

Hotels, Hostels, Or Something Else?

Contributed by Steve Gillman
Sunday, 17 August 2008

Hotels are not the only choice of accommodations for travelers, but are you ready for a hostel or other option?

{mosbotwordcount}

Hotels may be the most common option for travelers, but there are hostels and other options. Which is best for you? Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Hotels

This is the "standard" option for most travelers. You get privacy, and the usual amenities. It isn't necessarily expensive to stay at hotels either, if you shop online before traveling. Using coupons found in the discount books available at gas stations and convenience stores along the freeways can also save you money - sometimes as much as \$20 per night.

Hostels

{bot_wrgoogle}Some people love hostels, and others wouldn't ever stay in one. You rent a bed instead of a room, and share common bathrooms and showers as well. Typically people from around the world will be there, and the common television viewing areas and kitchen make meeting them inevitable. This social atmosphere and the money-savings is what make hostels so attractive to many travelers.

On the other hand, if you are traveling with a partner, you'll pay for two beds, so there may not be much savings versus a hotel room. And sharing a bathroom is just out of the question for some people. A compromise might be to stay in a hostel for the atmosphere, but rent a private room. Many of them have at least one private room with its own bathroom.

Hostels tend to be oriented towards young travelers and anyone seeking cheap accommodations. To be perfectly honest, they also tend to be less clean than hotels. They are difficult to find in the United States, although you can check online to see if there is one where you are going.

Bed and Breakfast

These are essentially a cleaner, more expensive version of a private room in a hostel. It is a matter of what you like. The visitors you might share a breakfast with will generally be wealthier, older, and less likely to be from other countries. Depending where you are, a room may even cost more than a hotel.

RV

Some people still pretend that they are saving money by traveling in an RV rather than staying at hotels. Add up the cost of gas, maintenance, and park fees and it becomes clear that it is usually cheaper to stay at the best hotels. (And this doesn't even take into account the RV rental fee or costs of buying it.) This, then, is a "style of travel" issue. If you like camping, but not in a tent, and you like having your "home" with you, this may work for you. There is no carrying suitcases to and from hotels, and no tent to set up.

Camping

This is the cheapest option if done right. You can either camp in a tent or in a van set up for the purpose. There are even free campgrounds around, like the ones we stayed at in northern Florida (one even had hot showers and lets visitors stay ten days). Otherwise, you will typically be paying from \$7 at a national forest campground to \$30 if you can only find an RV campground. Some of the best places are not even campgrounds, but public lands you can camp on. BLM land, national forests and state forests usually are free to camp on without a permit for up to 14 days in a given location.

Other Possibilities

You might want to plan a trip to places where friends live, and stay with them. Then there are the more unusual options. I once read about tree houses you can rent in Mexico, and caves that are open for camping in Greece. Hotels and hostels are just a start for adventurous travelers.

Copyright Steve Gillman. Get the free Travel Secrets Ebook, as well as travel stories and tips, at <http://www.everythingabouttravel.com>