

lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to lonelyplanet.com/hotels and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

- Aberdeen Lodge (p205)
- Four Seasons (p204)
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- Isaacs Hostel (p208)
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- Shelbourne (p198)
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SLEEPING

Dublin's a pricey city to bed down in, easily the equal of any of Europe's most popular destinations. The other bit of bad news is that until you reach the upper price brackets, you're not always getting great value for money. The tourist boom also means that in high season – from around May to September – getting the room you want, at a reasonable price, can be a challenge. Always book ahead unless you're happy to stay out in 'the sticks' and grapple with a two-hour traffic-choked journey into town.

That's the bad news. The good news is that the city's popularity, coupled with the country's overall prosperity, has seen the overall landscape of accommodation improve and diversify dramatically over the last few years. There are now hotels that can compete with the world's best, while a host of others have cottoned on to the fact that the contemporary traveller doesn't think worn sheets are part of the charm and that grapefruit isn't some kind of exotic fruit that has no place at the breakfast buffet. Those that haven't just don't get a mention, least of all in these pages. As ever, we've only selected what we consider the best options in each category for your delectation.

So where to stay? If you're only in Dublin for the weekend, you'll want to be in the city centre or a short stroll away. The prices are higher, but pay the money. Believe us, it's worth it. Besides the obvious advantage of being central, you will avoid the potential nightmare of transport to and from the suburbs. The construction of the Luas tram line has made some suburbs far more accessible, but public transport more or less disappears shortly after midnight, with the exception of hourly night buses packed full of drunken youngsters (an experience that can often be a cutting-edge anthropological experiment). Get a taxi, you'll think, and we say good luck: there's you and thousands of others all queuing up in the wee hours for the same thing. Still, some of our favourite properties – the ones with all the charm and character – are just outside the city centre in the outlying suburbs south of the Grand Canal, so you may have to rely on some kind of motorised transport if you can't handle the 20- to 30-minute walk.

So, what exactly is available in this fair city?

ACCOMMODATION STYLES

Top-end and deluxe hotels fall into two categories – period Georgian elegance and cool, minimalist chic. No matter what the décor, you can expect luxurious surrounds, king-size beds, satellite TV, in-room DVDs, full room service, broadband or wi-fi and discreet, professional pampering. While the luxury of the best places is undeniable, their inevitable affiliation to the world's most celebrated hotel chains has introduced the whiff of corporate homogeneity into the carefully ventilated air.

Dublin's midrange accommodation is more of a mixed bag, ranging from no-nonsense but soulless chains to small B&Bs in old Georgian town houses. These days, hotel connoisseurs the world over have discovered the more intimate, but equally luxurious, boutique hotel, where the personal touch is maintained through less rooms, each of which is given lavish attention. Dublin's town houses and guest-houses – usually beautiful Georgian homes converted into lodgings – are this city's ver-

sion of the boutique hotel, and there are some truly outstanding ones to choose from.

These are beautifully decked out and extremely comfortable, while at the lower end, rooms are simple, a little worn and often rather overbearingly decorated. Here you can look forward to kitsch knick-knacks, chintzy curtains, lace doilies and clashing floral fabrics so loud they'll burn your retinas. Breakfast can range from home-baked breads, fruit and farmhouse cheeses to a traditional, fat-laden fry-up.

Budget options are few and far between in a city that has undergone a dramatic tourist revolution and if you want to stay anywhere close to the city centre you'll have to settle for a hostel. Thankfully, most of these maintain a pretty high standard of hygiene and comfort. Many offer various sleeping arrangements, from a bed in a large dorm to a four-bed room or a double. There are plenty to choose from, but they tend to fill up very quickly and stay full.

Groups, families or those on extended stays may prefer to do their own thing so you'll also find a list of central self-catering apartments (p199).

CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT TIMES

Check-out at most establishments is noon, but some of the smaller guesthouses and B&Bs require that you check out a little earlier, usually around 11am. Check-in times are usually between noon and 2pm.

ROOM RATES

Hardly surprising, but the closer to the centre you stay, the more you'll pay – and in Dublin we're talking as much as the most expensive cities in Europe. With prices, it's not just quality that counts, but position. For instance, a large-roomed comfortable B&B in the north-side suburbs may cost you as little as €45 per person, while the owners of a small, mediocre guesthouse within walking distance of Stephen's Green won't blink when asking €70 for the box room. A quality guesthouse or midrange hotel can cost anything from €90 to €200, while the city's top accommodation places don't get interested for less than €200. At the other end of the scale there's the ubiquitous hostel, the bedrock of cheap accommodation: their standards have uniformly gone up, but so have their prices and a bed will cost anything from €13 to as much as €30.

Most budget to midrange places charge low and high season rates, and prices are bumped up during holidays, festivals or sporting events. And now for the good news. Many hotels have a weekend or B&B rate that can save you as much as 40% on the rack rate; others offer similar discounts for midweek stays. At top-end hotels, check what discounts are available on the published rack rates by phoning or checking their website; you'll be surprised how much even the poshest of places will stoop for custom in low season so it's always worth asking.

BOOKINGS

Finding a bed is pretty tough in any price range, especially between April and September. If you can make a reservation, it will make life easier. If you arrive without accommodation, staff at Dublin Tourism's walk-in booking offices (see p243) will find you a room for €4 plus a 10% deposit. Sometimes this may require a great deal of phoning around so it can be money well spent.

If you want to book a hotel from elsewhere in Ireland or abroad, the easiest way is to go through Gulliver Info Res, Dublin Tourism's

ROOM RATES

The categories used in this chapter indicate the cost per night of a standard double room in high season.

€€€	over €200
€€	€90-200
€	under €90

computerised reservations service, via their website www.visitdublin.com or book directly yourself from the accommodation's own website. See p243 for a list of Dublin Tourism offices and Gulliver contact numbers.

There are also great savings if you book online (see the boxed text, below). These rates are generally available year-round, but are tougher to find during high season. Be sure to book ahead and ask for a pre-booking rate.

LONGER-TERM RENTALS

Finding long-term accommodation in Dublin is difficult for Dubliners, never mind visitors from abroad. Gulliver Ireland's [Reservation Service](http://www.gulliver.ie) (☎ 1800 668 668; www.gulliver.ie) specialises in reserving accommodation. However, while it can find places for up to six months, or even a year, it charges a non-refundable deposit of 10% of the total price.

There are several letting agencies in Dublin. [Abbott & Matthews Letting & Management](http://www.abbottmatthews.com) (Map pp66–7; ☎ 679 2434; www.abbottmatthews.com; 40 Dame St) specialises in long- and short-term leases of apartments and houses, furnished or unfurnished. One-bedroom apartments rent for between €800 and €1500 per month. [Home Locators](http://www.homelocators.ie) (Map pp66–7; ☎ 679 5233; www.homelocators.ie;

BOOKING SERVICES

Advance Internet bookings are your best bet for deals on accommodation. These are just a handful of services that will get you a room at a competitive rate.

[All Dublin Hotels](http://www.all-dublin-hotels.com) (www.all-dublin-hotels.com)

[Dublin City Centre Hotels](http://dublin.city-centre-hotels.com) (<http://dublin.city-centre-hotels.com>)

[Dublin Hotels](http://www.dublinhotels.com) (www.dublinhotels.com)

[Dublin Tourism](http://www.visitdublin.com) (www.visitdublin.com)

[Go Ireland](http://www.goireland.com) (www.goireland.com)

[Hostel Dublin](http://www.hosteldublin.com) (www.hosteldublin.com)

[Under 99](http://www.under99.com) (www.under99.com)

35 Dawson St) has a wide selection of properties on its books; it charges a €10 registration fee and then helps you locate suitable accommodation.

A few British newspapers, notably the *Daily Telegraph*, carry advertisements for long-term rentals in Dublin. Websites such as www.daft.ie are well worth checking too.

GRAFTON STREET & AROUND

Grafton St itself has only one hotel – one of the city's best – but you'll find a host of choices in the area surrounding it. Not surprisingly, being so close to the choicest street in town comes at a premium, but the competition for business is fierce, which ensures that quality is top rate.

WESTBURY HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€€**
☎ 679 1122; www.jurysdoyle.com; Grafton St; s/d/ste from €210/245/750; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺 📺

Visiting celebs looking for some quiet time have long favoured the Westbury's elegant suites, where they can watch TV from the Jacuzzi before retiring to a four-poster bed. Mere mortals tend to make do with the standard rooms, which are comfortable enough but lack the sophisticated grandeur promised by the luxurious public spaces – which are a great spot for an afternoon drink.

SHELBOURNE [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€€**
☎ 676 6471; www.marriott.co.uk; 27 St Stephen's Green; r from €255; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺 📺

Two years, one renovation and many millions later, an old friend sorely missed has returned and the city's most iconic hotel is once again the best address in town, as it has been since it was founded in 1824. If the sumptuous elegance of the grandly restored public spaces and carefully re-designed rooms weren't enough, then perhaps it will be the thought that you're bedding down where the Irish Constitution was drafted in 1921 and about which Elizabeth Bowen wrote her novel *The Hotel*. They've added a new restaurant and oyster bar, but afternoon tea in the refurbished Lord Mayor's Lounge remains one of the best experiences in town.

BROWNE'S TOWNHOUSE [Map pp66–7](#) **Boutique Hotel €€€**
☎ 638 3939; www.brownesdublin.com; 22 St Stephen's Green; s/d from €195/250; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺

This exquisite Georgian home is a slice of country house living in the middle of the city. The elegant rustic theme is pursued throughout; each of the rooms has a four-poster bed and stylish antique furniture. The fabulous Thomas Leighton Suite is best of the lot, successfully recreating the kind of style and plush comfort enjoyed by the 18th-century's rich and powerful – updated to suit the needs of the 21st-century equivalent.

HILTON [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€€**
☎ 402 9988; www.hilton.com; Charlemont Pl; r €240; 🚗 Charlemont; 📺 📺 📺 📺

What is it about hotels that assume that just because you're here on business you couldn't care less about style, décor or the basics of good taste? The Hilton group's Dublin offering is comfortable, convenient – right on the Grand Canal by a Luas stop – and corporate...but about as pretty as a photocopier. You'll sleep just fine here, but that's about it. We expected more.

BROOKS HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€€**
☎ 670 4000; www.sinnothotels.com; 59–62 Drury St; s/d from €190/240; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺

About 120m west of Grafton St, this small, plush place has an emphasis on familial, friendly service. The décor is nouveau classic with high-veneer-panelled walls, decorative bookcases and old-fashioned sofas, while bedrooms are extremely comfortable and come fitted out in subtly coloured furnishings. The clincher for us though is the king- and superking-size beds in all rooms, complete with...a pillow menu. Go figure. The intimate Jasmine bar and on-site cinema are popular with media industry schmoozers.

FITZWILLIAM HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€€**
☎ 478 7000; www.fitzwilliam-hotel.com; St Stephen's Green; r from €200; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺 📺

You couldn't pick a more prestigious spot on the Dublin Monopoly board than this minimalist Terence Conrad–designed number overlooking the Green. Ask for a corner room on the 5th floor (502 or 508)

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Self-catering apartments are a good option for visitors staying a few days, for groups of friends, or families with kids. Apartments range from one-room studios to two-bed flats with lounge areas, and include bathrooms and kitchenettes. There are some good, central places:

Clarion Stephen's Hall ([Map pp78–9](#); ☎ 638 1111; www.premgroup.com; 14–17 Lower Leeson St; s/d €165/310; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺) Deluxe studios and suites, with in-room safe, fax, modem facilities and CD players.

Latchfords ([Map pp78–9](#); ☎ 676 0784; www.latchfords.ie; 99–100 Lower Baginbally St; per week €575–860; 🚗 all cross-city) Studios and two-bedroom flats in a Georgian town house.

Home From Home Apartments ([Map pp78–9](#); ☎ 678 1100; www.yourhomefromhome.com; The Moorings, Fitzwilliam Quay; per night/week from €220/660) Deluxe one- to three-bedroom apartments in the southside city centre.

Oliver St John Gogarty's Penthouse Apartments ([Map p85](#); ☎ 671 1822; www.gogarty.ie; 18–21 Anglesea St; weekend €600; 🚗 all cross-city) Perched high atop the pub of the same name, these one- to three-bedroom places have views of Temple Bar.

with balmy balcony: that is, if you're not living it large in the new €3200-a-night penthouse with personal trainer/shopper/chef thrown in. The hotel is also home to one of the city's best restaurants, **Thornton's** (p145).

RADISSON SAS ROYAL HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€–€€€**

☎ 898 2900; www.royal.dublin.radissonsas.com; Golden Lane; r Sun–Thu €159–239, Fri–Sat €194–274; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺 📺

The stunning new Dublin flagship of this well-respected Scandinavian group is an excellent example of how sleek lines and muted colours can combine beautifully with luxury to ensure a memorable night's stay. From the hugely impressive public areas (the bar alone is worth the visit) to the sophisticated bedrooms – each with flat-screen digital TVs embedded in the wall to go along with all the other little touches – this is bound to be one of the most popular options for the business traveller. There's free wi-fi throughout the building.

STEPHEN'S GREEN HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Hotel €€**

☎ 607 3600; www.ocalaghanhotels.com; St Stephen's Green; r €200; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺 📺

Past the glass-fronted lobby are 75 thoroughly modern rooms that make full use of the visual impact of primary colours, most notably red and blue. This is a business hotel *par excellence*; everything here is what you'd expect from a top international hotel (including a gym and a business centre), but what you won't find elsewhere is the marvellous view of St Stephen's Green

below. There are extraordinary online deals available.

LA STAMPA HOTEL [Map pp66–7](#) **Boutique Hotel €€**
☎ 677 4444; www.lastampa.ie; 35 Dawson St; r weekday/weekend €160/200; 🚗 all cross-city; 📺 📺 📺

La Stampa is an atmospheric little hotel on trendy Dawson St with 29 Asian-influenced white rooms with Oriental rattan furniture and exotic velvet throws. They've just added an Ayurvedic spa, **Mandala** (p188), but to fully benefit from your restorative treatments, ask for a top-floor bedroom away from the revelling at SamSara bar below.

TRINITY LODGE [Map pp66–7](#) **Guesthouse €€**
☎ 617 0900; www.trinitylodge.com; 12 South Frederick St; s/d from €140/180; 🚗 St Stephen's Green

Martin Sheen's grin greets you on entering this cosy, award-winning guesthouse. Not that he's ditched movies for hospitality – he enjoyed his stay (and full Irish breakfast presumably) at the classically refurbished Georgian pad so much that he let them take his mugshot. Room 2 has a lovely bay window.

HARRINGTON HALL [Map pp66–7](#) **Guesthouse €€**
☎ 475 3497; www.harringtonhall.com; 69–70 Harcourt St; s/d €134/173; 🚗 Harcourt; 📺 📺 📺 📺

Want to fluff up the pillows in the home of a former Lord Mayor of Dublin? The traditional Georgian style of Timothy Charles Harrington's home – he wore the gold chain from 1901 to 1903 – has thankfully

been retained and this smart guesthouse stands out for its understated elegance. The 1st- and 2nd-floor rooms have their original fireplaces and ornamental ceilings.

MERCER HOTEL Map pp66–7 Hotel €€

☎ 478 2179; www.mercerhotel.ie; Lower Mercer St; s/d from €99/160; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺
Not a stone's throw from Grafton St, a fairly plain frontage hides a pretty decent hotel, with largish rooms dressed in antiques, giving the whole place an elegant, classical look. There are a dizzying array of room deals available; the off-peak rates are sensational.

CAMDEN COURT HOTEL

Map pp66–7 Hotel €€

☎ 475 9666; www.camdencourthotel.com; Camden St; s/d from €110/145; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📠 📧

Big and bland ain't such a bad thing this close to St Stephen's Green, especially if the mainstay of your clientele is the business crowd. They like the standardised rooms but love the amenities, which include a 16m pool, health club (with Jacuzzi, sauna and steam room) and a fully equipped gym.

STAUNTON'S ON THE GREEN

Map pp66–7 Guesthouse €€

☎ 478 2300; www.stauntonsonthegreen.ie; 83 St Stephen's Green; s/d from €88/140; 📍 all cross-city
Bargains and a St Stephen's Green address are mutually exclusive, so surely there must be a catch to this handsome Georgian house two doors down from the Department of Foreign Affairs smack in the middle of the most expensive spot in town? There isn't really, not unless the worn décor reminiscent of another decade really bothers you. The place is clean, the staff are friendly and professional, and the front-facing rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Green. Any closer and you're sleeping with the Lord Mayor.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Finding reasonable accommodation for a young family can be difficult in Dublin. Your best bet is a larger chain hotel (where a flat room rate usually applies), a serviced apartment, or a hostel where you can house the whole family in one room, usually with en suite. Almost all deluxe and top-end hotels offer 24-hour babysitting services and extra beds or cots.

CENTRAL HOTEL Map pp66–7 Hotel €€

☎ 679 7302; www.centralhotel.ie; 1-5 Exchequer St; s/d from €100/135; 📍 all cross-city; 📞
The rooms are a modern – if miniaturised – version of Edwardian luxury. Heavy velvet curtains and custom-made Irish furnishings (including beds with draped backboards) fit a little too snugly into the space afforded them, but they lend a touch of class. Note that street-facing rooms can get a little noisy. The wonderful **Library Bar**, all leather armchairs and roaring fireplaces, is also one of the finest spots for an afternoon drink in the whole city. Location-wise, the name says it all.

GRAFTON HOUSE Map pp66–7 Guesthouse €€

☎ 679 2041; www.graftonguesthouse.com; 26-27 South Great George's St; s/d from €60/120; 📍 all cross-city; 📞

This slightly off-beat guesthouse in a Gothic-style building gets the nod in all three key categories: location, price and style. Just next to George's St Arcade, the Grafton offers the traditional friendly features of a B&B (including a terrific breakfast), coupled with a funky design – check out the psychedelic wallpaper. Hard to beat at this price.

GRAFTON CAPITAL HOTEL

Map pp66–7 Hotel €€

☎ 475 0888; www.capital-hotels.com; Lower Stephen's St; r from €115; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📠 📧

It's hardly recognisable as such today, but this centrally located hotel just off Grafton St is actually a couple of converted Georgian town houses. Its 75 modern rooms are designed along the lines of function before form, which makes them perfect for the weekend visitor who wants to bed down somewhere central and still keep some credit-card space for a good night out. Breakfast is included.

TRINITY COLLEGE

Map pp66–7 Campus Residence €€

☎ 608 1177; www.tcd.ie; Accommodations Office, Trinity College; s/d from €37/70; 📞 mid-Jun–Sep; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📠 📧

The closest thing to living like a student at this stunningly beautiful university is crashing in their rooms when they're on holidays. The location is second-to-none, and the rooms are large and extremely comfortable. Rooms and two-bed apartments in

the newer block have their own bathrooms; the others in the older (and more beautiful) blocks share facilities, though there are private sinks. Breakfast is included.

AVALON HOUSE Map pp66–7 Hostel €

☎ 475 0001; www.avalon-house.ie; 55 Aungier St; 📍 all cross-city; dm/s/d €18/32/64

Before there was tourism, this large, listed Victorian building catered to the thin trickle of adventurers who landed in Dublin. They flood in now, and Avalon House is one of the city's most popular hostels, a welcoming house with pine floors, high ceilings and large, open fireplaces that create the ambience for a good spot of meet-the-backpacker lounging. Some of the cleverly designed rooms have mezzanine levels, which are great for families. Book well in advance.

MERCER COURT CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

Map pp66–7 Campus Residence €

☎ 478 0328; www.mercercourt.ie; Lower Mercer St; r from €42; 📞 end Jun–end Sep only; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺

Owned and run by the Royal College of Surgeons, this is the most luxurious student-accommodation option in the city. Cheaper than Trinity, but just as central, it's close to Grafton St and St Stephen's Green. The rooms are modern and up to hotel standard.

MERRION SQUARE & AROUND

It's the most sought-after real estate in town, so it's hardly surprising that it's home to the lion's share of the city's top hotels. But what price to sleep amid Dublin's Georgian heritage, within a gentle stroll of the best restaurants, bars and attractions the city has to offer? You'll pay upwards of €130 for even a basic room round these parts, but there are some truly outstanding hotels to make your expense worthwhile.

MERRION Map pp78–9 Hotel €€€

☎ 603 0600; www.merrionhotel.com; Upper Merrion St; r from €470; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📠 📧

This resplendent five-star hotel, in a terrace of beautifully restored Georgian town houses, opened in 1988 but looks like it's been around a lot longer. Try to get a room

top picks

COMFIEST PILLOWS

Our favourite pillows to rest our weary heads on are in...

- Brooks Hotel (p198)
- Merrion (left)
- Aberdeen Lodge (p205)
- Morrison Hotel (p206)
- Westin Dublin (p203)

in the old house (with the largest private art collection in the city), rather than the newer wing, to sample its truly elegant comforts. Located opposite government buildings, its marble corridors are patronised by politicians, visiting dignitaries and the odd celeb. Even if you don't stay, come for the superb afternoon tea (€32), with endless cups of tea served out of silver pots by a raging fire.

NUMBER 31 Map pp78–9 Boutique Hotel €€€

☎ 676 5011; www.number31.ie; 31 Leeson Cl; s/d/tr €200/320/480; 📍 11, 11a, 13b, 46, 58, 58c; 📞

Probably the city's most distinctive property, this is the former home of modernist architect Sam Stephenson (see p50), who created here a stunning homage to the style and cool of the 1960s: cue the theme music to *Austin Powers*. As you enter this magnificent home, only five minutes' walk from St Stephen's Green, with its sunken sitting room, leather sofas, mirrored bar, Perspex lamps and ceiling-to-floor windows, you are enveloped in an oasis of stylish calm. Its 21 bedrooms are split between the retro coach house, with its fancy rooms, and the more gracious Georgian house, through the garden, where rooms are individually furnished with tasteful French antiques and big comfortable beds. Gourmet breakfasts with kippers, homemade breads and granola are served in the conservatory. Yeah, baby!

QUALITY HOTEL Map pp78–9 Hotel €€

☎ 643 9500; www.qualityhotel dublin.com; Cardiff Lane; r €109-359; 📍 1,2 or 3; 📞 📺 📠 📧

It's a little bit removed from the action in the middle of the yet-to-be-hip waterfront development area, but the name does not lie: this

top picks

HOTEL BARS

These are our favourite hotels to hole up in with a drink:

- **Radisson SAS Royal Hotel (p199)** Bangkok-style bar.
- **Merrion (p201)** Best afternoon tea.
- **Shelbourne (p198)** Drink like a lord.
- **Four Seasons (p204)** Ice, baby, ice.
- **Westbury Hotel (p198)** I recognise him/her/them!

is one of the best midrange options in the city. The rooms are large and extremely comfortable, but the real appeal is the amenities: two restaurants, a top-class fitness centre complete with sauna and a 22m swimming pool, the largest hotel pool in town.

LONGFIELD'S Map pp78-9 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 676 1367; www.longfields.ie; 9-10 Lower Fitzwilliam St; s/d €125/195; ☎ 11, 11a, 13b, 46, 58 or 58c; ♿ ♿

This 26-room hotel, between Merrion and Fitzwilliam Sqs, is a little slice of Georgian heaven. It feels more like a private home than a commercial property, as each room is carefully decorated with period antiques, beautiful fabrics and elegant fittings. The rooms on the lower floors are bigger than the ones above, and some have four-poster or half-tester beds.

CONRAD DUBLIN Map pp78-9 Hotel €€

☎ 602 8900; www.conradhotels.com; Earlsfort Tce; r from €185; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿ ♿

Kudos to the Conrad: Dublin's first truly international business hotel has worked hard to keep up with the ever-growing needs of its primary clientele, folks in suits. The king-size rooms have every gizmo and gadget your computer, PDA or mobile phone might ever need, while the state-of-the-art fitness centre should take good care of the rest of you. The hotel offers a dizzying array of special discount rates – at the last minute, room prices are often slashed by half – for both business and leisure travellers.

DAVENPORT HOTEL Map pp78-9 Hotel €€

☎ 607 3500; www.ocalaghanhotels.com; Merrion Sq; r from €180; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿

Certain travel writers may fantasise that this fine and elegant hotel somehow belongs in the family, but it just ain't so: it is located in Merrion Hall, which was built in 1863 for the religious Plymouth Brethren. It is still a popular spot for meetings, only of a more commercial kind, and its 114 rooms are tailored to suit the needs of the business visitor (voicemail, ISDN line, wi-fi and European and American sockets are all standard). Leisure travellers also like the large rooms, which come with orthopaedic beds. There's a well-equipped workout room downstairs.

BUSWELL'S HOTEL Map pp78-9 Hotel €€

☎ 614 6500; www.quinnhotels.com; 23-27 Molesworth St; r from €130; ♿ St Stephen's Green; ♿ ♿ ♿

In business since 1882, this elegant hotel, made up of five Georgian town houses, is a Dublin institution. Like the **Shelbourne (p198)**, it has a long association with politicians, who wander across the road from Dáil Éireann to wet their beaks at the hotel bar. The 69 bedrooms have all been given the once-over, but the owners have thankfully resisted the temptation to contemporise the furnishings and have left its Georgian charm more or less intact.

O'NEILL'S TOWNHOUSE Map pp78-9 Pub €€

☎ 671 4074; www.oneillsdublin.com; 36-37 Pearse St; s/d €65/130; ♿ all cross-city

There's only one thing better than living above a pub: living in one. The pub in question – where you'll have to settle for the first option – is O'Neill's, a Victorian beauty that is a long-time favourite with the students of Trinity College next door. The eight rooms above the pub are snug and decorated without too much imagination, but they're warm and cosy. Most importantly, the owners are friendly and very helpful. It's central and convenient.

GEORGIAN HOTEL Map pp78-9 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 661 8832; www.georgianhotel.ie; 18-22 Lower Baggot St; s/d from €80/99; ♿ St Stephen's Green; ♿ ♿

Ideally located just a few steps from St Stephen's Green, this boutique hotel, in a 200-year-old Georgian building, has successfully combined the intimacy of a traditional Dublin guesthouse with the meticulous luxury of a high-end hotel. Breakfast costs an extra €15.

TEMPLE BAR

If you're here for a weekend of wild abandon and can't fathom anything more than a quick stumble into bed, then Temple Bar's choice of hotels and hostels will suit you perfectly. Generally speaking the rooms are small, the prices large and you should be able to handle the late-night symphonies of die-hard revellers.

CLARENCE HOTEL Map p85 Hotel €€€

☎ 407 0800; www.thclarencel.ie; 6-8 Wellington Quay; r €350, ste €640-2400; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿ ♿

If you were hoping to find TV sets cascading from windows, groupie-clad tour buses or any other evidence of the Clarence's rock star associations, you'll be sorely disappointed as Bono and Edge's discreet little bothole is anything but that – although we suspect that the penthouse's rooftop hot tub has seen its fair share of frolics. The genteel atmosphere is more 1930s gentleman's club with 50-odd lavish-albeit-smallish rooms, decorated with simple elegant furnishings and original artwork by their friend (and former member of Irish cult band the Virgin Prunes) Guggi.

IRISH LANDMARK TRUST

Map p85 Self-Catering €€€

☎ 670 4733; www.irishlandmark.com; 25 Eustace St; 1 night €403, weekend €807, weekly €1925; ♿ all cross-city

If you're travelling in a group, instead of renting a bunch of doubles in a hotel that you'll barely remember a week after you've gone home, why not go for this fabulous 18th-century heritage house, gloriously restored to the highest standard by the Irish Landmark Trust charity? You'll have this unique house all to yourselves. It sleeps up to seven in its double, twin and triple bedrooms. Furnished with tasteful antiques, authentic furniture and fittings (including a grand piano in the drawing room), this kind of period rental accommodation is something really unique.

WESTIN DUBLIN Map p85 Hotel €€€

☎ 645 1000; www.westin.com; Westmoreland St; r from €360; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿

Formerly a grand branch of the Allied Irish Bank, this fine old building was gutted and reborn as a stylish upmarket hotel. The rooms, many of which overlook a beautiful

atrium, are decorated in elegant mahogany and soft colours that are reminiscent of the USA's finest. You will sleep on 10 layers of the Westin's own trademark Heavenly Bed, which is damn comfortable indeed. The hotel's most elegant room is the former banking hall, complete with gold leaf plasterwork on the ceiling, now used for banquets. Breakfast will set you back €28.

MORGAN HOTEL Map p85 Boutique Hotel €€€

☎ 679 3939; www.themorgan.com; 10 Fleet St; r €140-400; ♿ all cross-city; ♿

Designer cool can often be designer cold and the hypertrendy Morgan falls on the right side of the line, but only just. It's the kind of place Victoria Beckham would have liked – before she made the real cash. The facilities are top rate, and all rooms come equipped with satellite TV, video, stereo and minibar. Aromatherapy treatments and massages are extra, as is breakfast (€20).

PARAMOUNT HOTEL Map p85 Hotel €€€

☎ 417 9900; www.paramounthotel.ie; cnr Parliament & Essex Sts; s/d €150/250; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿

Behind the Victorian façade, the lobby is a faithful re-creation of a 1930s hotel, complete with dark-wood floors, deep-red leather Chesterfield couches and heavy velvet drapes. The 70-odd rooms don't quite bring *The Maltese Falcon* to mind, but they're handsomely furnished and very comfortable. Downstairs is the **Turk's Head (p169)**, one of the area's most popular bars. Highly recommended.

ELIZA LODGE Map p85 Guesthouse €€

☎ 671 8044; www.dublinlodge.com; 23-24 Wellington Quay; s/d/ste from €76/130/200; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿

It's priced like a hotel, looks like a hotel, but it's still a guesthouse. The 18 rooms are comfortable, spacious and – due to its position right over the Millennium Bridge – come with great views of the Liffey. The penthouses even have Jacuzzis.

ASTON HOTEL Map p85 Hotel €€

☎ 677 9300; www.aston-hotel.com; 7-9 Aston Quay; s/d from €90/120; ♿ all cross-city; ♿ ♿ ♿

This small, friendly hotel makes big use of pine furniture and primary colours, which give the public spaces and rooms a fairly

that have been given top rating by Fáilte Ireland either. Every room is individually decorated with period furniture, which lends the place an air of genuine luxury. Ariel House beats almost any hotel.

SANDFORD TOWNHOUSE

Map p99 Guesthouse €

☎ 412 6880; 52 Sandford Rd, Ranelagh; s/d from €50/70; 📍 Ranelagh; 📞

The pleasant suburb of Ranelagh is one of the most desirable addresses in town, a self-contained village with decent pubs and some terrific restaurants. This elegant Victorian home, with three large rooms, is a terrific choice, made all the better by the presence of the nearby Luas, which makes getting in and out of town a cinch.

NORTH OF THE LIFFEY

It's a truism that you'll get more for your buck on the north side, but as the north inner city continues to get a facelift so its desirability has grown. The fancy hotels of yesteryear don't seem as out of place anymore and a number of excellent new hotels have made the area an interesting spot to bed down in again. East of O'Connell St is Gardiner St, where virtually every second building is a B&B. Once proudly unfussy and basic, they've had to up the game and introduce a better standard of comfort – although the further north you go the dodgier they get. Watch yourself around Upper Gardiner St and the area immediately around Connolly Station and Busáras, the central bus station.

GRESHAM HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 874 6881; www.gresham-hotels.com; Upper O'Connell St; r €200, ste €450-2500; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📺 📺

This landmark hotel shed its traditional granny's parlour look with a major overhaul some years ago. Despite its brighter, smarter, modern appearance and a fabulous open-plan foyer, its loyal clientele – elderly groups on shopping breaks to the capital and well-heeled Americans – has stuck firmly. Rooms are spacious and well serviced, though the décor is a little brash.

MORRISON HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 887 2400; www.morrisonhotel.ie; Lower Ormond Quay; r €285-580, ste €1400; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 Luas Red Line to Jervis; 📞 📺 📺

The Morrison recently upped the ante in the Hip Hotel stakes with the addition of 48 new bedrooms in the adjoining former printworks. Fashion designer John Rocha's loosely Oriental style is still evident in the zen-like furnishings but extras like Apple Mac plasma screens, iPod docking stations and Aveda goodies clinch it for us. For a few quid extra, nab a far superior studio den in the new wing with balcony and enough space to throw a party.

CLARION HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 433 8800; www.clarionhotelifsc.com; Custom House Quay; r €265, ste €395-1000; 📍 Connolly Station; 📞 📺 📺 📺

This swanky business hotel in the heart of the Irish Financial Services Centre has beautiful rooms decorated in contemporary light oak furnishings and a blue-and-taupe colour scheme that is supposed to relax the mind after a long day of meetings. We prefer to relax with a swim in the Sanovitae health club downstairs.

LYNHAM'S HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 888 0886; www.lynhams-hotel.com; 63-64 O'Connell St; s/d €100/170; 📍 all cross-city

Bang in the middle of O'Connell St, beside the General Post Office, this smart, friendly little hotel is a gem. All 42 rooms are nicely furnished with country pine furniture and tasteful fabrics. Room No 41 is a lovely triple with an additional camp bed, handy for groups who want to share. Midweek rates are cheaper.

COMFORT INN SMITHFIELD

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 485 0900; www.comfortinndublinicity.com; Smithfield Village; r €130-150; 📍 Luas Red Line to Smithfield

This functionally modern hotel with big bedrooms and plenty of earth tones to soften the contemporary edges is your best bet in this part of town. We love the floor-to-ceiling windows: great for checking out what's going on below in the square.

TOWNHOUSE

Map pp102–3 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 878 8808; www.townhouseofdublin.com; 47-48 Lower Gardiner St; s/d/tr €70/115/132; 📍 Connolly Station

The ghostly writing of Irish-Japanese author Lafcadio Hearn may have influenced the Gothic-style interior of his

GAY STAY

Most of the city's hotels wouldn't bat an eyelid if same-sex couples checked in, but the same can't be said of many of the city's B&Bs. Tongues would wag, however, if a mixed-gender couple checked into **Frankies Guesthouse** (Map pp66–7; ☎ 478 3087; www.frankiesguesthouse.com; 8 Camden Pl; r from €80), an old mews house with 12 homey rooms complete with cable TV, a full Irish breakfast and a plant-filled roof terrace.

former home. A dark walled, gilt-framed foyer with jingling chandelier leads into 82 individually designed, comfy rooms. Some rooms in the new wing at the back are larger with balconies overlooking the small Japanese garden. It shares a dining room with the **Globetrotters Tourist Hostel** (p208) next door.

ACADEMY HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 878 0666; www.academyhotel.ie; Findlater Pl; r from €130; 📍 all cross-city; 📞 📺 📺

Recently acquired by the Best Western group and thoroughly upgraded to solidly three-star level, the Academy has well-appointed rooms with light, modern furnishings that will afford you a comfortable if unmemorable night's sleep. The deluxe suites come with free wi-fi and flat-screen digital TVs. There's discounted parking at the covered car park next door.

WALTON'S HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 878 3131; www.waltons-hotel.ie; 2-5 North Frederick St; s/d from €80/120; 📍 36 or 36A; 📞 📺

Better known for their legendary musical instrument shop next door, the Walton family opened this friendly hotel in an effort to preserve the traditional Georgian heritage of the building. With the help of the **Castle Hotel** (right) they have done just that. This is an excellent choice with a superb location overlooking Findlater's Church and the Rotunda Hospital, and 43 clean, spacious rooms. Children under 12 stay for free.

BROWN'S HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 855 0034; www.dublin-hotel.net; 80-90 Lower Gardiner St; s/d €89/115; 📍 Connolly Station

A popular hotel along the strip, Brown's 22 rooms are a fairly comfortable bunch even

if they're a little shabby looking. They fill up quickly and there's usually a pretty lively atmosphere, although we could do without the noise from the hostel next door.

CASTLE HOTEL

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 874 6949; www.castle-hotel.ie; 3-4 Great Denmark St; s/d from €70/100; 📍 36 or 36A; 📞 📺

In business since 1809, the Castle Hotel may be slightly rough around the edges but it's one of the most pleasant hotels this side of the Liffey. The fabulous *palazzo*-style grand staircase leads to the 50-odd bedrooms, whose furnishings are traditional and a tad antiquated, but perfectly good throughout – check out the original Georgian corning around the high ceilings.

JURY'S INN PARNELL ST

Map pp102–3 Hotel €€

☎ 878 4900; www.jurysinns.com; Moore St Plaza, Parnell St; r from €99; 📍 36 or 36A; 📞 📺 📺

Jury's hotels are nothing if not reliable, and this edition of Ireland's most popular hotel chain is no exception. What do you care that the furnishings were once mass-produced and flat-packed and that the décor was created to be as utterly inoffensive to everything save good taste? The location is terrific.

CLIFDEN GUESTHOUSE

Map pp102–3 Guesthouse €€

☎ 874 6364; www.clifdenhouse.com; 32 Gardiner Pl; s/d from €50/90; 📍 36 or 36A; 📞

A great place to stay in the area, the Clifden is a very nicely refurbished Georgian house with 14 tastefully decorated rooms. They all come with bathroom, are immaculately clean and extremely comfortable. A nice touch is the free parking, even after you've checked out!

ABBEY COURT HOSTEL

Map pp102–3 Hostel €€

☎ 878 0700; www.abbey-court.com; 29 Bachelor's Walk; dm/d from €22/84; 📍 all cross-city

Spread over two buildings, this large, well-run hostel has 33 clean dorm beds with good storage. Its excellent facilities include a dining hall, conservatory and barbecue area. Doubles with bathroom are in the newer building where a light breakfast is provided in the adjacent café, **Juice** (p149). Not surprisingly, this is a popular option for travellers. Reservations are advised.

JACOB'S INN Map pp102–3 **Hostel €**
 ☎ 855 5660; www.isaacs.ie; 21–28 Talbot Pl; dm/d from €12/76; 🚶 Luas Red Line to Connolly; ♿ Sister hostel to Isaacs (below) around the corner, this clean and modern hostel offers spacious accommodation with private bathrooms and outstanding facilities, including some disabled-access rooms, a bureau de change, bike storage and a self-catering kitchen.

ANCHOR GUESTHOUSE Map pp102–3 **Guesthouse €**
 ☎ 878 6913; www.anchorguesthouse.com; 49 Lower Gardiner St; s/d from €55/75; 🚶 Connolly Station; 📞 ♿ Most B&Bs round these parts offer pretty much the same stuff: TV, half-decent shower, clean linen and tea- and coffee-making facilities. The Anchor does all of that, but it just has an elegance you won't find in many of the other B&Bs along this stretch. This lovely Georgian guesthouse, with its delicious wholesome breakfasts, comes highly recommended by readers. They're dead right.

MOUNT ECCLES COURT Map pp102–3 **Hostel €**
 ☎ 873 0826; www.eccleshostel.com; 42 North Great George's St; dm/d from €16/72; 📞 36 or 36A A Georgian classic on one of Dublin's most beautiful streets, this popular hostel has a host of dorms and doubles, all with private bathroom. Facilities include a full kitchen, two lounges and a bureau de change.

GLOBETROTTERS TOURIST HOSTEL Map pp102–3 **Hostel €**
 ☎ 878 8088; www.globetrottersdublin.com; 46–48 Lower Gardiner St; dm/d €22/64; 🚶 DART Connolly Station This is a really friendly place with 94 beds in a variety of dorms, all with bathrooms and under-bed storage. The funky décor is due to the fact that it shares the same artistic ethos (and dining room) as the **Townhouse** (p206) next door. There's a little patio garden to the rear for that elusive sunny day.

ISAACS HOSTEL Map pp102–3 **Hostel €**
 ☎ 855 6215; www.isaacs.ie; 2–5 Frenchman's Lane; dm/d from €14/62; 🚶 Luas Red Line to Connolly; ♿ The north-side's best hostel – hell, for atmosphere alone it's the best in town – is in a 200-year-old wine vault just around

the corner from the main bus station. With Summer barbecues, live music in the lounge, internet access and colourful dorms, this terrific place generates consistently good reviews from backpackers and other travellers. There's also a disabled-access room.

CHARLES STEWART Map pp102–3 **Guesthouse €**
 ☎ 878 0350; www.charlesstewart.ie; 5–6 Parnell Sq; s/d from €47/60; 📞 36 or 36A; 📞 Just north of O'Connell St, Oliver St John Gogarty's birthplace has been converted into the Charles Stewart (as in Parnell), a large and functional guesthouse with 76 clean and unfussy rooms. The ceilings are very high, but the bathrooms are small. Rooms in the extension to the rear are bigger and quieter.

BEYOND THE ROYAL CANAL

About 30 minutes' walk (3km, five minutes by bus) east of Upper O'Connell St, along Dorset St on the way to the airport, is the leafy suburb of Drumcondra (Map pp102–3), a popular area for B&Bs. Most of the houses here are late-Victorian or Edwardian, and are generally extremely well-kept and comfortable. As they're on the airport road, they tend to be full virtually throughout the year, so advance booking is definitely recommended.

JURY'S CROKE PARK HOTEL Map p118 **Hotel €€**
 ☎ 607 0000; www.jurys-dublin-hotels.com; Croke Park, Jones's Rd; r from €109; 📞 3, 11, 11A, 16, 16A or 123 from O'Connell St Ireland's most Irish hotel chain hit on a sure-fire winner when it opened a hotel at the most sacred cathedral of Gaelic sports (see p117). It makes perfect sense: as tens of thousands arrive in Dublin to support their country's efforts at Croke, the clever few hundred who booked in advance won't have far to go to sleep off their celebrations – or commiserations. If you're looking for full immersion into the joys of Gaelic sports, find out when a big game is on and book early.

TINODE HOUSE off Map p118 **B&B €**
 ☎ 837 2277; www.tinodehouse.com; 170 Upper Drumcondra Rd; s/d €55/80; 📞 11A, 11B, 36 or 36A; 📞 This comfortable Edwardian town house has four elegant bedrooms, all with bath-

rooms. A friendly welcome and excellent breakfast are part of the package.

GRIFFITH HOUSE off Map p118 **B&B €**
 ☎ 837 5030; www.griffithhouse.com; 125 Griffith Ave; s/d €50/80; 📞 41, 41B or 16A; 📞 Suburban elegance should never be underestimated, especially not if it comes in the shape of this handsome Victorian home with four elegant rooms, three of which are en suite. It's a simple, traditional place that puts the emphasis on a warm welcome, a good night's sleep and a filling breakfast.

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY (DCU) off Map p118 **Campus Residence €**
 ☎ 700 5736; www.summeraccommodation.dcu.ie; Larkfield Apartments, Campus Residences, Dublin City University, Glasnevin; r per person from €43; 📞 mid-Jun–mid-Sep; 📞 11, 11A, 11B, 13, 13A, 19 or 19A; 📞 This accommodation is proof that students slum it in relative luxury. The modern rooms have plenty of amenities at hand, including a kitchen, common room and a fully equipped health centre. DCU's Glasnevin campus is only 15 minutes by bus or car from the city centre.

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