

Here's how to sanitize your cabin in 12 steps

Follow these 12 steps from Cruise Critic to sanitize your cruise cabin, and you'll feel better about your chances of staying healthy on vacation

Step 1: Pack the right supplies

If you're serious about deep cleaning your cabin, you'll need to come prepared with the right gear. First, you'll need cleaning supplies, such as Lysol Disinfectant Spray or Clorox wipes. Not all travel wipes and cleaners kill norovirus, so if that's your goal, read labels and pick a product that does the job. (Note that if you buy something strong or hospital-grade, containing bleach, you might also need to bring gloves and a mask to keep yourself safe.) Also, pack a zip-top bag; disposable gloves and dish soap are optional.

Step 2: Don't put your bags directly on your bed

If you first enter your cabin with your luggage or carry-ons, do not put them directly on the bed or couch. Should there be any stowaway bedbugs, direct contact with your bedding is their gangway to board your bed and treat you as their evening buffet. Leave your bags on the floor or put them on top of the provided thick mat, and you won't be introducing new bugs to your cabin.

Step 3: Wash your hands

You've been walking around onboard, possibly touching elevator buttons and railings and other public-use surfaces. Before you start your sanitization process, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. For even more protection, put on a pair of gloves after you've washed your hands.

Step 4: Wipe down all door handles and light switches

These high-touch areas are used by everyone in your cabin, as well as housekeeping and anyone else visiting your cabin. Give them a good wipe down on day one; you might want to revisit the task later in the cruise, as well.

Step 5: Wipe down bathroom surfaces

Bathrooms can be germ central, so spray or wipe down all hard surfaces, including the toilet seat and lid.

Step 6: Quarantine the remote control

It's common knowledge that one of the germiest items in a hotel cabin is the remote control – touched by many and with lots of crevices that can't be effectively wiped down. Pick it up with a tissue or gloves, put it in a plastic bag and zip it shut. You can still operate the remote, but never have to actually touch its surface.

Step 7: Wipe down the phone

Unlike the TV remote, you can't put your cabin phone in a bag, so do your best to wipe it down, especially the mouthpiece.

Runner-up for germiest item is the telephone, for the same reasons as the remote. You can't put your cabin phone in a bag, so do your best to wipe it down, especially the mouthpiece.

Step 8: Clean hard surfaces in the cabin

Wipe down hard surfaces, such as the night table, coffee table, desk and shelves. You don't need to do them all, but prioritize surfaces where you will set down things that will go near your face or in your mouth. (Think shelves that house glassware, or nightstands where you put your glasses.)

Step 9: Wipe down balcony furniture

Don't forget to clean your personal outdoor space by spraying or wiping down balcony furniture. Put extra effort into places where you'll rest your arms and head and the table where you might be dining.

Step 10: Wash glassware

Do you intend to use provided glassware for a glass of wine in your cabin or to rinse out your mouth after brushing your teeth? You'll want to clean those glasses with soap and hot water before you use them. If you haven't packed dish soap, the provided shower gel will work just as well.

Step 11: Remove decorative bedspreads and pillows

Your bed linens might be changed frequently, but decorative blankets, bedspreads and pillows aren't always laundered between sailings. Remove these items from your bed and hide them in a closet or drawer – or ask your cabin steward to take them out of your cabin for the duration of your cruise.

Step 12: Wash your hands again

To be safe – and since you might have been handling chemicals – wash your hands one more time once you're finished.

Congratulations! Your home away from home is now sanitized to your satisfaction. To be safe – and since you might have been handling chemicals – wash your hands one more time once you're finished. Now go and enjoy a healthy vacation, worry-free.