

Fodor's Travel

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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.



Lake Austin Spa Resort

The [Lake Austin Spa Resort](#) is located on the shores of deep, blue Lake Austin (and accessible by a gleaming “boat taxi” from the city). “At the [LakeHouse Spa](#), we have two services curated specifically to support healthy sleep,” says Robbie Hudson, Program Director.

I arrived at the property, a wonderland of gardens in bloom, changed into a sumptuous robe and was led into a room filled with a light show of stars. The “Restful Reprieve” deep tissue massage combines some of the newest wellness technologies, from infra-red LED light to compression massage.

This futuristic and fabulous treatment was followed by the “Deep Rest” massage with “Slumber” aromatherapy (notes of Patchouli from Indonesia, Russian Rose, French Lavender, Valerian Root, and Ylang Ylang from Madagascar) and long, soothing strokes of Swedish massage with influences of [Lomi Lomi massage practices of Polynesia and Hawaii](#). I was relaxed after my treatments, especially the Lomi Lomi flowing strokes. I vowed that for my next visit, I would book a tranquil room for the night and go straight from my massage to bed.