfire; ask first.

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.