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How to Choose a Bed and Breakfast

By Tammy Jordan Sikes

How to Choose a Bed and Breakfast

by: **Tammy Jordan Sikes**

So you've decided to shun the neon-flashing motel chains and marble-foyered monsters and venture into the world of cozy, intimate bed and breakfasts? After all, you've heard how much more personal and romantic the b&b experience is, right? Well....usually that's the gospel truth. However, there are certain things to keep in mind and questions to ask yourself (and prospective innkeepers) before you make your final decision and turn over your credit card number.

The first thing to consider is the area of the country you will be visiting. Many towns across America offer the b&b experience but only have a handful of options for you to consider. On the other hand, if you visit our hometown of Fredericksburg, Texas (population 9,000) there are literally hundreds of b&b's, reportedly the largest number of b&b's per capita in the nation. Unfortunately for the unwary traveller, not all are created equal! When visiting such a popular bed and breakfast town, the research you do beforehand will greatly impact the quality of your stay.

These days it seems almost everyone makes their travel decisions and arrangements through the internet. In fact you are probably one of those individuals or you wouldn't be reading this article. You can always begin your search by typing in your destination city or town and "bed and breakfast" into your search engine to get an idea of the options you'll have. As you begin to view the properties, you should consider whether the b&b has the following amenities (assuming these are important to you): private bath, temperature control, full or continental breakfast, off-street parking, daily housekeeping and the ever-important factor....location.

Let's begin with location. Proximity to the "center of action" is often a plus for many travelers; however, it sometimes comes with a drawback...noise. In our town, many visitors want to be "on Main Street," and to be sure it is a boon at the end of the day when carrying heavy shopping bags back to your room. However, guests are sometimes surprised at the street noise which lasts throughout the night (Main Street is, after all, Highway 290)! Some visitors prefer to be a few blocks off Main with a bit more privacy yet good access to Main Street. Still others prefer a place in the country.

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Making this first decision will cut the number of properties you consider by as much as 2/3. A note of caution however; if location is a prime concern of yours be very detailed in your quest. For example, many Fredericksburg bed and breakfasts advertise "Located on Main Street," but what they don't tell you is they are a mile and a half from the shopping district on the west end of town. In our town, the 100–300 blocks of East Main are considered the true shopping district. So if proximity to shopping is your goal, you would be better off with a cottage 3 blocks off of Main but within the 100–300 blocks than at the property a mile and a half from shopping that sounds so convenient. Remember the old adage, "Buyer Beware."

Question number two could be whether to stay at an Inn or an individual cottage. Fredericksburg is unique in offering literally hundreds of one–couple, individual Sunday Houses or cottages in addition to numerous true multi–unit inns. One big distinction here other than the obvious over–all privacy issue is usually breakfast. In a private cottage you almost always receive a continental breakfast, left before

you arrive. At a traditional "Inn" or bed and breakfast, you are often served a full gourmet breakfast at a pre–arranged time...along with other guests. So for many guests the choice comes down to continental with privacy or full–breakfast served in a dining room. Either option offers lots of possibilities. But with so many different properties, there are no set rules; so check their website or ask!

One more common pitfall is something that sounds so basic but can really impact your experience: decor. Word on the street in b&b circles is that guests are increasingly looking for a "magazine spread" when they walk in the door. Nothing pleases me more than to open our guestbook and read, "When we opened the door the beautiful room just took my breath away!" Few people go to a bed and breakfast looking for the type decor they have at home...or worse, their granny's decor! However, many b&b owners are under the false impression that they can take an empty rent–house and hang out their shingle. They may stumble upon a few unsuspecting guests...but you don't want it to be you. Be sure and check the pictures on the website. I would never book a room that didn't at least show photos of the exterior of the cottage or inn and the bed. Webmasters tell me that these are the two photo's potential guests are most interested in. I would be very wary of a facility that wasn't proud to show its exterior and at least one photo of the inside of each room. Jacuzzi tubs, hot tubs, gas fireplaces, it's all out there for the taking...for those who do their homework. Spend a little extra time asking the right questions and you can have the most wonderful, relaxing getaway experience yet.

Tammy Jordan Sikes is a former trial attorney–turned bed and breakfast owner with several b&b's in Fredericksburg, Texas in the beautiful Texas Hill Country. See

and

Bed and Breakfasts Today

By Dylan Miles

Travelers are seeking new experiences today. Bed and breakfast trends today are attracting people

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who want to completely get away from their rushed and busy daily lives. These people prefer to travel far from the city and out into the country. They prefer to stay where the hospitality is warm and personal. They prefer smaller hotels, not large impersonal hotels. They want quiet and peaceful surroundings. They want to reconnect to the land, to experience community life and enjoy simple stress-free chatter. In short, they want an experience that only a bed and breakfast can provide. The quaint and simple experience of a bed and breakfast has become a popular tourism trend today.

The real human contact of a bed and breakfast getaway

Bed and breakfasts offer personal customer service by real human beings. Travelers who are seeking the bed and breakfast experience have busy impersonal lives and want to literally stop and breathe in real air and real human contact. Simple and pleasant interactions with the local community is the highlight of any bed and breakfast stay.

Bed and breakfast holidays are romantic and historic

Newlyweds are also looking to spend their honeymoons at bed and breakfast hotels and inns. They want to be pampered and treated like real human beings. Bed and breakfast getaways are often romantic and luxurious experiences. They offer an otherworldly experience. By virtue of being so completely different from your daily life in the big city and often by having a rich history, bed and breakfast inns and hotels make you feel as if you've traveled far, far away into another world.

For all of these reasons, more and more people are turning to bed and breakfast hotels and inns for quality vacationing.

Dylan Miles, journalist, and website builder, lives in Texas. He is the owner and co-editor of [Quality Ebooks and Softwares](#) on which you will find a longer, more detailed version of this article.

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