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Cheap Digs in Europe

BY MELODY WREN

Fifty Euros a night for a bijou apartment in the Montmartre district of Paris? No way! Travellers often assume that renting a private house or apartment requires a long commitment and lots of cash. But you can rent a flat in London, a centrally-located apartment in Florence, a converted stable in an English village or a former pool house in Cyprus, even if you're short on time and money.

Why choose a rental over a hostel or guest house?

Live and feel like a local, even for three nights; shop at markets and cook your own meals. You'll meet friendly neighbours who are the best resource for places to go and sights to see. Accommodations can include apartments, cottages, trailers, shared houses, B&Bs and house-sitting arrangements.

How to find a place to stay that suits your budget

If you're in a group, you can get some good deals. Websites have filters allowing you to search by price. Print and online newspapers often list properties for rent, most of them privately owned. Usually, the cost depends on the time of the year—the weather is beautiful in Florence in October, but the tourists are gone and prices are down. A property might be listed for only one time period, but if you are interested in going earlier or later, contact the owners and ask anyway.

Lower prices require some flexibility: for example, at that pool house in Cyprus, you'll hear someone cleaning right outside your windows very early, every morning. Find out if linens and towels are included. You may need to bring shampoo and soap, as well as large bags for market shopping.

Start your search here:

sabbaticalhomes.com

Private homes in many countries available for rent, exchange or house-sitting.

holiday-rentals.co.uk & vacationrentals.com

For holiday rentals, prices vary, but there are a few deals. Read the details closely. If a car is required, this means the property is secluded.

laclass.com

Privately-owned cottages on the southwest coast of France.

florenceapartmentscentral.com

San Lorenzo Apartments offers family-owned apartments in the Old Town Centre of Florence, accommodating two to six people. With four or more sharing, it can cost the same as a dorm bed in a hostel.

caretaker.org

House-sitting and caretaking opportunities around the world, mostly rent-free.



banana pancake and ran out the door, creating a supernatural gust of wind.

I was also heading for Guilin that day. "Maybe I'll catch up with you," I told him, not really believing it possible. I paid for breakfast and hoisted my pack.

Suddenly my name was echoing in the street. There was Jack, hanging off the bus as it passed by the hotel. "Get on, quick!" he shouted. "It's the express bus!" I climbed aboard, thinking how useful it was to know Jack. He pulled himself into the bus and ran to the rear, still dangling several pieces of luggage. The bus

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