

"I'd like a room, please..."

Many people travel abroad for business or on holiday. In many countries, English is the only language which both the traveler and the accommodator can understand. So, it is necessary to know some basic information about booking accommodation in English. Let's have a look at some of the most typical types of accommodation.



Hotels, motels

Hotels are the best known type of accommodation. Often the quality is ranked by the number of stars (*), with 5 being the best. Hotels generally offer clean rooms with single (for 1 person) or double (for 2) beds, queen (normal length but extra wide), or king (very large). Families traveling with children may also ask for a crib (baby bed with tall sides); cot (small, temporary bed); or roll-away (a normal single bed which folds up and is on wheels, so it can be moved in easily).

American motels are similar to hotels, but usually in one-to-three story buildings, and not located in the center of the city. Generally, smoking is not allowed in motel or hotel rooms. These items are always included: several towels; washcloths (for washing your face), a small towel to use as a bath mat; soap; shampoo; body lotion; and sometimes, a piece of chocolate, and a hair dryer.

Guest houses

Guest houses are houses typically by the seaside, in towns such as Brighton in Britain. Traditionally families stayed for a week in the summer and the landladies were very strict about meal times, or staying out late. They became comic figures in many English films.

After people started to travel abroad for their holidays, landladies had to become more 'accommodating' to attract visitors.

Pensions

These small, quiet hotels are not very common in the US. Pensions are usually found in Europe. They are similar to quality hotels. In the UK, they are similar to Bed and Breakfast places, which include a free breakfast in the price. Most British speakers only use 'B and B'. (Saying 'pension' would make people smile as you would sound slightly pretentious.)



Hostels, youth hostels

In many English-speaking countries, a hostel is plain, cheap accommodation. Usually there



are several beds in one room, and you sleep with other travelers.

The Youth Hostel Association in the UK is changing its image and now it is possible to have en suite facilities in some youth hostels. This trend is to cater for the growing number of older people who want to travel but also want to have some home comforts.



Campgrounds, camping

These are special areas in recreation areas, or even a private person's field, with a small wooden house to sleep in or a flat place where you can pitch your own tent. Depending on the size and the cost there will be toilets, showers, sinks, and possibly a shop.

Campgrounds in the US are very popular. Therefore, to protect the environment, they have special rules which you must obey. They include building a fire only in the grill; using only the public toilets; not throwing cigarettes or matches away; not littering; and in some places, not drinking alcohol or playing a radio.

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Note: We always say [ho-TEL, mo-TEL]. Never [hotl, motl]! These words do not exist in English, and native speakers won't understand you!