Beat: Travel

Holiday Travel Tips

4 simple tips to make improve your trips

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USPA NEWS - Our new feature of Travel Tips starts off with four great tips when deciding on, reserving, and then staying in hotels during the holiday travel season. These tips are from an industry insider with twenty years of experience in the Hospitality Industry.

With the holidays fast approaching, many of you may be travelling for the holidays, with this, I thought I would share a few of our "Insiders Tips"? to make your stay more enjoyable.
Hotels Travel Tips:
1. Do Not Book Your Reservations Using third Party Websites: Third party travel sites spend millions each year on television and internet marketing, have you ever wondered where that money comes from? The answer is YOU! Third party websites, advertise that they will save you the most money on a hotel room per night, however in 98% of the cases, the website is charging you the hotels Standard Rate, which they charge to your Credit Card immediately.

. In turn, the website has a contract with most hotels that they will pay the hotel a rate which is on average 20% off the Standard Rate, it is that 20% plus any booking fees they charge you is how they stay in business. If you want the best rate, first visit the hotels or brands website, most major hotel chains have a rate match guarantee or internet only specials. Read the terms on the specials though as some have longer cancellation policies or conditions, such as minimum length of stay requirements. Then contact the hotel directly and ask what their best rate would be, compare the two and the one with the most savings is the one you book.

2. If there is a problem during your stay, pick up the phone and call the desk, or stop by the Front Desk. Hotel employees are not psychic, and may not be aware that you are unhappy. 90% of all guests that travel today either wait until checkout to voice their concerns, or worse wait until they get home. Every hotelier on the planet wants to ensure their guests have a comfortable stay and enjoy every aspect, if there is a problem, give the hotel a chance to correct it when it happens, not after the fact. Let them know, and when you do, remember that the majority of hotel employees, including Management are not paid as well as their peers in the 5 star hotel chains, so please treat them with the same respect that you expect from them.

Screaming at a Front Desk Agent who makes $8.50 an hour is not going to get you anywhere. Also, if you happen to be one of those travelers that are normally very hard to please, and you feel the need to threaten a hotelier with negative reviews on Travel Sites like TripAdvisor or Facebook unless they give you something in return, please be aware that in the United States, this is called Extortion and is a crime. Also TripAdvisor has a "TripAdvisor Blackmail Tool"? for its listed hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc. to prevent these threats from coming to fruition. Remember the old saying that our grandmothers used to teach "You catch more flies with honey, than you do with vinegar."?

3. When I travel and stay in hotels there is one place in a room that I check before any others the minute I check in, the bathroom. A bathroom is a hard area to keep perfectly clean, so if you find a problem in the bath, then more than likely there are problems elsewhere in the room.
4. And finally in the Tips Section, I will briefly touch on a problem that all travelers have a misconception of, Bed Bugs. Bed Bugs are members of the Lice family and are transmitted to hotels, airplanes, theatres, retail stores by their customers. Every hotel in this country has at one time or another had bed bugs, from the super-budget Mom & Pop brand to the most luxurious 5 star hotels.

. If you read online reviews before travelling and see one concerning bed bugs, take heart.
"¢ All well run hotels take Bed Bugs very seriously.
"¢ Bed Bug bites will not normally appear until days after the initial bite, sort of like a tick bite.
"¢ Bed Bugs are not caused by a hotel not being clean, that is a very common misconception.
"¢ Bed bugs are drawn by body heat, and also prefer darkness, so the majority of all bites occur in the bed at night.
There are policies and procedures in dealing with a Bed Bug Complaint. Most hotels follow this procedure:

“¢ Upon Receipt of a complaint, the room is sealed until it can be inspected by a licensed Pest Control Company. If any sign of the insect is found, they then inform the management and the following occurs:
1) All Linens, Bedding, Pillows, even Shower Curtains are bagged and sealed.
2) The room is treated by the pest control company, and set out of service for the period as instructed by the pest control company guidelines.
3) The linens are transported to the hotel laundry and washed separate from all other hotel laundry to prevent cross-contamination. They are then placed in a dryer that exceeds 140 degrees for 40 minutes as Bed Bugs cannot survive in extreme heat.

4) The room is re-inspected by the pest control company on its follow-up visit and once cleared of visible evidence, re-opened.
A hotel that does not follow these procedures is very likely to have a cross-contamination infestation. A majority of hotels, like one here in Shelbyville have concrete floors, walls, and ceilings, which also aides in preventing room to room migration of the insects. Many newer hotels are wood or metal framed for their rooms walls, and this is an easy way for the insect to migrate, as they normally use electrical outlets to get from one room to another.

The most important thing to remember, is that when you read a review that a guest had a bed bug problem, the insects were brought to the hotel by someone, either on their luggage which could have been in an airplane hold, or other means, but rest assured that the majority of hotels that have experienced this problem, take it very seriously and are trained on how to deal with it.

So all in all, we do hope that you take the above referenced tips to heart when choosing and then using lodging facilities across the country, and from our family to yours we wish you safe travels and a very happy holiday season!

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