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Business Trip Or Vacation– Bed And Breakfasts Are A Hidden Treasure

By Paul Hyde

Within the same city, across the country, or on the next continent to the East, you wont ever find

two bed and breakfasts alike. They aren't chain enterprises where cookie–cutter–like consistency is a company rule. Rather, they often share the culture of their surrounding area, and reflect the taste and personality of the owner.

For the vacationer, they provide a refreshing, home–like setting to unwind from a day of site seeing and pounding the pavement shopping. For the business traveler, with many offering wireless internet and computer services, they provide a much more relaxing and productive environment than a tiny hotel room.

No matter the reason for your travels, you'll sleep better knowing you can go down to the kitchen in the middle of the night and have a glass of milk and cookies or take off your shoes, grab the newspaper and put your feet up on the couch!

The Host Advantage

Since your hosts usually own the home they are friendly and helpful people. You're invited in, not just a number to a minimum wage, behind the counter employee. Because you're not waiting in a stalled check–in line in a crowded lobby, your arrival is a welcome experience. Your hosts will take the extra time to guide you to where you want to go and introduce you to a new city.

That personal touch is much more helpful than having a map left in a hotel room for you to figure out on your own. B & B hosts know their cities well; they'll give you first hand tips on great restaurants, shopping, and local information about the city tourists and new visitors wouldn't otherwise know. Rely on them for safety tips while you're out in the strange and unfamiliar, and to help you understand the customs of the locals, like tipping or hailing a cab for example.

Find Your Perfect B & B Online

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Most B & Bs are advertised on the Internet. You can find many choices by going to any search engine, like Google or MSN, and type in "Bed and Breakfast Toronto" for example. Their websites will have pictures of the home, the bedrooms, prices and information on amenities. Don't assume that every accommodation will have wireless Internet and parking available. Be sure to do your research.

Bed and Breakfasts, like hotels, will range from opulent 5 star mansions to quaint, little simple places for the budget conscious. Fine tune your search to a specific search like "Bed and Breakfast Downtown Toronto". Some good websites that list and compare many B & Bs are:

www.lanierbb.com

www.tripadvisor.com

www.bedandbreakfasts.ca

www.bbcanada.com

www.globalbedandbreakfastlinks.com

Different Places, Different Policies

Hosts have different policies for their establishments, and it's always best to ask questions about things important to you before you book. Do you need parking? Does it cost extra? Is there a curfew? Some other things that vary are cancellation policies, if they have internet use for you, laundry facilities, air conditioning - neither you or the host wants a surprise if there is something that you need that they don't have it to offer.

Remember, these are people's homes and a good host wants to provide all the services you would expect at a hotel, except for the hotel atmosphere. They're relying on their charm and the warmth of their home to make your stay an exciting, fun, welcoming and comfortable experience for you.

Breakfast Has Many Definitions

The breakfasts themselves differ as much as the decors, locations and house types. The owners normally prepare them so you'll have a home-made, personal touch to your first meal of the day. I've stayed in B & B's that have a self-serve style, continental breakfast. These can be a tasty variety of homemade breads and jellies and treats, or they could be fruit, cereals, yogurts etc, a common standard for the continental breakfast. Don't be afraid to ask for details on the phone. I've expected a delightful morning meal and sadly had to force down commercially bought, frozen, fattening and salty unfulfilling snack.

Others make a wonderful morning event, providing a menu of hot breakfast standards including pancakes, French toast, home fries and eggs. These are my personal favorites because you can bet the owner has their unique flair or a family recipe that you're not going to find anywhere else. In fact, I

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visited one B & B where they grew their omelet vegetables right outside in the garden, and the jams and jellies were homemade right on site.

What to Expect

I have found that if a B & B has five or more rooms, they usually have staff to help out the owners. Just like a hotel, you'll get your beds made and plenty of fresh towels. Personally I like the larger establishments because the house is usually more mansion-like and bursting with character, and normally they can then afford to provide a few more amenities. If you like interacting with people from all over the globe, this would be definitely for you.

I've met people from North and South America, Europe, Asia - basically the world. Bed and Breakfast travelers tend to be friendlier, happier and easy-going types that seem more extroverted and genuinely glad to meet each other and enjoy good company and conversation - it's always a pleasure to compare stories and learn new things about people's homelands.

After my first stay in a Bed & Breakfast, I was hooked. If you've never stayed in one, give it a try. You might be pleasantly surprised... I loved being a guest so much I decided to become an owner!

Paul Hyde is the owner of Banting House Inn, a seven bedroom downtown Toronto bed and breakfast. His clientele are vacationers and business travelers alike, often returning to their 'home away from home'. Have a look at this Top 10 Toronto accommodation at

<http://www.bantinghouse.com>

Australia – A Place I Must Visit Before I Die

By Gabriel Adams

I have a few places on my list that I must visit before I die. Most of these places are located next to the ocean and have amazing beaches and ocean wildlife. I love the ocean and I really love surfing as well as swimming with different types of wildlife in the ocean. Another major reason to visit these locations is the truly amazing sites that can be visited which can not be duplicated anywhere else in the world. The places I must visit before I die are Italy, Hawaii, and probably the most important, Australia.

The main reason that I want to vacation in Australia is for the amazing surf that is created there. The Great Barrier Reef creates the best waves in the world for surfing. I have also been very intrigued about Australia ever since I saw the movie Point Break, and Patrick Swayze's character dies while surfing during the "Fifty Year's Storm". I grew up thinking that dieing while surfing would be the best way to die, because you would die while doing something that you love. Not only does the Great Barrier Reef supply outstanding waves, it also is a habitat for an enormous amount of ocean wildlife. I could spend years snorkeling in this area trying to see all of the amazing ocean wildlife that Australia has to offer.

Australia also has amazing places to visit while you are vacationing there. The most famous building in

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Australia is located in Sydney, the Sydney Opera House. This famous landmark was shown in nearly every shot that was taken of the city during the 2000 Olympics. To me one of the best things about Australia, and Sydney in particular, is the tremendous amount of bed and breakfasts there are to stay in. I was looking online and I saw about twenty or thirty different bed and breakfasts, with all different types of amenities. Some of these bed and breakfasts had four star services, and others were more like apartments, where you took care of everything for yourself. I think that staying in one of these places could make your vacation in Australia that much more interesting. I'll see you in Australia!

Visit our Australian Bed and Breakfast Directory to help you plan your vacation to Australia!

<http://www.ozbnbdir.com/>



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