

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



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TIPS FOR CLEANING YOUR GEAR AFTER TRAVELING

By Andrea Sachs
WASHINGTON POST

Months into the coronavirus crisis, travelers have grown familiar with how to protect themselves on airplanes, in hotel rooms, and among crowds. But what about the risk of returning home with potentially contaminated travel gear? Can you catch or spread the virus through your luggage or clothing? Medical experts say the threat is low but suggest several precautions you can take to reduce the worry even more.

Global health organizations and professionals do not yet know how long the coronavirus can live on certain materials, so they are basing their information on similar viruses, such as the one that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome. The World Health Organization estimates the coronavirus's survival time from a few hours to several days, depending on various factors, such as type of material, air temperature and humidity. Hard, nonporous materials such as metal, plastic and glass are more welcoming habitats for viruses than soft goods such as fabrics.

In travel terms, this means the virus might hang out longer on the aluminum handle of your carry-on than on your canvas tote. Fortunately, the coronavirus is an enveloped virus and probably does not have a long survival rate

on surfaces, according to Ann Falsey, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York. By comparison, the norovirus, the previous bane of cruise ships, is a non-enveloped virus and has a longer shelf life.

Falsey said the coronavirus can probably survive two to four days on hard surfaces, generally less than a day on fabrics and other porous materials, and 30 minutes to an hour on hands.

Greg Poland, a professor of medicine and infectious diseases at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., said that to contract the virus from your luggage, you would need a very specific series of events to occur.

"You'd literally have to have someone sneeze all over it, get mucus on it, and then, within minutes to a few hours, you would have to touch your bag and then your face," he said.

To ease concerns, he said travelers can wipe down the parts of their luggage that might have been handled by other people, such as airline baggage handlers, bellhops and airport shuttle drivers. He suggests swiping the exposed area with a disinfectant towelette or squeezing antibacterial gel onto your hand and spreading it over the vulnerable area. When asked about disinfecting the entire bag, he responded, "Power wash your suitcase? I don't think so."

Georgine Nanos, a California-based physician specializing in epidemiology and public health, recommends cleaning "anything anyone could potentially touch." She

suggests using wipes, but if the local market's shelves are bare, soap and hot water will do the trick. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides a recipe for bleach solution on its Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations page: Mix five tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water or four teaspoons of bleach per quart of water. (The agency also explains the difference between cleaning and disinfecting, an important distinction. Cleaning removes germs, dirt and other unwelcome guests from surfaces; disinfecting involves germ-destroying chemicals.) Be aware that the cleaning products could damage your bag, depending on the material.

For clothing worn on your trip, the experts advise the usual course of action: Throw your load into the washer and dryer or ship it off to the dry cleaner. The CDC suggests refraining from shaking your bag of dirty laundry; you don't want to disperse the virus in the air.

If you prefer a more comprehensive and less a la carte approach to your post-trip cleanse, Falsey says to gather your travel items in one place at home and leave them there, untouched, for several days. "Don't use them for a week and the virus will die," she said.

Poland said he would put any potentially contaminated items outside in the sun. The reason: Warmer temperatures, higher humidity, and strong ultraviolet rays can disrupt the virus.

Can you catch the virus through your luggage or clothing?

HERE

HI-TECH CHAIRLIFT COMING TO LOON

Ski season may be winding down but Loon Mountain Resort is looking ahead to the 2020-21 season when it breaks ground this spring on an eight-seat, high-speed bubble chairlift. Moving at a speed of 18 feet per second, the Kancamagus 8 chairlift (a.k.a. Kanc 8) will transport 3,500 skiers per hour to the top of Loon's popular peaks; that's less than 4½ minutes per ride. The ultra-smooth, whisper-quiet ride will feature heated, ergonomically designed, and extra-wide seats; tinted bubbles; auto-locking restraining bars; individual footrests; and height-adjustable conveyor loading for guests of all sizes. The first anywhere in the eastern United States, and the second in North America, the Kanc 8 will insure you'll get to the top of the mountain quickly — so you can ski down even faster. 800-229-5666, www.loon-mtn.com

THERE

WINDY CITY DEBUTS ART MUSEUM HOTEL

Tour dynamic exhibits of contemporary art without leaving your hotel in Chicago's River North neighborhood at the newly opened 21c Museum Hotel. The 297-room boutique hotel and multi-venue art museum is the ninth property in a national series designed to bring contemporary art to the public through exhibitions and programming. More than 10,000 square feet of exhibition space will feature rotating solo and group exhibitions, site-specific installations, and a full roster of cul-



tural programming curated by museum director and curator Alice Gray Stites. The bright and airy guest rooms offer a soothing color palette inspired by the sky and nearby Lake Michigan. Amenities include Malin + Goetz bath products, luxurious bedding, full-service spa, 24-hour fitness center, business center, and valet parking. Rates from \$219. An introductory rate of up to 30 percent off stays through Sept. 1 available online only with booking code CHIPRE. 888-345-9009, www.21cmuseumhotels.com/chicago

HISTORIC HOME RENEWED AS LUXURY INN

When we all start traveling again, those who love staying in historic homes will want to check out Zabriskie House at Inns of Aurora, the property's fifth impeccably restored boutique inn in Aurora, N.Y., on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake. Originally built in 1903 as a fami-

ly home, Zabriskie House features 11 guest rooms (many with private fireplaces and balconies); wood-paneled dining room available for private events; double parlor with cozy fireplaces; coffee bar serving organic fair-trade coffee; afternoon complimentary wine and cheese hour; turndown service each evening; an impressive three-story staircase; and outdoor seating with water views. Guests are encouraged to bike and stroll in the ti-



ny village, where many homes are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; kayak and paddleboard on Cayuga Lake; and visit the nearby wineries and breweries that dot the Finger Lakes region. Award-winning cuisine is available at 1833 Kitchen & Bar, and laid-back meals can be enjoyed at Fargo Bar & Grill. Rates from \$160-\$295. 315-364-8888, innsofaurora.com/accommodations/zabriskie-house

EVERYWHERE

PACKS FOR CITY AND WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

Kammok, makers of adventure grade gear, has released its first travel packs. The Burro Pack Line, available in various sizes, is designed as an urban/outdoor crossover bag. Stylish enough for use in the city and strong enough for a wilderness trek, the packs feature lightweight and durable waterproof fabric (with taped seams); removable back pads for structure and support that can double as protective laptop sleeve or waterproof camp seat; watertight zippers; a variety of pockets and organizational features; and exterior or mesh pockets for water bottles or an extra pair of shoes. \$29-\$145. kammok.com

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Camping aficio-



nados, night runners, and off-the-grid explorers all have something in common: the need for light. Travelers looking for a comfortable and streamlined headlamp to stash in their running and biking pack, ski touring bag, or any other outdoor adventure kit may want to check out the HeadLamp 200. This ultra-light product (only 1.7 ounces) is the newest offering by BioLite, an innovator in bringing sustainable energy products to off-grid communities. The new model features a battery that is integrated in a front panel that can tip downward with one hand (no battery packs or cords needed!); red floodlight settings for battery-saving night vision; micro USB rechargeable capability; and 200 lumens of light. \$44.95. www.bioliteenergy.com

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