

Directory

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodation options in Bermuda range from small guesthouses to big beachside resorts. There are plenty of delightful options to choose from but don't expect any bargains. Bermuda doesn't offer truly cheap accommodations – no youth hostels, no family campgrounds and no economy-chain motels.

Rates that fall below \$125 a night are considered budget. If you're looking in the mid-range, expect to pay between \$125 and \$275. Top-end places start around \$275. You can find attractive places in all price ranges; even the ones that fall into the budget category have nicely equipped rooms and sometimes a pool to boot. What you get as you spend more are fancier digs, private beaches and more pampering.

Throughout this book, we give published rates which the industry refers to as rack

rates. Some of the resort hotels, which are affiliated with international chains, occasionally offer discounts from their rack rates on their websites, but deals at smaller places are few and far between. One way to cut down your accommodations bill is to come in the winter season, from November to March, when many places offer lower winter rates.

PRACTICALITIES

- **Electricity** Plug in to Bermuda's 110V, 60Hz electric current using a flat, two-pronged plug – the same as in the USA. Some hotels have adapters for electric shavers.
- **Newspapers** Keep up with Bermudian current affairs and local entertainment with the *Royal Gazette* newspaper, published daily except Sunday, or the twice-weekly *Bermuda Sun*.
- **Magazines** As soon as you arrive at the airport or dock, pick up *This Week in Bermuda* and *Preview Bermuda*, free magazines packed with useful visitor information.
- **TV** Bermudian cable TV is loaded with US programming plus BBC World. Tune in to ZBM (channel 3) at 7pm for local news, and channel 4 for ongoing Bermuda weather updates.
- **Radio** FM 89 and FM 106.1 have rock and contemporary music and AM 1160 broadcasts the BBC World Service and local public affairs.
- **Video Systems** If you're buying videos to take home, be aware Bermuda uses the NTSC system – the same as in the USA and Canada, but incompatible with the PAL system used in Europe and Australia.
- **Weights & Measures** Bermuda has gone partly metric (such as for speed limits) but retains the imperial system of measurement for many uses (temperatures are reported in Fahrenheit; weights are measured in pounds).

Bermuda's tourist industry likes to divide accommodations into several categories, based on a place's predominant character. Keep in mind that these groupings are somewhat imprecise and categories often overlap a bit. A room in a small hotel or a cottage colony may have the same cooking facilities that you'd find in an apartment, for instance.

In addition to the places listed in this book, which operate as full-time businesses and accept direct reservations, there are private families that occasionally rent out rooms and apartments solely via a booking service. To peruse these and make reservations go online to **Bermuda Rentals** (www.bermudarentals.com).

B&Bs & Guesthouses

Many of these places are in lovely period homes, often overlooking gardens or sporting water views. They might have just a couple of rooms in a family home or be larger places with several wings. What they have in common is an intimate setting in which you get to know the host. In most cases, breakfast is included in the rate and you share the table with fellow guests. Sometimes there's a group kitchen where guests can prepare other meals.

Apartments

Hugely popular, tourist apartments provide not only a place to stay but also full cooking facilities. As a rule they pack the most space for the buck and are also economical because they save you from having to dine out for every meal. Considering that the average hotel charges a good \$10 per person for breakfast, being able to prepare your own coffee and toast can represent a tidy saving!

Cottage Colonies

Now this is where things start to get fancy. The term 'cottage colony' is generally used in Bermuda with more upmarket places that offer units inside individual cottages, or in small clusters of buildings, each of which contain a few units. The 'cottages' sometimes have limited cooking facilities and invariably have a genteel setting with landscaped grounds, water views, afternoon teas and the like. All very private and pampering.

Small Hotels

Small hotels are by and large just that: smaller places, typically around 50 rooms, that usually have a restaurant, lounge and swimming pool but don't necessarily offer the extensive array of services found at the large resort hotels. These range from unpretentious family-oriented places to some of the island's more prestigious and intimate spots.

Resort Hotels

Bermuda has five resort hotels: the Elbow Beach Hotel, the Grotto Bay Beach Hotel, the Fairmont Hamilton Princess, the Fairmont Southampton and the Wyndham Bermuda Resort. Together they provide about half of all the guest rooms in Bermuda. Each has all the amenities you'd expect in an upmarket resort – restaurants, swimming pools, room service, activities and the like.

Camping

Although you may see Bermudians setting up tents, foreign visitors cannot camp in Bermuda. The only exception is for organized groups, who may apply for permits to camp at group sites run by the government on nearshore islands. Information on group camping is available from the **Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation** (☎ 297-7619).

ACTIVITIES

Bermuda offers plenty for active visitors. Essentially, the best time of the year for most things to do in the water, including swimming, snorkeling and diving, is during the summer season of April to October. Golf and tennis are good year round, though the most pleasant weather for a vigorous outdoor workout is during the cooler winter season. Golfers will find information at **Bermuda Golf Association** (www.bermudagolf.org). Tennis players can log on to **Bermuda Lawn Tennis Association** (☎ 296-0834; www.blta.bm). For more information on all sorts of outdoor fun, see p34.

BUSINESS HOURS

Business offices are typically open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Shops are generally open 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday, though there are exceptions – for example, grocery stores have longer hours and Sunday openings, and tourist-gear shops catering to cruise ship passengers often stay open into the evening when ships are in port.

Most restaurants and cafés serve lunch from around 11:30am to 2:30pm, and dinner from 6pm to 10pm. Bars tend to keep much later hours, and are typically open to at least 1am, with even longer hours on weekends.

CHILDREN

Although Bermudians are family oriented, Bermuda can pose some challenges to travelers with children. For instance, families who are accustomed to renting a car and piling all the kids inside will be dismayed to learn Bermuda has no car rentals. Large resort hotels don't place restrictions on children, but many other hotels and guesthouses tend to be formal and gear their activities solely to adults.

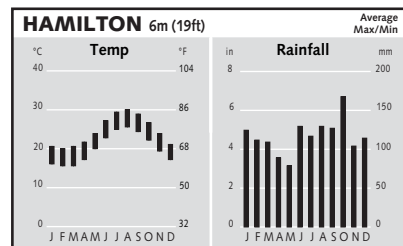
On the plus side, apartment-style accommodations that are well-suited for families are readily available in Bermuda, and most have a swimming pool that kids can splash around in. All places except fine-dining restaurants welcome families with young kids. In addition to beaches and swimming pools, there are snorkeling tours, miniature golf (p123), a wonderful aquarium and zoo (p90), and plenty of cool forts to explore.

Travelers with babies will readily find baby food, formula and disposable diapers at local supermarkets, although prices will be higher than at home. Some hotels can provide cribs and high chairs; if not, they can be rented from the **Bermuda Red Cross** (☎ 236-8777) at the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Paget.

For those vacationing with children, Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* has lots of valuable tips and interesting anecdotal stories.

CLIMATE CHART

Bermuda being a small place, the weather's the same throughout the island. For information on the best time to visit, see p9.



CUSTOMS

Visitors to Bermuda may bring in duty-free 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 0.5kg of tobacco, 1L of liquor and 1L of wine as well as clothing, sports equipment, cameras etc intended for personal use. Each visitor is also entitled to a \$30 gift allowance.

Because of the high price of imported food, it's not uncommon for return visitors staying in places with kitchens to bring in frozen steaks and other meat. Visitors are allowed to bring in up to 50lb of meat and other food items for their own consumption, though these are subject to a 22% duty.

Bermuda restricts or prohibits the importation of animals, plants, fresh fruits and vegetables, firearms, spear guns and drugs. For more information about customs laws, contact the **Customs House** (☎ 295-4816; www.customs.gov.bm).

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Crime

Although Bermuda is relatively safe, it has its fair share of crime and drug abuse problems just like any other place. Violent crime has been on the increase in recent years, and tourists are occasionally targeted for muggings. Travelers should use the standard precautions they would use anywhere when walking alone at night, especially in areas that are not well lit. Women carrying handbags should keep them close to their bodies to prevent purse snatchings. One local mugging offense is the drive-by in which a thief rides by on a motorbike and snatches the purse of a pedestrian from behind.

Still, the most common problem encountered by visitors is motor scooter theft, which is at epidemic proportions in Bermuda. It's so great a problem that it's virtually impossible to get theft insurance on scooters anymore. Some of the bikes end up in 'chop shops' where they are stripped for parts, although others just end up being taken for a joyride before being dumped over a cliff. If you rent a scooter, you can cut down on the odds of having it stolen by locking it every time you stop and by parking in well-lit public places.

Land Dangers

There are no poisonous snakes or other such dangerous creatures lurking in Bermuda. Hikers, however, should be aware that

poison ivy is abundant on interior trails. Wear socks and long pants as a precaution. Mosquitoes can also get pesky, particularly around marsh areas.

Ocean Dangers

RIP TIDES

If you're not familiar with water conditions, ask a local. It's best not to swim alone in any unfamiliar place.

Chief among the ocean dangers are rip currents, fast-flowing currents of water moving from shallow nearshore areas out to sea. They are most common in conditions of high surf, forming when water from incoming waves builds up near the shore. Essentially the waves are coming in faster than they can flow back out. The water then runs along the shoreline until it finds an escape route out to sea, usually through a channel or out along a point. Swimmers caught up in the current can be ripped out to deeper water. Although rip currents can be powerful, they usually dissipate 50yd to 100yd offshore. Anyone caught in one should either go with the flow until it loses power or swim parallel to shore to slip out of it. Trying to swim against a rip current can exhaust the strongest of swimmers.

JELLYFISH

Always take a peek into the water before you plunge in to make sure it's not jellyfish territory. These gelatinous creatures, with saclike bodies and stinging tentacles, are sometimes found in Bermuda. The sting of a jellyfish varies from mild to severe, depending on the variety. Unless you have an allergic reaction to their venom, the stings are generally not dangerous.

The Portuguese man-of-war is by far the worst type to encounter. Its body consists of a translucent, bluish, bladder-like float, which generally grows to be about 5in long, though its tentacles can extend many feet. In the waters off Bermuda, the Portuguese man-of-war is most prevalent from March through July. A man-of-war sting is very painful, similar to a bad bee sting except that you're likely to get stung more than once from clusters of long tentacles containing hundreds of stinging cells. Even touching a Portuguese man-of-war a few hours after it's washed up on shore can result in burning stings.

DISABLED TRAVELERS

Unlike in the UK, Bermuda has no laws requiring businesses to make adjustments to their property to accommodate the physically disabled. So, not surprisingly, access varies greatly.

For wheelchair users, Bermuda's larger resort hotels generally have the greatest accessibility with elevators, wider doorways and the like. Some smaller places also have wheelchair-accessible guestrooms and common areas, but others don't, so visitors with special needs should make their requirements known at the time of booking.

Wheelchair access on public transport is limited. Public buses do not have hydraulic lifts and are unable to accommodate wheelchairs at all. Public ferries are readily accessible only from the three largest ports – the City of Hamilton, Town of St George and Royal Naval Dockyard – which have ramps. Taxi companies have wheelchair-accessible vans but they are in limited supply and sometimes require booking the day before.

Travelers with special needs should log on to the website of the **Bermuda Physically Handicapped Association** (www.bermuda-online.org/BPHA.htm), which is chock-full of information, including specifics to how to handle the ins and outs of getting around Bermuda.

DISCOUNT CARDS

If you're a member of the National Trust in Australia, Barbados, Britain or another Commonwealth country, you'll get free entry into Bermuda National Trust sites by showing your membership card.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Bermudian Embassies & Consulates

As a dependency of the UK, all of Bermuda's diplomatic representation is handled by British embassies and consulates around the world. British embassies are listed at www.fco.gov.uk and include the following:

Australia (☎ 02-6270-6666; British High Commission, Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla, Canberra, ACT 2600)

Canada (☎ 613-237-1530; British High Commission, 80 Elgin St, Ottawa K1P 5K7)

France (☎ 01 44 51 31 00; British Embassy, 35 rue du Faubourg St Honoré, 75383 Paris Cedex 08)

Germany (☎ 30 20457 0; British Embassy, Wilhelmstrasse 70, 10117 Berlin)

Ireland (☎ 1 205 3700; 29 Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)