

Calling All Insomniacs! Check Into One of These Zzz-Friendly Destinations

Amanda Ward | May 9, 2022



PHOTO: The Retreat Costa Rica

From the comfort of my bedroom to the beauty of Costa Rica, I went searching for the perfect night's sleep.

I had “Corona-somnia” before it was a thing. A combination of anxiety, bad habits, and chocolate keeps me up most nights; I often wake before dawn. But according to the many, many ads I receive about sleep solutions, I am not alone. So, if, like me, you wouldn’t mind a more restful lifestyle, slip into your favorite pajamas and join me on my research trip through the newest, most wonderful...and most insane wellness trends that promise a trip to dreamland.

Experts say that one-third of Americans aren’t getting enough sleep. According to the CDC, our insomnia is caused by a 24-hour workday, stress, smoking, alcohol consumption, sedentary lifestyles, and—as we know—our screens. Research shows that disrupted sleep leads directly to a host of ills, raising risks for cancer, depression, bad eating habits, and cardiovascular disease. But if we can’t retire from worry and have a hard time avoiding “doomscrolling” and Girl Scout cookies, how can we retrain our brains to enjoy the benefits of a good night’s rest?

What Hasn’t Worked, and What Has

If you’re in the mood to throw money at the problem of sleeplessness, you are in luck. From meditation apps featuring stars reading dull stories to canned elixirs and mystical creams, hopeful (if scientifically dubious) remedies are but a PayPal click away. In desperation, I ordered just about everything.

It’s important to note that I exercise daily and have had Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for insomnia; I’ve eaten Melatonin gummies, avoided electronic devices after 8 pm, and made sure my bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool. If you have not tried these options, experts advise you give them a shot.

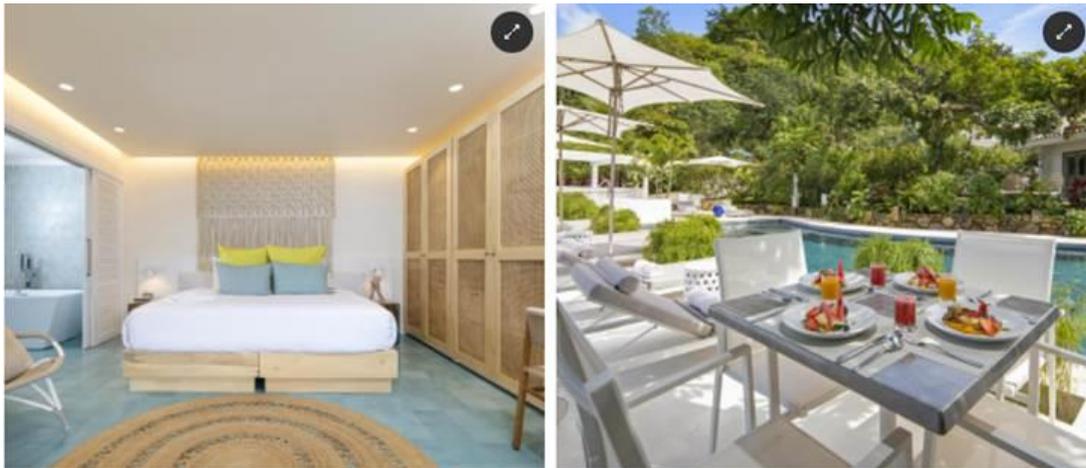
Alcohol is a proven sleep foe, so I tried sipping a can of Som and a fizzy brew of Calm Magnesium Drink. The Som was yummy—tart and sweet—but did nothing to help, while I felt that the Calm drink made me a bit calmer (maybe?). I enjoyed my Zoom sound bath class, Breathe meditation app, and lavender diffuser, but none put me to sleep. Nor did pricey CBD sublingual sprays, lotions, or tinctures.

I borrowed the \$350 Apollo Stress Relief Wearable for a week. The wrist (or ankle) device emits low-frequency inaudible sound waves, buzzing along depending on what “mode” I choose. I was in the middle of rolling my eyes at the absurdity when I realized I felt a deep sense of stillness. I continue to use and adore the Apollo Neuro. It never puts me to sleep, but it does seem to alleviate anxiety and gives me something to focus on when I wake in the middle of the night.

Finding Sleep Beyond My Bedroom

More and more spas and hotels are offering getaways that promise not just a vacation but sleep retraining, technology, and wellness services. As the luckiest insomniac in the world, I packed my pajamas and went on the road.

The Retreat, Costa Rica



The Retreat Costa Rica

When I heard about the “Art of Resting” package at [The Retreat Costa Rica](#), a luxury wellness boutique resort and spa founded by celebrity chef Diana Stobo, I booked a trip. The property offers an easy shuttle from the San Jose International airport, and set up my Covid test for a seamless return to the U.S.

I enjoyed three days of delicious, anti-inflammatory organic meals; a jaw-dropping suite with a bathtub that seemed to float in the rainforest due to its floor-to-ceiling windows with views of the valley and the Pacific Ocean; and treatments like an [Abhyanga massage](#) with the resort’s Ayurveda doctor, Dr. Vinod Balakrishnan (I met a few guests who had traveled to Costa Rica just to work with him), and a transportive facial with an ancient Ayurvedic facial tool called a “[Kansa Wand](#).”

I loved the invigorating yoga classes and new friends I met at the resort, the set meal and yoga times leading naturally to conviviality. The aromatherapy massage was a standout, and I appreciated having a few days to live in a new way: eating well, taking time to exercise and rest, even sitting on my deck quietly enjoying the view of the surrounding coffee plantations. I packed a vial of the resort’s lavender essence in my luggage, but I also brought home wisdom and new knowledge of what was possible.