



# So you want to host a gaggle of friends but only have one "guest room"?

Bunks are the obvious answer. The key is creating a place that is comfortable for kids and grown-ups alike. Here's how to turn any under-utilized area into an on-demand, pajama party hub.

# Keep in Mind

### SPACING

A room should have 8to 10-foot-high ceilings so no one's banging their heads. Also "leave at least 40 inches of space between beds so everyone's comfortable," says Barrett Cooke of Arterberry Cooke Architecture.

### **BED SIZE**

For maximum versatility (and unexpected growth spurts), choose mattresses that are XL twin (for single bunks) or queen (for bottom beds).

### PRIVACY

When multiple folks are sleeping in the same room, create a compartment for each. Designer Elena Frampton uses textiles like extra pillows to dull noise. For ultimate hushing, consider adding curtains for each bed.

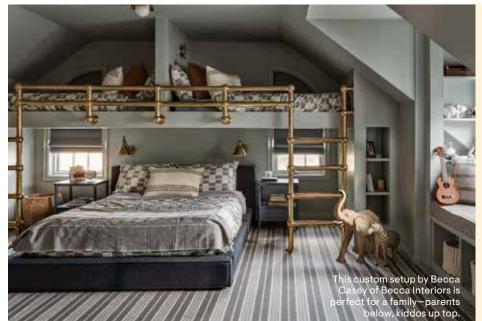
### STORAGE

Plan ahead and you can build in nooks, shelves, or drawers to marry function and aesthetics.

### BUDGET

A ready-made bunk bed can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Custom ones can cost up to \$20,000 and take up to a month to complete, says Holt Williamson, cofounder of Cedar & Oak.





# LEVEL UP AN AWKWARD SPACE

Designers call them "mezzanine bedrooms": Sleeping quarters carved out of attics, lofts, barns, and other odd spaces. If you've got such an area you'd like to bunk up, "make sure you have adequate structural support and subflooring," says Williamson of Cedar & Oak. Then the fun starts. "Any time you have a funky space," he says, "textural design elements such as tongue-and-groove, beadboard, or shiplap will accentuate the change in ceiling slope or angle, adding visual interest."



## A Step in the Right Direction

Deciding how guests get to the "penthouse" bunk is half the fun. Think about who'll be using the beds (and who'll be making them in between) and aim to bridge safety and style. Custom stairs allow for storage and make adults feel more comfortable. Ladders are fun for kids if they're secure, but they should offer-not obstruct-access.



### **ROLL WITH IT**

Designer Sandra Lucas of Lucas/Eilers Design Associates chose a Putnam rolling ladder for this tight space. "It can slide back and forth between the two upper bunks and be lifted off the rail at the beds, and placed on the rail above the seat cushions to access the storage cabinet above," she explains.



### **STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN**

For these bunks over queen beds, designer Michelle Morgan Harrison used steps to give parents trip-free access. The solid sides with guardrails at the top provide shelving and peace of mind that kids won't tumble down-and they make sheet changes less of a Cirque du Soleil performance.



### **GLOWING PRAISE**

Our favorite reading lights for sleepy guests.



Milk 1-Light Sconce in satin brass, \$54. maximlighting.com



**Scout Small Single Light Sconce** in dark matte gray, \$149. hinkley.com



Paola Wall Sconce \$198. mitzi.com



Anders Small Articulating **Wall Light** in antique brass and black, \$579.

visualcomfort.com



≺ See the rest of this alpine-inspired guesthouse in Austin.

### **BUNK ROOMS**

### **ON GUARD**

Bunk beds should be sturdy with secure, easy-to-climb entry points. You can find guidelines for guardrails and spacing at cpsc.gov, and remember, no one under age six on a top bunk.



Adjustable bars on designer Ken Fulk's cabin-like bunks can be lowered to climb into bed and raised to keep sleepers from rolling out.

# SURPRISE SLEEPERS Clever bunks are there when you need them, disguised when you don't. Designer Margaret Donaldson snuck custom quarters for four into this media room, installing doors on a recessed track that allows them to pivot, fold, and stack flat against each of the side walls when guests are over. Designer Marea Clark suggests barn doors for a similar effect.



# Smart Storage

When every inch matters, built-in drawers can hold linens and act as dressers. Add a niche in lieu of a nightstand for convenience.



### **CLOSET SPACE**

Recessing the wardrobe from the beds and painting them all the same color keeps the room from being claustrophobic, says designer Hilary Matt.



### STEP-UPS

Samantha Struck, principal designer of StruckSured Interiors, turned stairs into drawers finished with rounded handles that won't snag pj's as guests climb up.