



Hip hostels

— Once home to bunk beds and shared bathrooms, today's hostels are much more than a budget place to crash, finds Sarah Reid. Fancy a night in a converted jail or a spot of morning yoga? Drop your backpack here —

No longer is bagging the cheapest bed in town considered a hostel "win". For today's travellers, hostel stays are all about the experience.

A 2019 global study from Hostelworld (hostelworld.com) – the planet's largest hostel booking platform – reported that the importance of innovative décor in choosing a hostel increased by 44 per cent among millennial travellers. The research also found that free activities were growing in importance, while demand for co-working spaces grew by 136 per cent among Australian travellers.

"Hostel travellers are increasingly looking for authentic experiences as well as serendipitous opportunities to connect with in-the-know locals," says Cathy Thomson, Head of Customer Experience at Hostelworld. "The range of features, amenities and experiences offered by modern hostels cater to much higher guest expectations of quality and comfort than ever before."

From 'grammable design to experiential offerings, flexi-working facilities for digital nomads to clever eco-friendly initiatives, next-gen hostels are stepping up. Here are six of the coolest ones you need to check out (err... check in to).





THE POD@BEACH ROAD

THE YARD BANGKOK

> Built from recycled shipping containers and insulated with recycled paper, this eco-conscious hostel in the buzzy Ari neighbourhood has three restaurants and offers luggage storage for up to two months. Their admirable sustainability initiatives include free bikes, reusable water bottle loans and supporting a community forest project. theyardhostel.com

LUB D SIEM REAP

> Asian hostel chain Lub d's Cambodian outpost comes complete with co-working space, chill-out area, pool with swim-up bar, laundry room and a café-restaurant. Top bunks are easily accessed by stairs rather than wobbly ladders and Lub d is just a short walk from Pub Street.

lubd.com/siemreap

THE POD@BEACH ROAD SINGAPORE

> On the fringe of Singapore's CBD, this slick capsule hostel will ease you into communal living with 300 thread-count sheets and free breakfast and laundry. There are also couples pods, private singles and a dedicated ladies floor.

thepodcapsulehotel.com



PURI GARDEN

FREMANTLE PRISON YHA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

> This unusual accommodation near Perth lets you sleep in a converted cell in a former convict prison. You can also combine your stay with a tour of the heritage-listed building – which operated as a jail up until 1991 – and a ferry ride to nearby Rottnest Island to snag a #quokkaselfie.

yha.com.au

TRAIN HOSTEL HOKUTOSEI TOKYO

> Inspired by the now-defunct Hokutosei sleeper train which used to shuttle travellers between Tokyo and Sapporo, this quirky hostel emulates real train accommodation with fittings from the locomotive spread throughout the hostel. Appropriately it is attached to a train station (Bakurochō) for easy access to Tokyo.

global.trainhostelhokutosei.com

PURI GARDEN BALI

> For a uniquely Balinese experience, it's difficult to beat this recently renovated Ubud hostel. From your plush dorm bed, head straight to the tropical garden for free yoga before breakfast and a lazy afternoon swinging in a hammock by the pool. Don't miss the weekly traditional dance shows.

purigardenhotel.com

FREMANTLE PRISON YHA