



Between Check-In and Lights Out: Inside the Quirks and Comforts of Kiwi Travellers

Kiwis have become creatures of comfort when travelling, with younger generations leading the charge on hotel room rituals, bedtime routines and sleep habits.

- **89% of Kiwis admit to having a "settling in" ritual when arriving at a hotel room, with immediately unpacking taking the top spot on 39%**
- **Almost 1 in 3 Gen Z and Millennial travellers (31%) jump straight onto the hotel bed to "test the bounce" on arrival**
- **Nearly 9 in 10 Kiwis (88%) rely on something to help them fall asleep when staying away from home**
- **The new research has been commissioned by Holiday Inn Express by IHG to better understand the evolving habits and comfort rituals Kiwis use to help them sleep better and wake easier when travelling**

Thursday 28 May, 2026: Kiwis aren't just checking into hotel rooms – they're embracing highly specific rituals to feel comfortable, relaxed and at ease when away from home. The findings are part of ***Between Check-In and Lights Out***, an insights-led report commissioned by Holiday Inn Express by IHG to better understand the evolving habits shaping the way Kiwis stay and travel.

And the findings suggest travellers are seeking rituals from the moment they're checked in. In fact, 89% of New Zealanders admit they do something to make themselves more comfortable as soon as they arrive at a hotel room, suggesting many travellers aren't truly "checked in" until everything feels just right.

The most common settling-in rituals reveal Kiwis are quick to make themselves at home. Nearly two in five (39%) unpack immediately to settle in, while 34% adjust the room temperature and another 34% scout charging points before doing anything else.

More than a quarter (29%) immediately claim "their side" of the bed – even when travelling alone – while almost one in three Gen Z and Millennial travellers (31%) jump straight onto the hotel bed to "test the bounce" before unpacking.

The Pre-Snooze Routine

For many Kiwis, the real routine kicks in once the lights go out. A huge 88% rely on something to help them fall asleep while staying away from home, highlighting just how important comfort and familiarity have become when travelling.

More than one in five (21%) say they need a wind-down routine before bed, while 23% use deep breathing or meditation techniques to help switch off. Another 12% bring comfort items from home – whether it's a blanket, eye mask or even their own pillow.



Gen Z travellers, however, are taking bedtime behaviours to another level. More than a quarter (27%) turn to deep breathing or meditation before bed, while 21% admit they check behind curtains, under beds or ensure wardrobe doors are closed before they can properly relax.

Creating the Perfect Sleep Environment

The research also highlights just how particular Kiwis have become about their sleep environment while travelling.

Half of all travellers (50%) say silence is essential to getting a good night's sleep away from home, making it the most important sleep aid overall. Temperature control follows closely behind (44%), while 42% rely on blackout blinds to help them drift off.

Others have developed their own sleep hacks, with nearly one in five (18%) admitting they sleep with one foot outside the covers to regulate their temperature overnight.

According to leading expert in positive psychology, **Dr Tim Sharp (also known as 'Dr Happy')**, these quirks are a natural response to being away from home.

"When we travel, we're stepping into an unfamiliar environment, and that can create a level of discomfort, even if we're excited to be there," said Dr Sharp.

"These small rituals – whether it's unpacking immediately, adjusting the room temperature or following a familiar bedtime routine – help recreate a sense of familiarity and control. And that's what allows us to properly switch off, relax and ultimately feel happier."

"What might look like 'high-maintenance' behaviour is actually a very normal human response. We're wired to seek comfort, and these habits are a simple way of achieving that when we're away from home."

Dean Jones, Vice President of Commercial, East Asia & Pacific at IHG Hotels & Resorts, said the findings highlight how much travellers rely on small routines and familiar comforts to properly settle in when they're away from home.

"Travel habits are constantly evolving, and what we're seeing more and more is that people want stays to feel simpler, easier and more comfortable from the moment they check in," said Jones.

"Whether it's sleeping with blackout blinds closed, choosing from a pillow menu or knowing breakfast is sorted in the morning, those small rituals can have a big impact on how quickly people relax and feel at ease when travelling.

"That's something we think a lot about at Holiday Inn Express. The brand has always been built around simple, smart travel – giving guests the essentials they really value, done exceptionally well. The research keeps us in tune with what modern travellers want and ultimately get the most out of their stay."

Holiday Inn Express by IHG has centred itself around offering simple, smart travel for guests, reflected in over 3,300 hotels globally and more than 660 in the pipeline. All stays are backed by IHG One Rewards,



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Holiday Inn Express imagery can be found [HERE](#)

Note to Editors:

*Survey Methodology

The research was conducted by PureProfile on behalf of IHG Hotels & Resorts, among a sample of 1,018 New Zealand adults (aged 18+) who travelled for at least one night in the past 12 months. The data was collected between 18th May - 22nd May 2026.

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