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# 10 things hotels need to stop doing now



TRAVEL TIPS

Ross Clarke

Updated on 16 August 2018 | 5 Comments

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From towel art to measly milk rations, writer Ross Clarke humorously takes us through his biggest hotel gripes

Hotel rooms are supposed to be places of rest; an escape from a day of sightseeing, a business meeting, or a day at the beach. But there's usually something that stops me completely switching off...

## 1. Key cards

I get it, they're safer, easily programmable and less costly if someone decided to take it with them back home, but why do hotels insist on punishing us with key cards? The ones where you can just wave in front of the lock aren't so bad, but the put-it-in, take-it-out first quickly, then very slowly, then in, leave, take out... nope, that light is still flashing red, are the worst.

Back to reception you go, although you have to take the stairs as the lift won't go anywhere without the key being waved in front of the buttons, leaving you feeling as if you're stuck in some sort of escape room challenge.

"Have you had it near your phone?" asks the receptionist. Well, yes, as a matter of fact, I have, seeing as I keep both in what I thought the obvious and safe place, my pocket. And don't think you can turn on a light without jamming it in that little slot by the door, you know, the one you can't really see when you stumble back to your room after a few G&Ts in the hotel bar.

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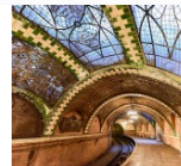
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## 2. Towel art

No, I don't want a swan on my bed; I want a lovely non-creased towel hanging on the towel rail in the bathroom for when I get out of the shower. Generally, what use are towels on a bed anyway even lying flat in a pile? To show that there are towels and that they're clean?

The problem is, you have to move them immediately off the bed if you want to sleep in said bed, want to wash your hands, use the shower, mop up a spilled glass of Sauvignon from the mini bar, or stop the flood from the ridiculously designed shower seeping its way into the room (more on that later).



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## 3. Designing showers for short people

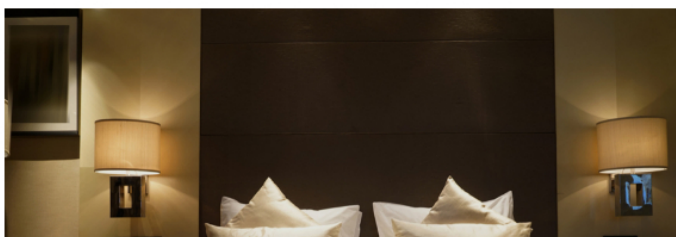
What is it about showers that hotels find so hard to get right? Whether it's water pressure that could be outdone by a watering can, or a non-adjustable showerhead, there's usually an issue with what must be the most basic of hotel room amenities.

The biggest problem is when the head is bolted to the wall and the designers/plumbers presumably haven't factored in that the bath adds an extra foot to your height from the floor. It means anyone over about 5'8" has to contend with a jet of water shooting directly at their chest, bobbing down and contorting like some form of preening seagull to wash their hair.

## 4. Measly rations

Perhaps it's the Brit in me, but I love it when a hotel room has tea and coffee making facilities. Some swanky ones even have Nespresso machines for use, but I'm happy with a miniature kettle (that usually doesn't fit under the tap in the bathroom) and a sachet of Twining's Everyday. But why, oh why do they provide so few milk sachets? I'm not one to have my tea milky, but you need two in a cup, and then, lo and behold, you've run out of milk.

No second cup, no "oh I think I might use the Nescafe instant to have with a stem ginger biscuit." So you pop by reception (again) for some more. They'll send them up, they say. And how many do they bring? Another two...



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## 5. Hard pillows

The bed can be as hard as you like but if your pillow isn't comfy, you can write off a good night's sleep. Yes, if you go to fancy hotels they probably have a pillow menu but we don't all have that luxury. Perhaps soft pillows cost more, but surely they reap their rewards in the long run.

## 6. Putting plugs in the wrong place

In this day and age, is it too much to ask for a plug socket next to the bed? Yes, I know I've set my phone alarm for 8am, but what if I want to snooze a little while longer? Crossing the room starkers to turn it off kind of defeats the point of not getting up (read: opening my travel-weary eyes) and just seems like an unnecessary thing to have to do in a place where I'm supposed to be relaxed.

Even better, why not (like most hostels, ahem, ahem) just have USB sockets next to the bed for phones, tablets, cameras etc? And why is there never a plug next to the mirror? Yes, there may be a terrible hairdryer in the bathroom (roughly 20 watts and about as effective as breathing on your hair), but what, as my friends tell me, about straighteners?



Photo: Lolostock/Shutterstock

## 7. Automatic help

When using a toilet becomes the thing of nightmares, you know the hotel has gone wrong somewhere. Or you're getting old. On a recent stay at a very high-end hotel, the toilet greeted me by conveniently opening the lid itself every time I walked nearby. Convenient? Yes. Creepy? Absolutely.

FYI, I was not in Japan where techno-toilets are taken to the next level. Of all the places to feel nervous, the loo really isn't one.

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## 8. Impractical bathrooms

Okay, so we've covered showers and auto toilets, but what about other bathroom niggles? The shower tray and screen that aren't big enough and so allow you to get plenty of water over those extra shiny bathroom tiles. Then you give an Olympic ice skater a run for their money when you attempt to tiptoe back to the bed to retrieve your fluffy white avian towel

(that aren't Paris)



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attempt to tuck back to the bed to relieve your hairy white arse cover. And what's the point of bidets? (Okay, I know what their actual purpose is, but who actually uses them?)

Soap is another thing. After you've unwrapped the fresh bar with great difficulty from its seemingly waxed paper case – all the while with wet hands – you go to put it down, but where? There's no soap dish, no little dip to rest it in, so you play a game of chase the soap across the sink unit until it falls into the basin or flies off onto your clean trousers.



Cool Pictures/Shutterstock

## 9. Ineffective curtains

Correct me if I'm wrong, but one of the prime reasons for curtains is to block out the light. So why do hotels (or their interior designers) insist on hanging drapes so thin they might as well not bother.

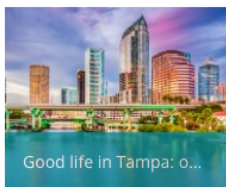
And those that do go for the blackout curtain (we like you!), please make sure they close properly. There are only so many clippy trouser hangers I can use to close that gap in the middle.

## 10. Being over personalised

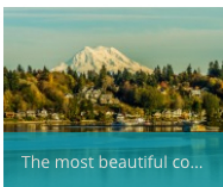
Okay, it is nice to be greeted at reception by your name and if you're a regular to that particular hotel to have your preferences (gin in the mini bar) noted for each time you stay, but printing out pictures of me and putting them in any form in my room is just plain over-the-top.

A journalist last year reported that she was greeted by framed pictures of her children in her room, they'd been found on her Instagram by the hotel's social media concierge (yes, apparently that exists as a job). We can cope with the TV saying hello, but stop right there, please.

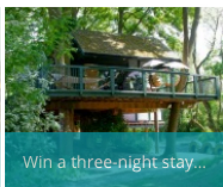
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*What about that lever that you can only reach while standing under the shower in the bath because of the fixed shower screen, which suddenly redirects the water from the bath outlet to the shower head with the force of an industrial jet washer - with absolutely freezing water for those first 2 seconds?*

*I concur with the key card thing, having stayed in the Comfort Inn in Orlando. Our room was the opposite end of a colossal open complex from the reception, 4 floors up. Whenever BOTH key cards failed (which they did 2 or 3 times on most days) it would mean walking all the way back across two vast car parks in 40 degree Florida heat (or a monsoon) to get the card reflashed. Which didn't always work, so I would have to repeat the pilgrimage leaving the wife and two small children sweating on the balcony outside the room.*

*The hotel pools would also occasionally be closed if an alligator decided to have a swim. I'm not blaming the alligators for that because they lived there first.*

REPORT



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