

# The Best - and Worst - Ways to Complain When a Hotel Stay Goes Bad

Robert McGarvey (<http://www.mainstreet.com/author/1610501>) | Follow ()

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NEW YORK (MainStreet (<http://www.mainstreet.com>)) — You booked a romantic holiday getaway for you and your honey. “I want a great view and a kingsize bed,” you’d insisted when you made the reservation. When you are shown to the room, instead of a mountain view, there’s a dumpster - and what gives with the two twin beds?

You have a choice in that moment. How you proceed will determine whether you get the vacation you want - or if you will spend three days in a grim hell of dashed expectations.

Ditto for when a room smells of mold or has an acre of hair in the shower.

How to set matters right? Whatever you do, do not invoke a threat to blacken the hotel's name on TripAdvisor (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/could-you-be-bribed-to-remove-a-negative-review-from-tripadvisor>). Most hotels genuinely live, or die, by TripAdvisor; they are hypersensitive to it, but they also are on guard to what they may perceive to be a blackmail attempt. Waving this club can tarnish your rep and result in getting you bupkis.

“This is one sure fire way to get your name on the ‘never again guest’ list!,” said Janet Trogdon, who runs a collection of vacation homes in the Niagara Falls area.

**Read more:** The TripAdvisor Blackmail Epidemic (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/tripadvisor-blackmail-epidemic>)

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By all means, if you leave the hotel unhappy after trying multiple ways to solve your problems, eventually do post a negative write up on TripAdvisor. Quite possibly, the hotel will then offer to make matters better for you. But that's a last resort. Better is to get resolution now, while you are at the property and just not happy.

### **Read more:** Could You Be Bribed to Remove a Negative Review from TripAdvisor?

(<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/could-you-be-bribed-to-remove-a-negative-review-from-tripadvisor>)

Here is how to salvage that vacation before it goes irretrievably bad. The starting point: head to the front desk, state your issue, and - crucially - propose a resolution, said advice columnist April Masini. Don't be snide, and don't condescend; do be plain spoken.

Masini elaborated: "Suggest an outcome. 'This room has a great view of the gas station — could you please move me to the other side of the hotel?' is a lot different than, 'A blind person would complain about this view — and you want me to pay top dollar, and stare at a gas station and parking lot?' One lets the hotel staff know you're open to a solution. The other let's them know you want a target for your rant."

**Read more:** The End of Free Same-Day Hotel Reservation Cancellations (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/the-end-of-free-same-day-hotel-reservation-cancellation-a-travelers-guide>)

You don't like what the hotel is offering to make matters right? Just say so, urged Ashley Cummings, a onetime Marriott manager.

"Many new employee orientation programs encourage front line associates to be empowered to resolve guest's problems to the best of their ability from the start," she said. "Only when the team member does not get the clue should you move up the chain to get desired results."

At the posh Ritz Carlton chain, every employee is famously empowered to spend - with no higher approval - up to \$2,000 to make matters right for an unhappy guest. Sure, most hotels are stingier, but just about all well-run hotels and resorts empower line employees to do the right thing by a guest with a beef.

Incidentally, right there also is why (a) it is plain dumb (not to mention rude) to dis front line staff and (b) you should handle matters properly at the first level with usually no need to demand to kick your complaint up to the General Manager (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/could-you-be-bribed-to-remove-a-negative-review-from-tripadvisor>).

But, urged Dawn McCloud, CEO of the blog GlamSiren, ask to see any proposed new room before agreeing to accept it. If it still isn't right, say so, urged McCloud. Keep at it until you are happy and, by the way, when you are, have a hotel porter move your gear to the new digs and always tip.

"Word travels fast, and this gesture will get you plenty of mileage," she said -- and if you hit another bump in this travel road you want staff remembering how generous you are, not what a kvetcher you can be.

The hotel is sitting on its hands doing nothing to put a smile on

your face? Get tweeting, advised Dan Miller, who blogs about travel at Points With a Crew. He said: "If the hotel can't or won't solve it, reach out via Twitter. In this age of social media, almost all of the major chains have a great Twitter team that is usually pretty responsive to legitimate problems."

Another option when on-property solutions are failing: email the company's CEO and see what that produces. Corporate speaker Barry Maher, who spends many nights on the road, said, "If the problem is particularly serious, I go right to the top."

"It may be the executive director or general manager," he added. "On very rare occasions, it may be the CEO of the hotel group. That's the best way to complain. To a live person who can and, once you reach right level, usually will remedy the problem."

--Written by Robert McGarvey for MainStreet

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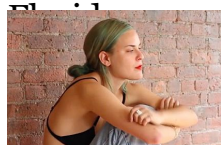
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