
Setting Up Your Listing



Get Typing...

Introduction

This Chapter is all about how to setup your listing in the Airbnb website.
This Chapter has a section for each of the following:
Each section then goes into the information that you are required to input.

Listing details

Booking settings

Pricing




Availability

Local taxes and laws

Co-hosts

Photos

Edit



28 photos

Listing Details

Photos

You should have prepared them in advance. They need to be really [good](#).

Rooms and Spaces

This is used to count up how many rooms and spaces you have. Adjust the numbers until they are correct.

Amenities

There is a checkbox here for every possible amenity your listing could have. Only check the ones you actually have.

Accessibility Features

This is a new section designed to make it easier for travelers with disabilities. If you have any features, such as step-free entry then add them as it will be good for business.

Title & Description

Spend time on these as these will be seen by a lot of people! Get them right!

The title has to be short (under 60 characters) but try to get as much appeal as you can from it.

The description has to be under 500 characters. Try to fit in everything that you offer to potential Guests, especially those that you are targeting. Why should Guests stay with you? Tell them about peace and quiet. Tell them about how safe the neighborhood is. Tell them about privacy. Tell them about how close you are to the train station if that is a strong point. Tell them if you have a good wifi connection. Tell them about family-friendly features like pong table etc. Also try to answer Guests questions: transport, shopping nearby, what beds you have, are

pets allowed, noise levels, rules. Appeal to your target audience but be truthful: don't give them the impression they can have parties if they can't.

Property & Guests

Enables you to specify what space type (apartment, room etc.) the Listing is for and how many guests it can maximum number of people that it can accommodate. This is not the normal number of guests for the nightly or weekend price. That is specified in Extra Charges later.

Example:

My base & nightly price is for 2 guests but in Property & Guests I say it can accommodate 4.

In Extra Charges, I apply a charge of \$25 per night for every guest after 2.

Location

Put in your address here. You can also add a directional text.

Guest Resources

Please add as much info as you can here to help the guest check-in, use the wifi etc. Specify your check-in method here (eg lockbox).

You can also add additional information under 'House Manual'.

Guidebook

This is where you can setup an electronic Guidebook for the visitor with local places of interest such as restaurants, parks, shops etc.

Listing Status

You can activate and deactivate your listing here.

Booking Settings

How Guests Can Book

Instant Booking

Instant booking turns off the approval process for your listing.

The potential Guest can make inquiries and then go straight to booking, as long as they fit the requirements setup in your Listing (for example Guest Requirements).

Instant booking has its good sides and its bad sides. If you have more of a nervous disposition, don't use Instant Book. If you are starting off, maybe turn it off at first then turn it on later.

- The good.
 - Improves the Host response rate.
 - Improving the Host response rate makes the Listing return higher in the Search Results, thus enabling more bookings.
 - Being a responsive host make it easier to become a Superhost.
 - It helps potential Guests book much quicker.
 - Many potential Guests who are busy or 'on the run' (maybe they just got to the airport) want to book quick and only select listings with instant bookings.
 - That's obviously going to make you more business.
 - You will have more last-minute bookings, good for business.
 - Guests who instant book have to agree to all your House Rules before they can book.
 - If you see an 'instantly booked' reservation coming up and you don't like it (for example you checked out the guest and you don't like their reviews) then you can cancel the reservation without penalty using the reason 'Uncomfortable with Reservation'.
 - You can do this through the website up to 3 times a year.
 - After the 3rd time you have to call Airbnb.
 - You cannot just cancel the reservation for any reason without penalties. Be careful here as the Airbnb service people are the ones deciding if you can walk away penalty free.

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- The bad.
 - As the approval process is not being followed, you have not been forced into approving or declining a potential Guest. Obviously, not being forced into making the decision on every Guest can let problem Guests in.
 - As the approval process is not being followed, you end up with Guests that you never checked out.
 - Many hosts don't like Instant Booking and have had bad experiences from Guests who they never really checked out because there was no approval process.
 - You are relying more on your Listing and House Rules to vet potential Guests.
 - If you are going to allow Instant Booking, you should probably make your Guest Requirements a bit stricter than you would otherwise. This can then affect business negatively.
 - You will end up with last minute bookings, which can be a pain if the rental is not ready.

Valid reasons for cancelling an Instant Book reservation using 'Uncomfortable with Reservation':

- Communications with Guests indicate future violations of House Rules.
 - Example: No pets allowed, but guest requests pet.
- Number of guests requested exceeds listing maximum.
- Communication issues.
- Unresponsive.
- Rude.
- Unreasonable requests.
- Suspect party or disturbance.
- Safety concerns.
- Previous bad experience with guest.
- Incomplete profile.
- Profile photo not of face.
- Third party booking.

When using instant booking:

- You should set Guest Requirements to at least a Government-issued id.
- You should still scan your calendar once a week and checkout future Guests at the same time, in case they Instantly Booked and you never looked at them.

Guest Requirements

There are several requirements you can setup for potential Guests.

1. Airbnb standard requirements. We leave this on (I think it is on by default). Phone number, email, payment info and agreement to house rules. I consider these an absolute minimum.
2. Profile photo. We leave this off.
3. Government-issued id.
4. Recommendation from other hosts.

We turn on #1 and #2 and leave the others off. You may want more security and turn #3 (and maybe #4) on. Maybe start your listing off with one or more of these turned on. If business is slow, turn them off.

Government-Issued Id

This sounds good but have never turned this on because we wonder if this can really hurt business and we suspect that most Guests aren't verified. Instead, we check the Guests history and (if they are new) then ask them about who they are and who they work for. Then I do a Google search on them and their area.

Recommendation from Other Hosts

This sounds good but we feel that turning this on would lose us a lot of 'first timer' business. First timers make up quite a lot of our rentals, you would be surprised.

House Rules

It is very important for you to stipulate the rules here. The Guests have to agree to them as part of the booking.

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Be explicit with your rules. You cannot expect Guests to comply with your rules if you have not communicated them clearly.

You should also include these rules in your Guest book also.

We have the following rules set:

Suitable for children (2-12 years)	Not allowed. Explanation: There is a sharp hill in the back yard.
Suitable for infants (under 2 years)	Not allowed. Explanation: There is a sharp hill in the back yard.
Pets allowed	Not allowed. I had one guests sneak a dog in one night and it caused some damage. Also, it creates possible cleanliness issues.
Smoking allowed.	Not allowed. I don't need the poison in my lungs and neither do the next guests.
Parties and events allowed.	Not allowed. I don't need the damage.

Additional Rules

Underneath the list of rules there is a text area where you can add your own additional rules. I have added the following to ward off those 'free extra Guests':

Sorry but I cannot accommodate extra guests for free. If you want extra Guests, you have to pay for them when you book and there is a limit of 4 Guests in total.

Details Guests Must Know About Your Home

This is a list of possible inconveniences. If you think that Guests may find something missing or unexpected you should warn them here. When you select an item on the list it opens a text area for you to add an explanation:

Must climb stairs.	Important for older Guests, or those with health issues, so important to a surprising amount of people. So be truthful here. I wrote 'You have to walk down some steps to the apartment round the back of the house. The steps are illuminated at night and there are guard-rails.'
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Potential for noise.	I can see how excess noise would really upset Guests, especially those who have to get up and go to work. You need to prewarn Guests if there will be such noise.
Pets on property.	Hosts should also provide information about their Pets also, so that Guests are alerted to their presence. I wrote 'Cats. Never in apartment. Please drive slowly up the driveway as they may be outside'.
No parking on property.	Maybe your rental is in a tourist area (say Miami) where there is no parking available. Warn your Guests in advance because they will get mad when they find out that they have to pay \$\$\$ for parking.
Some spaces are shared.	This can really upset some people. It can get even worse. What happens if the Guest arrives, finds out some spaces are shared and that another Guest has taken over that space. Make sure that both the potential Guest is warned, and that space really is available.
Amenity limitations.	You need to warn Guests if your WIFI is spotty or you run out of hot water very quickly.
Surveillance or recording device on property.	Hosts are required to inform Guests of any sort of surveillance or recording device on the property, even if it is not working.
Dangerous animals on property.	Self-explanatory. We don't consider our cats as dangerous. I can't imagine this is a common one.

Policies

Check-in Start Time

- "If there's no check-in or check-out time specified within a listing's description, check-in is 3:00 PM local time and checkout is 11:00 AM local time." - Airbnb
- Most Guests show up after the Check-in Start Time but many of them ask if they can check-in early. This makes life a little more complicated as you have to remember this even when you have agreed to it a couple of weeks ago and many Guests have been and gone since.

- Don't be afraid to say no (but nicely).
 - They are imposing on you.
- The way to check the start time is to go to the Calendar and you will see the Guest highlighted for that day. Click on the button to view Messages and check you did not promise to let them in early.

Check-in Start Time & Traffic

- Another consideration is traffic. The Guests may think that they will be arriving at a certain time but that may not be the case.

Example:

Atlanta can be hell in traffic. Then near holidays it can be the opposite as everyone has gone home to wherever they came from.

- Traffic can play havoc with your Check-in times. Consider the traffic patterns in your area.

Check-in End Time

- We don't mind when Guests check-in late. We can leave the door open downstairs in the apartment and the Guests can walk around the side of the house at night. They have lights that come on and a guard rail.
- It may be very different in your case though, especially if you are alone or may feel vulnerable.

Checkout Time

- "If there's no check-in or check-out time specified within a listing's description, check-in is 3:00 PM local time and checkout is 11:00 AM local time." – Airbnb
- Don't pester the Guests about Checkout Time until it is past that time. However, after that is fair game (and don't feel guilty) as you may need to get the rental cleaned. You should always plan your cleaning under the assumption that the Guest will stay until the last minute.

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- If your Guest stayed a long time and no-one else is coming that day, you may want to give them a bit more latitude, for example not bothering them even if they are an hour or two late at checkout.
- If you are worried about the Guests not being aware of the checkout time, send them a message in the morning, maybe something like this:

We hope you've had a lovely stay and that you have a safe trip home. If you would put any used towels in the hamper before checkout at 11 a.m. it would be appreciated. There's no need to strip the bed because we take care of the rest.

- If you have Guests who want to check-in and checkout at strange times (for example arrive at 11am and leave at 4pm, quote them an hourly rate for extending their stay.

Cancellation Policy

The cancellation policy is important because guests can change their minds at the last minute, leaving you without a rental and losing cash. The cancellation policy protects against this. I recommend you have a strong Cancellation Policy as it saves you money. I recommend against the Flexible Cancellation Policy as this can let some guests (who change their mind frivolously) off the hook. I also recommend making cancellations non-refundable. Remember that these small things can make a real difference to the profitability of your listing.

Cancellation Policy - Extenuating Circumstances

If they know how to, knowledgeable Guests can use Extenuating Circumstances to cancel without paying. Luckily this is not common knowledge and these circumstances must be serious:

- An unexpected death or serious illness of a host, guest or immediate family member.
- A serious injury that directly restricts a guest's ability to travel or a host's ability to host.

Pricing

Ensure you have read the [Pricing Chapter](#) before setting your prices.

This section is where you can setup basic pricing such as the Base price (see Nightly Price) and the Weekend Price (see Extra Charges). You can also setup important things like Cleaning Fee, Security Deposit, Extra Guest Rates and Weekend Pricing.

Remember that you can change the daily price in the Calendar later on.

Nightly Price

This lets you turn Smart Pricing on and off and set the Base Price.

We don't like Smart Pricing, so we turned it off.

We set the Base Price to \$110. We set it high initially then start to lower it later on in the Calendar if we get within a month of that date without it being taken (see the Pricing Chapter).

Length of Stay Discounts

We like someone staying longer (but no longer than a month) so, we setup the following discounts.

Weekly discount.	12%
Monthly discount.	25%

Early Bird Discount

We don't like giving out unnecessary discounts, so we don't offer any Early Bird Discount. However, this may be of use to Hosts who prefer their place booked well in advance. I looked through the Airbnb Community forum and some hosts stated that they used it to make up for changing to a harsher Cancellation Policy.

Extra Charges

These are covered in more detail in the Pricing Chapter.

Cleaning Fee

We set our Cleaning fee to be \$30. We felt that was a reasonable amount for a cleanup after Guests without them feeling cheated.

Security Deposit

Remember this deposit is not charged to the Guest when they make the Booking, only when a damage claim is made by the Host. However, it is pre-authorized when the Guest performs the Booking. The Security Deposit should be enough to cover significant damages but also not be so much as to prevent the booking when the transaction is authorized. We set it to \$300, which may not be enough for you.

Extra Guests

This is important. We have two bedrooms in our apartment, but we normally only rent out to 1 or 2 people at a time during the week and 2-4 people at the weekend. If we were to set the Nightly Price and Weekend Price for 4 people, it would be much higher and drive away potential Guests.

So, we setup an Extra Guests fee of \$20 for every guest after 2. If you have 4 people staying for 2 nights, then this is an extra \$80. Not an inconsiderable amount over a long period of time.

You Should Communicate to Guests that this Fee Applies to Extra Guests

You should add notes to the listing to tell Guests to book with the correct number of Guests. You should also inform Guests in the Booking Message that they need to check that they have booked with the correct number of Guests. See the 'Bookings' chapter for more info.

Weekend Pricing

If you think demand is higher at the weekend (probably) then bump up your Weekend Price. It's for Friday and Saturday nights.

Currency

This is mainly useful for Hosts who have properties in different countries. Not for us!

Availability

This section is all about controlling access to your rental. When it can be booked, how long people can stay, when they can check-in and checkout etc.

Reservation Preferences

Advance Notice

This how much advance notice you need before you can take-in a Guest. You can adjust this to the amount of time you feel comfortable with.

Having a long period here can affect business with 'last minute' Guests.

We have this set to 1 days' notice. That means that we are going to miss out on Guests looking for a place that night. We can deal with that.

Preparation Time

This is how many days you want to block before and after each reservation.

This may be useful if you don't want to be slammed all the time cleaning and preparing the rental. It may also be useful if you want to get into Airbnb slowly and are in no rush.

Booking Window

This is how early you are going to allow Guests to book. We have this set to 6 months as we don't want Guests to book up 'high demand' dates before we have set them up.

Example:

We find out the 2020 Superbowl is set to be in Atlanta. A clever Guest books the dates before we have had a chance to bump them up to what the market will stand.

Trip Length

This is where you can setup the parameters for how long Guests can stay.

You need to look up the Squatter rights in your state. In most states, when you agree to 30+ day stays in your unit, you're putting yourself at greater risk of being targeted for squatting.

We setup a minimum of 2 nights and a maximum of 30 nights, as we don't want even the remote chance of Airbnb squatters!

Check-in and Checkout

Check-in and Checkout times

These is also editable under 'Booking Settings'. Refer to [here](#) and [here](#).

Days of Week Guests Can't Check In

This is obviously for commercial Hosts or those that need other people to manage their rentals. Maybe they employee people at the weekend to check people in and out then only allow week-long bookings?

The calendar also gives you control what days Guests can't check-in or checkout.

Sync Calendars

This is probably very useful if you are managing one or more rentals with more than one service.

Example:

You would use Sync Calendars to combine your Airbnb and HomeAway calendars if you were using both services.

Linked Airbnb Calendars

This is useful if you have multiple listings on Airbnb and you need to link their calendars to prevent double-booking.

Local Taxes and Laws

This section is informational.

It requests the Host to ensure:

- That they operate their rental within the local codes and ordinances.
- That they get the appropriate permits.
- That they pay local taxes.

It also informs Hosts that they are legally responsible for their Listing.

Co-hosts

Invite a Friend

This enables a Host to give someone else access to their Airbnb account.

This can be very useful if you need to go on vacation and you want a friend or a family member to manage the rental while you are away.

We don't use this as we have the Airbnb app installed on a tablet, which we keep in our private area above the apartment. When we go on vacation, we have my wife's sister (or another relative) stay and they use the app on the tablet.

I can see why it's useful though, especially for commercial Hosts.