

The Travel Insider

THIS ISSUE: **HOTEL HOUSEKEEPERS**

What top cleaners wish you knew about their jobs



The Proper Guest

■ **Tip \$1 or \$2 per guest per night in most hotels.**

At higher-end properties, \$3 to \$5 per guest per night is typical, says Lillian Africano, president of the Society of American Travel Writers. If your visit is longer than three days, tip each morning so the right housekeeper receives it. Leave gratuities in a marked envelope on a nightstand or at the hotel's front desk (with your room number on it). Worried that someone else might pocket the cash while stocking the minibar or replacing a blown lightbulb? Put the tip under your pillow or in the bathroom sink, where others are less likely to see it.



■ **Be careful with the “Do Not Disturb” sign.** If you don't want to be bothered, that's fine. But if you waltz out and leave the sign hanging on the door, your room can't be cleaned. By 5:30 p.m. most full-service housekeepers have clocked out, so be mindful of these hours and think before you go huffing to the front desk to demand service. If you want more than a quick turndown or fresh towels late in the evening, you may be out of luck.

How Do They Do It?

Most hotels have a step-by-step sequence for cleaning rooms. In well-kept lodgings, light switches, door handles and remote controls are disinfected daily. Open toiletries are tossed, though used soap often gets donated to charity, says Hazel Davis, executive director of housekeeping at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. For that “fresh room” smell, Waldorf housekeepers sprinkle baking soda onto carpets monthly, she reveals.



OFF THE RECORD

SLOBs ARE A PAIN

With clothes, souvenirs and food strewn about, some rooms can be confusing to clean. Stash newspapers far from the wastebasket if you want to keep them.

Also, stay away from the housekeeper's cart; it's like her office, stocked with exactly what she needs to complete her tasks for the day. So if you want more soap or towels, don't just snag them—ask.



Housekeeping's Hidden Benefits

■ **Cleaning hotel rooms is a real workout.** “We carry some impressive poundage up and down stairs and from room to room,” says Ashley Ademiluyi, housekeeping supervisor at The Westin St. John Resort & Villas in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. “Checking under the beds, behind the furniture, under the sink and everywhere else guarantees you get in your fair share of squats and push-ups,” she says.

■ **Hotels could open a store with all the forgotten chargers for electronics that housekeepers discover.** The upside: If you forget yours, odds are there's one you can borrow. A housekeeper at The Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania reports finding dentures. “And guests seem to leave one shoe behind,” she says. “What are they wearing on the other foot?” —*Laura Daily*