

THE SUN HERALD

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— will travel

Those days of dreadlock holidays are long gone

minded travellers about the good hostels in which they've stayed.

Chatting to other hostellers is so beneficial, you'll usually notice a pattern in advice on places to stay and areas to give a miss.

If you happen upon a hostel you love, browse around the counters or walls near the check-in desk. Chances are they have pamphlets of similar standard hostels in other areas or countries.

Having a great backpacking experience has a lot to do with your state of mind. There will be times when you're tired and cranky and things aren't going your way, but your best line of defence is an easygoing attitude.

There is a positive to most situations — the times when I've met the most interesting and fun-loving people was when I've stayed in a feral hostel. Or I've been told there are no rooms at a certain place late at night after a long journey, only to find a better and cheaper place around the corner.

You can also experience the most amazing moments of your life. What you lack in creature comforts you will no doubt make up for with cherished memories.

Besides, when things don't go your way, keep in mind that your nightmare experiences usually end up being your most entertaining party stories.

Now get packing.

TOP FIVE HOSTELS

Balmer's Herberge,
Interlaken Switzerland
ph +41 033 822 1981

Hostel heaven. Rooms are clean, the food is good, the staff is friendly. There's heaps to do and you're in one of the most beautiful, mountainous areas in the world, perfect for skiing, hiking and adrenalin sports. This is a family-run business and it shows.



The Treehouse Backpacker Hotel

Gruenau, Austria
ph +43 0 7616 8499

Another family-run business. You feel like you've come home when you check in here. Delicious home-cooked dinners, great rooms, friendly people, breakfasts complete with every type of cereal under the sun, a well-stocked video room, games room, bar and free pick-up from the train station. The best hostel I have ever been to.



Yoho International Hostel

Salzburg, Austria
ph +43 0 652 879649

Clean accommodation, comfortable beds and a great bar that sells cheap food. There's a TV room which plays *The Sound Of Music* daily. Annoying for some, but fun if you want to get into the spirit of things.

There's even *The Sound Of Music* drinking game for those who can't cope any other way.



Pink Palace, Corfu,

Greece
ph +30 661 53103

If you want to party, this is the hostel for you. Well presented and offers activities, water sports, meals and entertainment.



Circus Hostel

Berlin, Germany
ph +49 030 28391433

A clean, central and modern hostel that has an excellent help desk where you can find out timetables, book train seats and get visas for countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary.

GADGETS YOU'LL NEED

An alarm clock; a pegless clothesline (take more than one); a phone card (many European public phones no longer take coins); a Walkman and some favourite tapes; a pack of cards (not only a cure for boredom but a way to meet people).

Die 5 besten Hostels Europas

Circus Hostel

Ein sauberes, zentral gelegenes, modernes Hostel mit einem excellenten Helpdesk, an dem man Zug- und Businfos bekommt, Reservierungen machen kann und Visahilfe bekommt für Länder wie die Tschechei oder Ungarn.

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