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Boston Yacht Haven, a 10-room bed and breakfast, was ranked No. 1 for business travelers by BedandBreakfast.com.

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## Some business travelers prefer B&Bs

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By **Gary Stoller**, USA TODAY



[+](#) Enlarge By Mark Garfinkel for USA TODAY

Business travelers generally don't consider bed-and-breakfasts for their lodging. Maybe they should, a new survey suggests.

Most of 1,332 B&Bs in 49 states that responded last month to a survey by BedandBreakfast.com say they provide many of the services and amenities business travelers seek.

Most provide at least five of the following business-friendly features: free Wi-Fi, a desk in a guest room, copying service, fax service, online booking, and corporate or single-occupancy rates.

Almost all allow late check-in and early breakfast times. BedandBreakfast.com, which reviews B&Bs and books reservations,

CareNext Group executive Dan Tewes, of Purchase, N.Y., checks e-mail and uses the phone while wife Leslie and kids Megan, 10, Sarah, 6, and James Daniel (J.D.), 3, hang out on the deck at the Boston Yacht Haven B&B.

## TOP BED & BREAKFASTS

The following are the top picks at BedandBreakfast.com for the best urban B&Bs for business travelers. Sandy Soule, editor of the website, says the top-ranking inns offer expected amenities for business travelers plus "over-the-top" extras such as a great view, notable decor, a convenient location or exceptional value.

### Top 10 urban B&Bs

1. Boston Yacht Haven, Boston
2. Oge House Inn on the Riverwalk, San Antonio
3. Butler House on Grand, Des Moines
4. Royal Elizabeth B&B, Tucson
5. Union Street Inn, San Francisco
6. 1871 House, New York City
7. Napoleon's Retreat, St. Louis
8. DC Guest House, Washington
9. Chambered Nautilus, Seattle
10. Flemish House of Chicago, Chicago

## TRAVELER'S TOOLBOX

sent the survey to 5,000 innkeepers at USA TODAY's request.

"Dozens of thoughtful extras make many B&Bs ideal choices for business travelers," says Sandy Soule, editor of the website. Kevin Matthews, general manager of the 10-room Boston Yacht Haven, which was named by BedandBreakfast.com as the No. 1 B&B for business travelers, says 75% of his guests are traveling on business. His downtown inn is convenient to many of the city's big businesses.

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"A lot of business travelers are looking for something different than a traditional hotel," he says. "After a hard day of business, a lot want to relax, and they like the homey feel and the tranquility of our lodging by Boston Harbor."

### Some features a turn-off

B&Bs may be more attractive than in the past to the business set, but their appeal is mainly to leisure travelers. A unique B&B feature that's considered quaint by a tourist may be an unsettling surprise to a business traveler who values predictability. And they're not for travelers who dislike getting chummy with strangers in the morning.

Frequent business traveler John Fitzgibbon, of Manorville, N.Y., says he stayed at a B&B in New Hampshire about five years ago and hasn't stayed at one since.

"The room was very nice and comfortable, but there were many things shared, including meal times," the health care consultant recalls.

"Everyone went around the breakfast table sharing stories and, to be honest, I value the anonymity offered at a Marriott(MAR), a Hilton (HLT) or a Sheraton. I checked out the next morning after making up some business emergency story and drove an additional 20 miles to the closest higher-end chain hotel."

Another frequent business traveler, Cynthia Grow, of Cincinnati, says she usually stays in hotels but was won over by a quaint and comfortable B&B in Natchitoches, La., that "was so different from a sterile cookie-cutter room that one gets at a hotel."

The image shows a search interface with three tabs: 'Airfare' (selected), 'Hotels', and 'Deals'. Below the tabs are two input fields: 'From (city/airport code)' and 'To (city/airport code)'. Underneath these are 'Depart' and 'Return' date pickers, each with a calendar icon. At the bottom left is a blue 'Advanced Search' link, and at the bottom right is the 'Powered by KAYAK' logo.

Grow, co-owner of an architectural design firm, says she mistakenly had assumed that B&Bs didn't have high-speed Internet connections or other services for business travelers. "If the location at a B&B is suitable, and it offers a great breakfast and all the business amenities of a hotel, heck yes, count me in."

Cornell University marketing professor Judy Siguaw says B&Bs, which usually serve just one meal, a complimentary breakfast, can be an appealing option for business travelers, but they vary greatly in hours of operation, facilities and services. "Unless you think to ask, you may not be prepared for what you are getting."

Hotels also offer frequent-stay programs, which few B&Bs offer. And most B&Bs don't offer laundry services or in-room meals for a business traveler "working through the night to get a presentation completed," Siguaw says.

Business travelers select hotels mainly on their location, she says. "You routinely find large, mostly chain hotels in, or adjacent to, key business districts," Siguaw says. "They are conveniently located, so there is no long commute for guests seeking to do business. The cost of land in these locations is high and generally not conducive for the development of B&Bs."

But urban areas have many B&Bs that could be convenient for business travelers. For example, the website BedandBreakfast.com lists 31 in Manhattan.

### 'B&B bonus factor'

Across the USA, says B&B trade group Professional Association of Innkeepers International, there are about 20,000 B&Bs and inns licensed by local governments. That compares with 48,000 hotels.

Unlike many hotels, Soule says, B&Bs usually provide free amenities, including local phone calls, Internet access, bottled water and snacks. "The B&B bonus factor is high," she says. "Women business travelers feel safer with no long hallways, no strangers at check-in, no sketchy guys at the bar."

The average daily room rate at a B&B last year was \$159, and the average room rate for the lodging industry was \$97, the Professional Association of Innkeepers International says.

Most B&Bs charge higher rates on weekends, so business travelers, who usually stay on weekdays, can often get cheaper rates or room upgrades, Soule says.

It's not easy to find B&Bs, because many don't have a prominent presence on Internet search engines. But many can be booked online at the websites of booking agents such as BedandBreakfast.com and Internet travel agents such as Expedia.

Posted 2d 10h ago

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**daveNaustin** wrote: 13h 33m ago

Mabel Dodge Luhan House in Taos, NM.

'nuff said.

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**quixotic** wrote: 18h 42m ago

I find that B&B's are fine on occasion. However, there is just so much of the "cutsie" Victorian period ambiance that I can take. When I went on business travel, my focus was mainly on the purpose of the trip and little else. Because you wish to return the courteous and friendly banter at B&Bs so as not to be rude, it takes a bit more patience to navigate through that environment. Some might argue that this is a good thing that helps to keep you civil and in a hospitable frame of mind while on business travel. Other may find this distracting. When pressed for time, jumping in and taking a quick shower is next to impossible at most B&Bs. Those quaint claw foot tubs are nice to look at, but seldom are set up so that you can grab a quick hot shower without getting water all over the place.

All this being said, if you are vacationing or staying in an unfamiliar area, having a B&B host can be a great asset. And the breakfasts and usually complimentary refreshments are a definite plus.

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**filmbuyer** wrote: 23h 4m ago

I travel a fair amount on business, and had my first experience at a B&B in Greely, Colorado at the Sod Buster Inn. I could not have been more impressed or treated with greater courtesy in immacuately clean, comfortable surroundings. While the guest must be respectful (not disturbing other guests by noise), it was great to be able to have a "friend" as the hostess, with beautifully prepared breakfasts and am ample supply of complimentary drinks. A special treat was a plate of homemade cookies at the beverage bar every evening.

In searching for a B&B via internet, some words of caution: rooms should have private baths, free wi-fi & local

calls (The Sod Buster even had free long distance), a prepared breakfast (as opposed to a refrigerator you get your own "continentat" breakfast from), a fairly large number of rooms (the 2-3 room places are sometimes not too desirable, and one where the owner(s) live on the premisis.

The comment about eating with others could be rather moot; just choose another table if one is avaiable, or keep your eyes on your food and your mouth shut....others will get the message. MuicCat seems to want to drink booze, so would recommend that if staying at a B&B, then find a watering hole within walking distance and be sober enough upon return to return to the room quietly.

A B&B is not for you if your tastes (and budget) run to Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis or high-end hotels where there is a charge for everything and most employees have their hand out for a tip. But if you want to be be treated as a GUEST and are at a quality B&B, then you'll be able to conference with business associates during the day in the dining (or living room area) as we did. If it's solitude you want, then you'll be able to find it at a good B&B, as they usually have gardens and porches where you can be alone, something you won't find at commercial lodging. If your tastes run to being in a bar, drinking and partying where you lodge, then a B&B is NOT for you. I will surely stay at a B&B again, but will thoroughly check it out after being educated by my hosts at the Sod Buster Inn. If one is really serious about doing their homework, then call the host directly and ask some questions.

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**MauiCat** wrote: 1d 14h ago

I personally don't dislike B & B's, but it feels like staying at your relative's house to me and I prefer a nice cozy bar, not everyone drinks wine.

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**InnkeeperVA** wrote: 1d 21h ago

As the owner of The Claiborne House Bed and Breakfast in Rocky Mount Virginia, I can attest that this article is pretty accurate.

Instead of staying in a cookie cutter hotel room, smelling of disinfectant, with hired front desk, stay at a Bed & Breakfast and experience something totally unique!

B&B's are so varied, from historic homes filled with antiques, to mountain lodges to seaside cottages. The breakfasts are inn-credible, the coffee ground fresh from choice beans, the tea always above par, the atmosphere relaxing. If you fear dining with strangers - request breakfast in your room, or sit on the porch and take in the scenery! Many innkeepers provide business guests with an ultra ealry breakfast, in fact just ask - we would love to!

Our guests are here for various reasons, many to get away from the stressful city hustle and bustle, many to hike the Blue Ridge Mountains or listen to toe tappin bluegrass along The Crooked Road Music Trail. The article stated inn not being in the business districts of a town or city - EXACTLY!

Innkeepers love their guests and love their homes, and that shows! Long gone are the shared baths, stuffed bunnies in Suzie's old room and innkeepers that feel like your parents. We have wi-fi accessable even on our porch! We have a guest fridge filled with sodas and snacks and aer within walking distance to a couple nice restaurants. A tennis court and park across the street.

We had a team of attorneys here midweek working ona case - they had no curfew - they came and went and used the dining room to spread out and work til the wee hours. THIS IS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT - Bed and

breakfast inns are here to serve you.

If you have not been to a B&B lately, I challenge you to give one a shot! Privacy is paramount. Comfort a given and amenities like wi-fi abound. You will be welcomed in with great hospitality and see what a true bargain B&B's really are.

[www.ClaiborneHouse.net](http://www.ClaiborneHouse.net)

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