



Pól Ó Conghaile
 The Travel Expert

[@poloconghaile](#)

The A-Zzz of sleep tourism

From pillow sprays to spa rituals, more hotels are offering to supercharge your night's sleep

I travel a lot. I also find it difficult to sleep in hotels. First World problem. I know. But the disruption of different rooms, the absence of blackout curtains and smart soundproofing (and the presence of door-slamming neighbours and noisy elevators) often leaves me wide awake. And that's not even starting on laser-like red lights from TVs or smoke alarms, fluctuating room temperatures, or the psychedelic ceiling stare-downs of jet lag.

If I sleep well in a hotel, I remember it. That's why I'm not surprised to see sleep tourism on the rise.

"Sleep tourism helps people step away from daily stressors and rediscover the essential need for restful sleep," says Theresa Schnorbach of sleep and mattress company Emma. It plans to launch its own sleep holidays after conducting a survey that found 98pc of us consider good sleep essential to a holiday, but 4pc say the item we miss most is our own bed. Prioritising relaxation helps everything from wellbeing to cognitive function, says Schnorbach.

I don't need science (or a mattress company) to tell me that — my puffy eyes talk loudly enough. And bazillions of books on wellbeing and insomnia say I'm not alone.

Though 'sleep tourism' is a new buzz-phrase, it hasn't come out of the blue. Hotels had their pillow menus and super-duper scratchers (Westin famously sells its Heavenly Beds), but things are going up a gear. Dromoland Castle has introduced a director of sleep. Ryan Logue can advise on everything from sleep-aiding scents like lavender and chamomile to room temperatures, and the hotel's new spa

has developed a 'Sleep Well Smoothie' said to be "packed with nutrients to optimise sleep". The Co Clare five-star was named TripAdvisor's Best Hotel for Sleep in 2023.

Staying at The Regency in Belfast, I found tubes of cooling eye cream and pillow spray by my bed. In Switzerland, The Alpina Gstaad is addressing "one of the biggest health issues of our time" with new Sleep Suites, including climate-controlled beds. The Cadogan in London has worked with Harley Street hypnotherapist and sleep expert Mal-minder Gill on a "sleep-inducing" meditation for its app. Dublin's Shelbourne has a 'Ground Sleep Ritual' at its spa that combines gentle breathwork, hands-on rhythmical pressures and aromatherapy oils "to create a mindful moment in time customised just for you".

It's not just posh stays. Budget chain REZz promises "a really comfy bed" amid its industrial-style hotels in Cork and Dublin. Small rooms in Galway's The Snug have king-sized beds "for the amazing Zzzzzz's". Or what about checking into the Buddhist temple of Ishikawa in Nadera, Japan? "Sleep like a monk" surrounded by snow or cherry blossoms from €85? Don't mind if I do.

Hotels were created to provide sleep. In an exhausted world, however, offering to supercharge our shut-eye makes for a great new marketing wheeze, a clever way to catch attention, burnish the brand, create loyal customers and to sell sprays, scents, bathroom products and even mattresses. Although, most of the time, I'd happily settle for a decent bed and blackout blind.