

International Youth Hostel Association of China

The youth hostel concept originated in Germany in 1909. The idea was to help young people see more of the countryside outside of the cities in which they lived. The youth hostel concept is still very big in Europe and is growing around the world. Today a youth hostel is aimed at travelers of all ages. They normally consist of a common area, dormitory, private rooms, and kitchen. They are generally inexpensive and are a good option for the budget traveler and for those wishing to meeting new people. They tend to be more communal and relaxed than hotels. Hostelling International is the umbrella group of which the various national Youth Hostel Associations belong. China has within the last few years created its own YHA, fully sanctioned by the HI organization. The number of official YHA hostels in China has grown dramatically. European YHAs have traditionally been managed as charities, whereas YHA China has shifted to a definite commercial approach. Official Hostels have to meet certain quality standards. But there are many independent hostels that are of atleast equal standard. Official YHA hostels accept membership cards. These give the holder a discount, usually around 10%. The success of the YHA brand has led to new organizations copying their business model. Most notable in China is UTELS. Their website domain name (chinayha.com) is remarkably similar to the official YHA China website (yhachina.com). Throughout China there are fake hostels, illegally using the blue triangle logo. Official YHA China website: <http://www.yhachina.com/> Hostelling International <http://www.hihostels.com>