



HAUTE HOSTELS

HIGH DESIGN, LOW BUDGET.
WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF
UPMARKET DOSSHOUSES

WRITTEN BY SARAH GARDEN

Dorm rooms, bunk beds, queuing for the shower, plastic plates, communal tables, lights on timers and towels of questionable cleanliness – don't even get us started on bed bugs. The word 'hostel' has more negative connotations than a gap year student has had hot dinners.

That was, until now. A new breed of designer hostel is inspiring the fashionable and the fabulous to globe-hop on a budget, with sociable accommodation options no longer reserved solely for students.

From backpacking honeymoons to fashion-week boltholes, savvy hostel owners have spotted a gap in the market for affordable accommodation catering to discerning travellers. With private rooms, branded interiors and unusual layouts, these prodigious pads will have your Instagram followers double tapping in no time.

GENERATOR, VENICE

Just a short watertaxi journey from the bustle of St Mark's Square, you'll find a collection of eight islands known as La Giudecca. On its waterfront sits an old grain house, which has been converted into an impossibly stylish and slightly eccentric hostel. Generator is filled with mosaic tiles, Murano glass, stone fireplaces and neon signs. If you thought power showers, fluffy towels and complementary toiletries were reserved for nice hotels, think again. This hostel offers all of the above in its rustic attic rooms, which even have exposed beams.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

More to the point, what isn't special? Aside from a well thought out design, the hostel is geared towards being social, with a games room, bar, pool table and reading spaces.

THE DETAILS

Private rooms start at Dhs112 per person.
generatorhostels.com





#BUNK, ISTANBUL

#bunk's mantra is that those on a budget shouldn't compromise on style – it delivers on this promise, and then some. Istanbul has two hostels, #bunk Taksim offers modern décor and is walking distance from Taksim Square, while #bunk Beyoglu nods to the old Ottoman Empire and has the city's vibrant art scene on its doorstep. Each hostel has its own unique perks such as stylish coffee bars and sun terraces, so choose the one that best reflects your character.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Look up and you'll see prints of Istanbul's most impressive ceilings, from a beautiful mosque to the dome of Hagia Sophia.

THE DETAILS

Prices are around Dhs329 per double room for #bunk Taksim, and slightly higher for the Beyoglu property. bunkhostels.com



COCO MAMA, AMSTERDAM

Opened in 2010 by two women in their twenties, this is a real homegrown business. The aim of Coco Mama is to offer a boutique experience, which combines all the best parts of hostels and hotels, resulting in a laidback-luxe property. The striking building has high ceilings adorned with chandeliers, and rooms are decorated with their own quirky design – each one with its own special Dutch twist. Amsterdam is a small city, so it comes as no surprise that all of the major museums are mere minutes away.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

The hostel is more than a business – it's a passion. The young owners decided to take a leap of faith and plough all their money and energy into what is now their beloved Coco Mama. It has a personal feel, right down to the presence of their cat, Joop.

THE DETAILS

A Private Deluxe Double Room starts at Dhs540 per night. cocomama.nl



THE CIRCUS HOTEL, BERLIN

The Circus Hotel offers three types of accommodation, all located on or near Rosenthaler Platz – otherwise known as one of the trendiest streets in Berlin. Whether you stay in the supersociable hostel, the simply eccentric hotel, or the affordably stylish apartments, there's a circus to suit every budget. In the surrounding area you'll find small cafés, shops and the arts quarter, while all the big attractions are easily accessible through Berlin's seamless transport system.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Each of the three properties offers its own unique touches, whether that be eyewitness history talks or iPads and laptops on loan.

THE DETAILS

Prices start at Dhs326 for a private room and go up to Dhs1,582 for a private six-bedroom apartment. circus-berlin.de



THE BOWERY HOUSE, NEW YORK

Sitting on the oldest thoroughfare in Manhattan, just beyond Soho's cobbled streets, The Bowery House is every bit as rustic as you'd expect. This chic pad looks like a dashing gentleman's club, with Chesterfield armchairs, Parisian Horus bathroom fixtures and Pedrali of Italy garden furniture. "Where's the catch?" we hear you ask. It's not exactly a catch, but this place stays affordable with compact cabin rooms in a variety of sizes. The Full Cabins have double mattresses, while the exclusive Prince Cabin has the luxury of a queen-sized bed.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

We doubt you've ever stayed at a hostel where the bathrooms have heated floors. There's even a landscaped roof terrace with views of Brooklyn Bridge.

THE DETAILS

A Full Cabin is priced at around Dhs455 per room. theboweryhouse.com



travel/glampackers

U HOSTEL, MADRID

With exposed brickwork and deliberately mismatched interiors, U Hostel may have the feel of a chic Brooklyn loft conversion, but it's actually a renovated palace in Madrid. The range of rooms includes themed suites with private bathrooms, and balconies overlooking the beautiful street below. Conveniently sandwiched between Madrid's best nightlife and shopping districts, you'll find the area ideal for exploring on foot.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Organise classes and excursions directly from the hostel and meet lots of interesting people. U Hostel also donates part of its profits to charities such as the Children's Centre in Malawi and Peddappendial Old People's Home in India.

THE DETAILS

Expect to pay around Dhs150 per person for a private suite depending on the season. uhostels.com



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