

Types of accommodation | Understanding tourism

<https://tourismteacher.com/types-of-accommodation/#0-the-different-types-of-accommodation-in-the-tourism-industry>

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When you are travelling or working in the tourism industry, it is important to understand what the different types of accommodation are. Fortunately, the tourism industry is multifaceted and diverse; meaning that there are lots of types of accommodation to choose from when we travel!

Whether you are planning a trip for a family, a single backpacker or a group of students, there is something to suit everything in the accommodation sector. In this article I will provide an outline of the different types of accommodation, with plenty of examples thrown in too.

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The different types of accommodation in the tourism industry

Accommodation is a key component of tourism. When we travel, we need a place to stay!

There are many different types of accommodation to suit different budgets, different types of tourism and different types of customers. The role of an accommodation provider is to provide a safe and secure place for a tourist to stay. Standards differ between different providers and according to different budgets.

Below, I have outlined the most commonly found different types of accommodation and given some examples too.

Catered accommodation

Types of accommodation can be separated into two categories: **catered** and **not catered**.

Catered accommodation provides the tourist with food. The food may or may not be included in the price of the hotel.

Catering comes in different shapes and sizes and in different amounts. **Half-board** usually means that the tourist will be given breakfast and dinner as part of their hotel package. **Full board** means that they will be given three meals and **all-inclusive** means that they have unlimited food and drinks throughout the day. **Bed and breakfast** provides only breakfast.

Some accommodation is sold as '**room-only**', but provides the opportunity for the tourist to purchase food at an additional cost. This is still classified as a catered accommodation type.

Catered accommodation is generally associated with a number of facilities including the following:

- room
- reception
- restaurant and bar
- housekeeping
- leisure facilities
- gym or health club
- conference and business facilities
- entertainment

Here are some of the most common types of accommodation that can be classified as catered.

Hotels

Hotels are the most traditional and most common types of accommodation. Hotels can be large or small. They can be independently owned businesses or they can be part of a hotel chain. Hotels may be part of a holiday resort. They are ranked using a star rating system. Hotels are awarded a grade between 1-5 stars (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest). This tells the tourist what level of service to expect at the hotel.



My favourite hotel: *We stayed at the Radisson Blu hotel on Yas Island when we travelled to Abu Dhabi for our babymoon. This hotel was part of a beach resort that had excellent facilities. It was the perfect place to get some much needed R&R before the arrival of my baby!*

Bed and breakfasts

A bed and breakfast is just as it sounds- a type of accommodation that offers a bed and a breakfast!

Bed a breakfast accommodations in the UK are traditionally a type of guest house or home-stay. The owners typically live in the accommodation and separate their personal living space away from the guest space. Breakfast served is traditionally an English-style cooked breakfast.

Today, this traditional model of bed and breakfast accommodations does still exist, however the experience described above is not a given. In fact, any type of accommodation that offers breakfast as part of the deal can be described as a bed and breakfast, and the breakfast offered can range from continental to exotic- there doesn't have to be a sausage or hash brown in sight!



My favourite bed and breakfast: *25 years ago my grandad purchased this beautiful house in a quaint village called Debenham in Suffolk. Sadly he passed away a few years after living here, but since this time his partner and her new husband have transformed this beautiful grade ii listed cottage into a bed and breakfast. They welcome guests from all over the UK and the rest of the world into their home (and cook them a delicious breakfast!).*

You can take a look at/book a stay at Cherry Tree Cottage in Debenham, Suffolk on their website.

Guest houses and home-stays

A guest house is essentially a house that welcomes guests. There is a fine line between a guest house and a bed and breakfast. While there is no hard and fast rule, guest houses tend to be bigger than bed and breakfast accommodations. Guest houses may or may not offer breakfast included in the price of the hotel room.

A home stay is intended to facilitate a deep cultural tourism experience. The intention is that you live and immerse yourself with a family in their home. However, my experience is that whilst many types of accommodation may advertise themselves as a 'home-stay', they are in reality just a guest house, with limited interaction between the hosts/owners and the guests.



My favourite guest house: *Thailand is one of my favourite countries in the world and I LOVED my stay at Ashi Guesthouse Chiangdao in Chiang Mai. The owners were really friendly and there was such a welcoming atmosphere.*

Chalets

Chalets are typically found in ski resorts and can come on a self-catering or catered basis. Often they are available with your own personal chef! Chalets are great if you are travelling in a group. They come in different sizes and can fit different amounts of people. You can also opt for a shared chalet if your group size is small.



My favourite chalet: *Chaletdorf Auszeit is a gorgeous chalet situated in the Austrian Alps. The chalets come with a private hot pot and sauna, a natural swimming pond and a chef!*

Youth hostels

A youth hostel is a type of accommodation designed to suit the needs of those on a budget. Whilst anyone can stay in a youth hostel, they are largely aimed at young people. Youth hostels will often provide dormitory-style accommodation, with shared rooms and bunk beds. This type of accommodation is perfect for group tours and educational trips.



My favourite youth hostel– In my previous job as Course Team Leader at a UK college we took our students on a residential visit each year to Edinburgh and stayed at the Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel. The hostel was brilliant- it had a restaurant and bar, areas for the students to chill out and relax and a games room!

Self-catered or non-catered accommodation

Self-catered and non-catered accommodation are types of accommodation that do not offer food. Self-catered accommodations offer cooking facilities, such as a small kitchen and cooking equipment. Non-catered accommodation is likely a room-only accommodation with no cooking facilities.

Products and services that are typically offered in self-catered and non-catered accommodation options include the following:

- rooms
- kitchen
- tent
- caravan pitch
- entertainment
- sports facilities
- laundry facilities
- showers

Self catering accommodation has become more popular in recent years with the growth of the sharing economy. Properties owners can now easily rent their accommodation to tourists through intermediaries, who connect the tourist with the property owner.

My favourite is Airbnb. We use Airbnb all the time! We have found some fantastic bargains and unique properties over the years. Have you tried Airbnb yet? If not, [sign up with this link](#) to receive up to £25 off your first stay!

Here is a little bit more detail about some of the most common self-catered or non-catered types of accommodation.

Cottages

A cottage is typically a small, cosy house that is classed as being old or traditional. Cottages are quintessential British homes that are often found in semi-rural locations. Because of their unique character, culture and heritage, cottages make for popular holiday homes. Cottages provide tourists with the opportunity for a 'home from home' experience. Guests can usually cook, do laundry and watch TV as they would in their own home.



My favourite cottage: We stayed in Cheddar, Somerset for two months and we LOVED living in this beautiful country cottage! Strawberry Rose Cottage is a traditional three bedroom cottage with a gorgeous open fire place and a little outside courtyard. The cottage had everything we needed from kids cutlery and a high chair to matches to light the fire and a tumble dryer. I couldn't have asked for any more, IT WAS JUST PERFECT!

Apartments

Apartments are a popular self-catering accommodation option. Apartments are found in many areas, but are most common in built up areas such as towns and cities and busy resorts.

Apartments can be large or small and can range from short-term to long-term lets.



My favourite apartment: Shanghai is a city of high-rise buildings and sky-scrappers. It is also a city that doesn't cater particularly well to those who want to self-cater. This is because people often eat out in China (and much

of Asia too). So, we were thrilled to find the Lanson Place Jin Qiao Residence. This apartment was perfect for us. With two bedrooms and a long, it allowed us to enjoy a glass of wine on the sofa after putting the kids to bed!

Boats

Some people choose to stay on a boat during their holiday- and what a cool experience!

No, I'm not talking about cruise tourism. I am talking about hiring your own private boat and sleeping on it-cool, huh?

You can stay on a many different types of boats, from yachts, to canal boats, to house boats.



My favourite boat: Staying on a house boat in Kerala was a once in a lifetime experience. Houseboats in this part of India are iconic and you will see them throughout the waterways, known as the 'Venice of the East'.

Log cabins

Log cabins are popular in countries with cooler weather, such as ski destinations. Log cabins are defined by the material that they are built with- logs. They can be small or large and have varying facilities inside.



My favourite log cabin: We found this beautiful log can near Vancouver, Canada on Airbnb. It was so peaceful and we were surrounded by nature (including bears!). We had the lake all to ourselves and the log cabin came with a canoe too.

Chalets As I mentioned before, chalets can be both catered and self-catered. Scroll back up to read more about what a chalet is.

Motels

A motel is basically a hotel room with a parking space.

Motels are popular in the USA.

Motels usually offer simple room-only accommodation, but some may have simple cooking facilities.



My favourite motel: *In the USA the main method of getting around is by car, so if you prefer car travelling around a lot, it makes sense to stay in a motel. We stayed here during our road trip across the USA and this spot in Los Angeles was super convenient.*

Aparthotels

An aparthotel offers a combination of what you get in a typically hotel with the facilities associated with an apartment. Some claim that this offers ‘the best of both worlds’.



My favourite aparthotel: *We loved the Aparthotel Stare Miasto in Krakow, Poland. This accommodation option was quirky, stylish and oh so much fun!*

Caravans

Caravans can be transported from place to place, or they can be situated in one location.

In the UK, caravan parks are very popular. Most are located close to the seaside. Some caravan parks are part of well-known holiday parks, such as Butlins, Pontins or Haven.



My favourite caravan: I went to Parkside Caravans many during during my childhood. I have fond childhood memories of converting the dining table into a bed and playing with the kids from the caravan next door until dusk. Happy memories!

Static or touring motorhomes

A motorhome is just as it sounds- a home that has a motor!

A motorhome is a vehicle that enables you to travel in it by day and sleep in it by night. Some motorhomes are the size of small vans, with limited facilities and functions. Other motorhomes are large recreational vehicles (RVs) that come with all the mod cons including a kitchen and bathroom. Motorhomes are very popular in the USA and in Australia, where road trips are common.



My favourite motorhome: I hope to do a road trip through Australia in a camper van like this with my family in the future! It looks like soooo much fun!

Camping- tents, yurts, tepees etc

Camping is often one of the cheapest types of accommodation, especially if you have your own tent. All you need to do is pay for your spot on a camp site (or find a place where you are allowed to camp for free), and you're all set. Many camp sites also offer camping with additional amenities, such as a bed, wardrobe, lamps etc. This is often referred to as clamping. Yurts (traditional Mongolian tents), teepees and other unusual types of tents are very popular these days too, however, these options do come with a higher price tag.



My favourite camping experience: *My friend and I went on a camping trip through France and Spain and we LOVED it. We simply pitched up the tent where ever we found a campsite at the end of the day, cracked open the wine and put the world to rights under the stars. It was just fabulous!*

Hostels

Hostels are pretty much the same as youth hostels, except for they may not provide provisions for catering. Some hostels have a communal area, such as a seating area or kitchen, whereas other may not.

To conclude: Types of accommodation

There are many different types of accommodation to choose from when you are travelling, and I have been fortunate enough to try most of them out myself! Types of accommodation can generally be classified as either catered or self-catered/non-catered. Within these two categories there are many different accommodation options available to you.

If you want to learn more about the travel and tourism industry or if you are a travel and tourism student, I strongly suggest you consult the texts listed in the further reading section below. These books are core texts for travel and tourism students, covering all of the fundamental tourism management topics that you will surely be studying.

Further reading

- [An Introduction to Tourism](#): a comprehensive and authoritative introduction to all facets of tourism including: the history of tourism; factors influencing the tourism industry; tourism in developing countries; sustainable tourism; forecasting future trends.
- [The Business of Tourism Management](#): an introduction to key aspects of tourism, and to the practice of managing a tourism business.
- [Tourism Management: An Introduction](#): gives its reader a strong understanding of the dimensions of tourism, the industries of which it is comprised, the issues that affect its success, and the management of its impact on destination economies, environments and communities.