



HAZARD ALERT: BED BUGS

TRAVELERS GUIDE TO DODGING BED BUGS



Sharing your vacation with uninvited guests and stowaways? Once the inhabitants of cheap hotels and hostels, bed bugs have moved up in the world. Now you'll find them in some of the swankiest hotels around the world, and they've become a big problem in major cities. Worse yet, they're showing up in planes, trains, buses, stores, offices, libraries, theaters and rental cars. In short, wherever you find lots of people, you're likely to find bed bugs. Squirming yet? Bed bugs aren't something you want to encounter on your trip — or bring back to infest your home. Here's what you can do to dodge the problem.



BEFORE YOU GO...

Pack light. Pack less and you'll have fewer bags and fewer items to worry about on your trip — or to clean up when you get home. Leave hard to clean items at home. If it can't be washed in hot water, go in the dryer for 20 minutes or withstand some serious heat or cold, think twice before you packing it.

Pack a flashlight. Bed bugs hide during the day and come out in the dark, so it helps to conduct an inspection with a flashlight instead of turning on the lights.

Pack some protection. Zipper top bags can come in handy on your trip. You can use them to isolate souvenirs or keep clothes clean, or in a pinch to help kill bed bugs. If you must have your pillow from home, consider buying a bed bug proof pillow protector.

Seal your bags. Believe it or not, there is a chance bed bugs can hop from bag to bag in the cargo hold. If this worries you, consider wrapping your bags in plastic before they get stowed. You can do this at home, but beware that airport security may have to open your bag to inspect it.

Check the news and reviews? Are bed bugs a problem at your destination? You can check the local news or look at reviews on sites like TripAdvisor, BedBugger.com and The Bed Bug Registry. When in doubt, call and ask



Goodnight sleep tight don't let the bed bugs bite

Keep things clean and separate. If you know an item is bed bug-free pack it in a zipper-top bag to keep it quarantined. Likewise, seal your souvenirs in a bag until you can thoroughly inspect them.

AT THE HOTEL...



Inspect your room. Make sure your room isn't already occupied before you settle in. Experts recommend stashing your luggage in the bathroom (or a space with bare floors where bugs can easily be seen) while you take a look around. Pull back the sheets and carefully examine the mattress, mattress padding, bedding and headboard. Also check chairs, cracks in walls, furniture, drawers, headboards, night stands and closets to your inspection.

Inspect your skin. Unfortunately, you may not see any signs of bed bugs until the next morning. The most common signs are reddish bumps in patterns of three — “breakfast, lunch and dinner”.

Call management at the first sign of a problem. There may not be much management can do, but try asking for a new room.

WHEN YOU GET HOME...

Kill using heat or cold. If you've got a sunny balcony and a few plastic bags, you may be able to kill them using heat. Seal items in the bag and leave them in the sun for a few hours. The same principle works for cold, but you'll need freezing temperatures and a long stretch of time.

Quarantine and inspect. Resist the habit of taking your bags to your bedroom and unpacking. Instead, keep your luggage in a safe spot like the garage or mudroom so you can inspect it. **Wash everything** in hot water and use the dryer on the hottest setting. **Inspect and clean your luggage.**



What are you looking for? Adult bed bugs measure about 1/4 inch and have flat, oval shaped bodies with flat, broad heads to match — kind of like an apple seed. Look for fecal stains too, which will appear as dark brown spots on the sheets.

Keep your bags off the floor. Even if you don't spot a problem, keep your luggage off the floor and furniture. Use a luggage rack or keep it in the tub.

