

When you travel next time, consider a bed and breakfast experience. In addition to their historic charm, your experience will be totally unlike booking big hotels with all their crowds, noises, elevators and high prices. The comfy little inns offer quiet locations, down-home service and much lower prices. Here are just a few unique bed and breakfasts.



1. Barangay Bed and Breakfast in Amsterdam, Holland, is in a neat 18th Century canal row building near the Anne Frank House. Its owners claim to have the best b&b breakfast anywhere, featuring a combination of Dutch and Filipino delicacies. It's in the Golden Reaal neighborhood, close to galleries, shopping and cafes and the famed Amsterdam coffee shops.

2. The Lizzie Borden Bed and Breakfast in Fall River, Massachusetts, is probably the most infamous house in New England. The innkeepers attract travelers by boasting it's where Lizzie Borden murdered her parents with an axe. The breakfast menu features what is supposed to have been the last meal ill-fated mom and pop Borden ate before Lizzie did them in. Some say the house is haunted, but you'll have to find out for yourself when you spend a night there.

3. There are three Dockside Boat Bed and Breakfasts, one each in San Francisco, Oakland and Long Beach, all in California. Someone got the brilliant idea of setting up docked boats and yachts along the pier as sleeping quarters for travelers. Vistors can scan the line-up and choose where they'll spend the night, while absent boat owners can earn money to help pay upkeep and dock fees.

The one at San Francisco's Pier 39 is conveniently located in the Fisherman's Wharf area, where scores of shops and restaurants are just a short stroll away. Similar facilities are available to travelers at the other two bed and breakfast coastal docking locations.

4. The Red Garter Bed & Bakery in Williams, Arizona, is located just an hour's drive to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, and near the railroad station where the restored 19th Century steam train puffs visitors to the Canyon in style. The b&b owner claims the restored old saloon building is haunted, and says guests have seen a beautiful woman with long dark hair and a flowing gown glide through the hallways on some dark nights. There are no extra charges to guests for seeing the spectre.

5. The General Lafayette Inn in Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania, also boasts of ghosts. The

restored 1732 stagecoach stop is also famous for its restaurant that serves Colonial-style meals, and customers have reported hearing footsteps outside their sleeping rooms and shadowy wenches and soldiers in 18th Century garb drifting through the dining room. Of course, this is one inn where the claim that George Washington slept there seems believable, although no guest has yet seen his ghost there.

6. Cregg Castle is just north of Galway Bay in Ireland and a few miles from Galway city's cafes and shopping for original Irish products. It was originally constructed 350 years ago as a fortress to protect the population from Spanish and pirate invaders. Now it welcomes travelers with classically decorated sleeping rooms and hot Irish breakfasts.

7. The Caboose Bed and Breakfast Resort on Clear Lake, in California's Wine Country offers a unique experience. At the Featherbed Railroad, guests stay in nine luxuriously redecorated and restored railroad cabooses. The site overlooks the Caboose b&b's private dock and boat launch at Clear Lake, where sailing, kayaking and fishing adventures are available. In addition to nearby shopping, there are 23 of the internationally-famous Napa Valley wineries just a short drive away.

8. The Historic Farnsworth House Inn at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is near the historic Civil War battlefields. In addition to guided day and candlelight tours of the area, there are ghost story sessions daily in the Inn's parlor. One sleeping room is said to be haunted by a young Union soldier and his teenage bride. When he was killed at Little Round Top, she died of grief in the Farnsworth House just a few days later, but now they're together with an eternal haunting career at the Inn.

9. Mepkin Abbey at Moncks Corner, South Carolina, is a former monastery, and in addition to daily breakfast, guests are welcome to attend prayer services. The breakfast consists of the same simple, vegetarian fare Trappist monks eat in their monasteries throughout the world. In addition to the usual tourist weekend stays, guest are welcome to join month-long retreats at the Abbey.

10. Out 'N' About Treesort at Cave Junction, Oregon, is a modern version of the Disney treehouse in its movie, "Swiss Family Robinson." Visiting kids and adults live in treehouse style, where they can visit each other's little tree cabins by walking across high rope bridges. The owners also offer lessons on treehouse building, should anyone want to go home and put one up in the yard.

Of course, there are hundreds of other interesting and unique bed and breakfast locations throughout the world. Next time you plan your vacation trip, consider skipping the usual boring hotel routine and try something original and entertaining at a b&b.

