

UNUSUAL LODGINGS

BY STEPHANIE CITRON



Shack-Up Inn, Clarksdale, Mississippi



Beckham Creek Cave, Parthenon, Arkansas

SHARECROPPER'S SHACK

Shack-Up Inn
Clarksdale, Mississippi

If picking and strumming bluegrass tunes on the porch of a restored sharecropper's shack in the Mississippi Delta sounds like paradise to you, this is your place. On-site are music workshops (for a fee) and a former cotton gin that now turns out moonshine. Each accommodation promises bathrooms, air conditioners, a bed, and not much else. Many American music legends grew up in shacks like these — minus the AC and plumbing — including Ike Turner, Buddy Guy, and B.B. King. Clarksdale is home to live music venues and museums chronicling the region's cultural past. From \$80, shackupinn.com.

stalactites and stalagmites protruding from the ceilings and floors will remind you. During the day, hike to waterfalls and scenic overlooks, or schedule a massage by gong. A two-night stay is required, and rates appear pricy at first glance, but not so much when you consider that multiple couples can share the cost of this spelunking sleepover nestled deep in Arkansas's bucolic Buffalo River Valley. From \$1,600, beckhamcave.com.

LIGHTHOUSE

Bordon Flats Lighthouse
Fall River, Massachusetts

Claiming to be one of only two offshore lighthouse towers in the U.S. offering an overnight encounter, this doubles as an educational program where participants experience the life of the lighthouse keepers who maintained the facility between 1881 and 1963. Be warned: This very authentic, off-grid, limited-solar-power, bring-your-own-food experience isn't a pampering B&B. Guests are boated once to the lighthouse and then back again at check-out — this isn't a come-and-go-as-you-please kind of place. Much like the lightkeeper's

GROTTO

Beckham Creek Cave
Parthenon, Arkansas

Located in the Ozark Mountain region, the caves have been opened up to accommodate a comfortable four-bedroom lodge, each with private bath. But it's still a cave, as the active waterfall in the living room and original

TRAIN CAR

Crowne Plaza Hotel
Indianapolis, Indiana

The downtown Crowne Plaza located inside Indy's still-operating (circa-1888) Union Station offers guest rooms inside a stationary 1920s Pullman train car that resides alongside active train tracks. Guests report that the experience resembles overnighting in

a sleeper car. From \$129, crowneplazaindydowntown.com.

ALSO CHECK OUT: West-coasters might want to try an overnight at a (stationary) lakeside caboose in California's Lake Country wine region: Featherbed Railroad. As the name implies, the amenities include lush goose down bedding. From \$175, featherbedrailroad.com.



Crowne Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana

CLARKSDALE TOURISM; COURTESY VISITINDY; COURTESY BECKHAM CREEK CAVE HOTEL

Nothing wrong with a Marriott or Hilton — with their cookie-cutter room design, there's a certain comfort in knowing exactly what you're going to get. But, if you're the kind of person who values experience as much as comfort, sometimes it's fun to try something different. Turns out, America is filled with unusual lodgings — lighthouses, teepees, train stations, igloos, and even a brewery-themed hotel with in-room beer taps. Each promises an evening of unique memories and one-of-a-kind adventure.

TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT

authentic daily existence back in the day, once there, there's not much to do beyond bird-watch and read before cooking your own dinner. Oh, and you need to not be spooked by ghosts, as the owners claim there are two friendly spirits residing on-premises. Plan ahead; dates for booking are released a year in advance and fill up quickly. From \$395, bordenflats.com. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** East Brother Light Station, Point Richmond, CA. From \$475, ebls.org.

INDIAN RESERVATION

The View Hotel Monument Valley, Utah

Owned and operated by the Navajo, this is the only hotel in the sacred Monumental Tribal Park. Each room offers a private balcony delivering stunning views of freeform sandstone rock formations (known as Mittens) and nighttime vistas of the starriest sky you will probably ever see. The property includes a restaurant, an authentic trading post, and hiking trails. From \$80, monumentvalleyview.com.



The View Hotel,
Monument Valley, Utah



Angad Arts Hotel,
St. Louis, Missouri



Shady Dell Vintage Trailer
Court, Bisbee, Arizona

LOCK-UP

Jailhouse Historic Inn Preston, Minnesota

Just for kicks, grab your band of best baddies and spend the night in the slammer. Constructed in 1869-70, this jailhouse has been resurrected into a slew of sleeping quarters for wannabe desperados. Overnight inmates can choose from 12 renovated, themed rooms, including the Cell Block Suite, the Drunk Tank room, the Detention Center, and the Sheriff's Quarters. Each lockup has a private bath and includes homemade hot breakfast. From \$89, jailhouseinn.com.

CLASSIC CAMPER

The Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Court Bisbee, Arizona

Residing in campgrounds established in 1927, these cozy, rehabbed vintage campers are tricked out to showcase the nostalgia of yesteryear (think black-and-white TVs, phonographs, and 45 rpm vinyls). The lodgings include mini-refrigerators, air conditioning and heaters, and a toilet and sink, but showers are in a shared facility. Meals can be had on-premises at Dot's Diner, an equally nostalgic spot serving homemade diner food. **NOTE:** This is an adults-only facility not open

to children under age 15. From \$85, shadydell.com.

TEEPEE

Wigwam Motel San Bernardino, California

At a glance, these Algonquin-style lodgings off California's kitschy Route 66 may appear cheesy, but honestly, that's part of the fun. A far cry from true primitive dwellings of Native Americans, these contain modern baths, air-conditioning, and Wi-Fi. Bring the kids, because nearby is an abundance of recreational lakes, ski resorts, and museums filled with the region's pop-culture history. From \$109, wigwammotel.com.

GALLERY

Angad Arts Hotel St. Louis, Missouri

Creativity is the theme here, so guests choose from an array of rooms uniquely painted to evoke a creative state of mind: freedom, rejuvenation, empowerment, or curiosity. The hotel also showcases a permanent art collection, visiting exhibitions, and

R.S. ORTEGA; SERGIO AND KELLY PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY ANGAD ARTS HOTEL



Float-Troy, City of Troy, Ohio

pop-up shows, in addition to performances and a restaurant with an imaginative menu. The bonus of being located in St. Louis's Grand Center Arts District invites days of exploring the city's 40 arts venues. From \$149, angadartshotel.com.

BREWERY

Brewdog Dog House Columbus, Ohio

Anyone with a hankering for an in-room beer tap or breakfast beer pairings will

enjoy these digs. Brewdog is a Scotland-based brewery that has expanded into the U.S., offering dog-friendly, suds-themed lodgings for devotees of craft beer. From \$190, brewdog.com/usa/locations/hotels.

FLOAT TRIP

Float-Troy City of Troy, Ohio

Awaiting you on Ohio's Miami River are inflated floating rafts covered by a tent topper and anchored into the riverbed. Each tent

accommodates four guests. Overnight rates include the kayaks or rafts needed to get you to your floating tent, life vests, and oars, so when you are ready for a change of scenery, you can paddle away. Owners advise that you bring plastic sealable bags for valuables, and wear only what you don't mind getting wet. More importantly, measure your beverage intake carefully because the nearest restrooms are in a public facility in a park onshore. From \$95, float-troy.com.

NIGHT LIGHTS

Igloo at Borealis Basecamp Fairbanks, Alaska

Surrounded by 100 acres of Alaskan wilderness, these geodesic fiberglass-roof igloos are ideal for viewing Alaska's magical nighttime cosmic lightshow — the famous aurora borealis. Inside each lodging are vital amenities, including a bathroom with showers and



Igloo at Borealis Basecamp,
Fairbanks, Alaska

COURTESY BOREALIS BASECAMP; CITY OF TROY; COURTESY WISCONSIN MARITIME MUSEUM

SPACE HOTEL

If your fantasy retreat is more out-of-this-world, mark your calendar for 2027, when Voyager Station (voyagerstation.com), the first space hotel, is being planned to float a cruise-ship-style lodging above planet Earth, promising very human creature comforts amidst other-worldly views.

luxé bed linens, and there's a restaurant on-premises. Daytime activities include a sauna, dog-sledding, snow-trekking, and helicopter flightseeing tours. Packages from \$980 for a two-night stay, borealisbasecamp.net.

SUBMARINE

USS Cobia, the Sub BnB Manitowoc, Wisconsin

This authentic World War II submarine is now a permanent exhibit at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. One of the largest class of subs of its era, it has been retrofitted to include 65 sleeping spaces. Amenities include cozy bedding, linens, toiletries, modern-day HVAC, and breakfast. The overnight rate includes up to five guests, or more for an additional fee. From \$500, wisconsinmaritime.org/programs-and-events/stay-on-the-sub.



USS Cobia, the Sub BnB,
Manitowoc, Wisconsin