

How to Make a Guest Room out of Thin Air

11 steps to ensure your guests feel welcomed—even if you don't have an extra room.



BY [KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS](#) DEC 8, 2021



So, you've decked the halls and stocked the fridge to ward off holiday hanger...but have you rolled out the proverbial red carpet for incoming visitors? No, you don't need a massive guest suite to do so: We asked designers for their very best tips to pamper houseguests—even if you don't have a properly outfitted guest room.

"Our guest space is limited with four daughters and no extra room," says Miriam Silver Verga, Partner and cofounder of New Jersey design firm [Mimi & Hill](#). Verga recently transformed her WFH office into a bedroom for a last-minute Thanksgiving guest by lugging in a sleeper sectional sofa. "We removed unnecessary work papers, computers, books, and junk (yes, this space became a dumping ground for our family)," she relays. After layering the room with poufs, throw blankets, and pillows, and stocking the adjoining bath with plenty of linens and a scented candle, "We ended up creating a comfortable and well-appointed guest room virtually overnight." Sound like magic? Well, it's well within reach—here, a step-by-step guide on how to conjure a hotel-level space from thin air.



1. Whip up a dreamy bed

“Even if your guests are relegated to a sofa bed, there are things you can do to make it feel luxe,” says Jessica Davis of [Atelier Davis](#). “A memory foam or feather topper is a great way to make a cheap mattress or sofa bed into something comfy. Linen sheets are great and there are so many brands like [Brooklinen](#) and [Parachute](#) that are now sold at retail stores like Target.” One vital tip: just make sure you wash the linens before dressing the bed, Davis says. ([Shop the very best sheets here](#)).

2. Make it personal

“A few personal touches are enough to transform your guest room into one that feels as though it has been especially prepared for your guests,” says [Philip Mitchell](#). His top tip: “put out a silver frame with a special photo of you and your guest in the room.”



A corner coffee and bar area by [Beth Diana Smith](#).
MIKE VAN TASSELL

3. Prep for sips and snacks

“Fill a decorative small holiday box with an assortment of coffees, teas, hot chocolate and maybe some packages of nuts or chocolates,” says Danye Bush, stylist for [Anthony Wilder Designs](#). “I also incorporate a miniature coffee maker and miniature fridge with creamer, miniature cordials, and small water bottles, and add disposable or glass cups for a hot or cold beverages in the morning or an evening cordial before bed.” Fancyyyy! [Beth Diana Smith](#) provides nibbles galore, “like fresh fruit (such as bananas and grapes that aren’t sticky and messy) granola bars, gummy bears, chocolate and something salty like chips.”

4. Add something special

“My formula for insta-joy in a guest room means See's Butterscotch Squares on a diminutive silver tray on the nightstand, which taste like brown sugar and butter and childhood all stirred together,” says [Jaimee Rose](#). “I place Voss still or sparkling water next to it (because the bottles are colorless and the most chic), white hydrangeas with fir and cedar boughs tucked in for Christmas spirit and that just-cut tree scent. Hot tip: iron the sheets. I promise that your guests will notice, comment, and feel spoiled, wanted, and welcome.”



In this bedroom by [Jean Liu](#), a [Samsung Frame TV](#) disguises as art over the fireplace.

STEPHEN KARLISCH

5. Ready the TV binge

“To make guests feel totally welcome, I like to make sure there is a TV with Netflix and all the channels in the room,” says [Jean Liu](#). She tailors books and magazines on the nightstand to her guests interests, and always provides a carafe with fresh water. “I also try to ensure all the decorative lighting and lamps are on dimmers so they can adjust the lighting level to their liking. Lastly, I like to set out a pair of fresh slippers for them...I suppose it’s my Chinese upbringing that is shining through.”

6. Power it up

And we don’t mean bacon for breakfast. Provide guests a charging station so all their gizmos can easily be plugged in for a reboot. “I like to use one that has multiple ports so my guests have every option they might need,” says [Beth Lindsey](#). [Tracy Morris](#) has a key tip: “Put the WiFi password on a card in the room.” Printing it on heavy cardstock is a luxe touch.

7. Prep like a hotel

Before guests arrive, Morris stocks their bathroom with toothpaste, body lotion, toiletries (like shampoo and conditioner) and hand cream, and ensures they have a hair dryer under the sink. “I also put extra blankets and pillows in their closet for easy access.” [Gray Walker](#) saves special handmade soaps and boutique brand toiletries to treat visitors to in the guest bath. “I think it’s fun to try new things when I stay at hotels, so why not do that for my guests?”

8. Give them space

“If your guests are staying for more than two or three nights it’s a nice idea to make room in the closet and perhaps empty the top two drawers in the dresser,” says [Meridith Baer](#). Just tuck your stuff in a suitcase and hide it out of sight in the attic or garage until your guest heads home.



A guest suite by **Dennese Guadeloupe Rojas** at the Cornell Inn.
WILLIAM WALDRON FOR THE SHADE STORE

9. Optimize the nightstand

A bedside table is an ideal spot to pamper, says **Dennese Guadeloupe Rojas** of Interiors By Design. “The gracious host provides good lighting for bedtime reading, a thoughtful array of magazines, a chilled bottle of water, Tea Forte tea sachets with an individual teapot of warmed water, a clock with ceiling display, and a bluetooth speaker to provide soft music to drift off by...Sweet dreams are made of these, my friends!”

10. Add fresh blooms

Hostess with the mostest [Charlotte Moss](#) always places freshly cut flowers in her guest rooms. “On the bedside, keep it simple with one gorgeous blossom: a rose, a lily, or anything from your own garden. One on the tray or desk would also be nice.” It’s a quick task, and totally transformative. “Fresh flowers suggest you care.”

11. Offer five-star turndown

“We try to make them feel like they are staying at a nice hotel with a ‘turndown service,’” says [Michelle Gerson](#). “We light a little candle, leave a chocolate with a bottle of water by the bed.” Gerson even puts foot warmers under the blanket at the end of the bed (easily heated in the microwave) and places slippers at the bedside they’ve collected on their travels. Chance her guests will return again? 1,000%.

