



**USA
TODAY®**
07.23.18

Many hotel bed myths should be put to rest

To sleep well, it takes more than a mattress

Christopher Elliott
Special to USA TODAY

Hotels claim their beds are amazing. Not all of their guests agree.

At least that's what two recent surveys and some of this column's readers say. Hotel beds are average at best, and plenty of guests complain about bad sleep when they're on the road. The fix: You have to be really picky about where you stay if sleep is a priority.

A new hotel guest survey by Mattressadvisor.com found that near-ly 81 percent of travelers say a comfortable bed is the "single-most important" feature in a hotel room. Yet of the top-ranked hotels for mattresses, none was a member of a major chain. The highest-rated property in the mattress category is the Holiday Inn Resort Panama City Beach, which has a terrific beach but is hardly a five-star hotel.

Another study by Mattress.com concluded most chain hotel mattresses were "unremarkable." For example, the famed Marriott Bed is manufactured by the same people who supply Motel 6. All major U.S. hotel chains source their mattresses from four companies. Of those, Serta, Simmons and Sealy Scored just a 74 out of 100 on Consumer Reports, and the fourth, Jamison/Solstice, is unrated.

Don't believe the surveys? Then just talk to your fellow hotel guests.

Jay Marose, a writer and publicist, recently checked into a Los Angeles chain hotel.

"The feather bed was so worn, it was like sleeping on a bed of nails," he complains. "There was no duvet cover.

There were four flat sheets in a bedding origami that had nothing to do with comfort, just picture taking. I left early."

I feel his pain. I'm on the road 365 days a year, so I sleep - or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, I don't sleep - on a lot of beds. I've stayed at two of the top-rated sleep hotels the West Baden Springs Hotel in West Baden Indiana (No 2) and the Hotel Emma in San Antonio (No. 8), and I slept well in both of them.

But I've stayed in some really nice places - you know, the kind that charge a mandatory \$30-a-night "resort fee" on top of their exorbitant room rate - and felt as if I were sleeping on a stone slab.

So let's dispense with these three hotel sleep myths:

■ **Because hotel beds are super premium products, you'll always sleep better in them.** They are not all super-premium, and people do not necessarily sleep better in them.

■ **Hotel mattresses are so amazing, guests should buy them for their own bedrooms.** Not really. It would be more accurate to say they are so amazingly marketed that people buy them.

■ **Hotel mattresses are proprietary and specially made for the hotel, which is why they're so good.** Not always. Many are generic and average.

But why do the myths endure? Experts say it's because there's more to a good night's rest than a mattress. Sheets, blankets and pillows are important. And having a quiet and uncluttered room counts for something as well. You're unlikely to have the same thing at home, which can be noisier and less tranquil.

"It's the entire package," says Chris Brantner, a certified sleep science coach at SleepZoo.com, a site that offers mattress buying help. "Are hotel mattresses considerably better than what we can get at home? Not likely. The devil is in the details."