

THIS JUST IN
Safety Check

After all the packing and planning, there's still something you should add to your travel checklist: registering for the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, or STEP for short. If you can get past the cutesy acronym, this is a terrific service that allows the U.S. Embassy in your destination to communicate important updates about security



threats, incidents, or natural disasters. This free service also provides the embassy with your emergency contact information. For info, visit step.state.gov.

Post-Its

TRAVEL

By Stephanie Citron



PRACTICAL MATTERS
BUG BEATERS

Sunset dinners, sleeping under the stars, trekking rainforests ... those dreamy vacation adventures are starting to seem a bit risky right now given the rise of mosquito-borne viruses like West Nile and Zika. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend using only EPA-approved products. Of these, we like ...

For long-term protection: Off! Deep Woods VIII contains 25 percent DEET, lasts up to eight hours, and comes in a "towelette" variety for a carry-on or purse.

For DEET alternatives: Sawyer Fisherman's Formula Picaridin and Natrapel 8 Hour both contain 20 percent picaridin.

For most environment-friendly: Repel Lemon Eucalyptus contains oil of lemon eucalyptus, proven to contain effective insect-repelling properties.

For added protection, you might want to spray your apparel with Sawyer's Permethrin Insect Repellent; it's nonstaining and safe for fabrics.



Far from the madding crowd: View of Macy's Parade from Quin hotel

THE SPLURGE
Your Own Parade Skybox

If you've ever wanted to see the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in person, yet hate crowds, here's a civilized solution. A variety of hotels along the parade route offer packages for rooms with views. But hurry: These rooms are released just a few months in advance and disappear quickly. The Quin hotel will deliver breakfast to you as you watch from the window of your suite (from \$819, thequinhotel.com). The Marriott Courtyard New York Manhattan/Times Square offers three room options with views of the parade's finish line and the broadcasters box (marriott.com/hotels/travel/nycmd-courtyard-new). **If you go:** It's nearly impossible to get a reservation in NYC for Thanksgiving dinner. Book it now: Nab a table at the Lexington Brass, with its tantalizing menu of roasted Heritage-breed turkey, chestnut-herb stuffing, and cider-braised greens (emmgrp.com/restaurants/lexington-brass).

SHUTTERSTOCK: THE QUIN HOTEL; SAWYER