

AIRBNB BEGINNERS GUIDE

LAUREN COATS



Airbnb Beginner's Guide to Hosting

How to set up and run your
own Airbnb business

4th edition

Lauren Coats

Art by Danielle O'Malley

introduction

Know that you can and will accomplish your dreams. It all begins with believing in yourself and knowing that it is going to happen. Then you'll need hard work, dedication, ignited passion, focus, humbleness, and honorable intentions. Believe in yourself, even if no one else does.

You'll get \$40 in free Airbnb travel credit as a new host when you use my Airbnb Brand Ambassador New Host Referral link. Consider supporting me this way, as I'll get a sweet bonus after you welcome your first guest.

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My intention in writing and publishing this book is to empower and enable seekers of financial independence with the best tips they need to become successful on the Airbnb platform quickly, while simultaneously creating and honoring positive experiences for the travelers they host.

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chapter I

the golden key

welcome superstar!

I've written this book specifically for brand new Airbnb entrepreneurial hosts seeking financial independence who will manage between 1-10 vacation rentals, primarily by themselves, or train employees to be reliable and available to support the guests and business operations. You will learn how to make decisions to create your Airbnb's brand, decoration, furnishing, vibe, how to navigate pricing, get 5-star reviews, and become an efficient, relaxed host naturally. I intend to offer valuable insights to make your hosting journey smooth, confident, profitable, and successful from day 1 and to minimize your frustrations and failures due to lack of experience.

the golden key

Managing your guest expectations is the #1 secret to creating a successful vacation rental business. Your primary work as a host is to identify, manage, and follow through on meeting and exceeding your guest's expectations. This is how you're going to be able to ask your guests to leave you 5-star reviews directly! *It's much easier than it sounds.*

Airbnb's review system allows users to choose between 1 and 5 stars, and receiving 4 stars is technically a negative score according to the re-

view system because it shows that you failed to fulfill your guest's expectations. How often your Airbnb listing will show up in the search results depends on your score. The higher it is, the more often you'll appear = more bookings = a more profitable business. It's ALL about 5-stars.

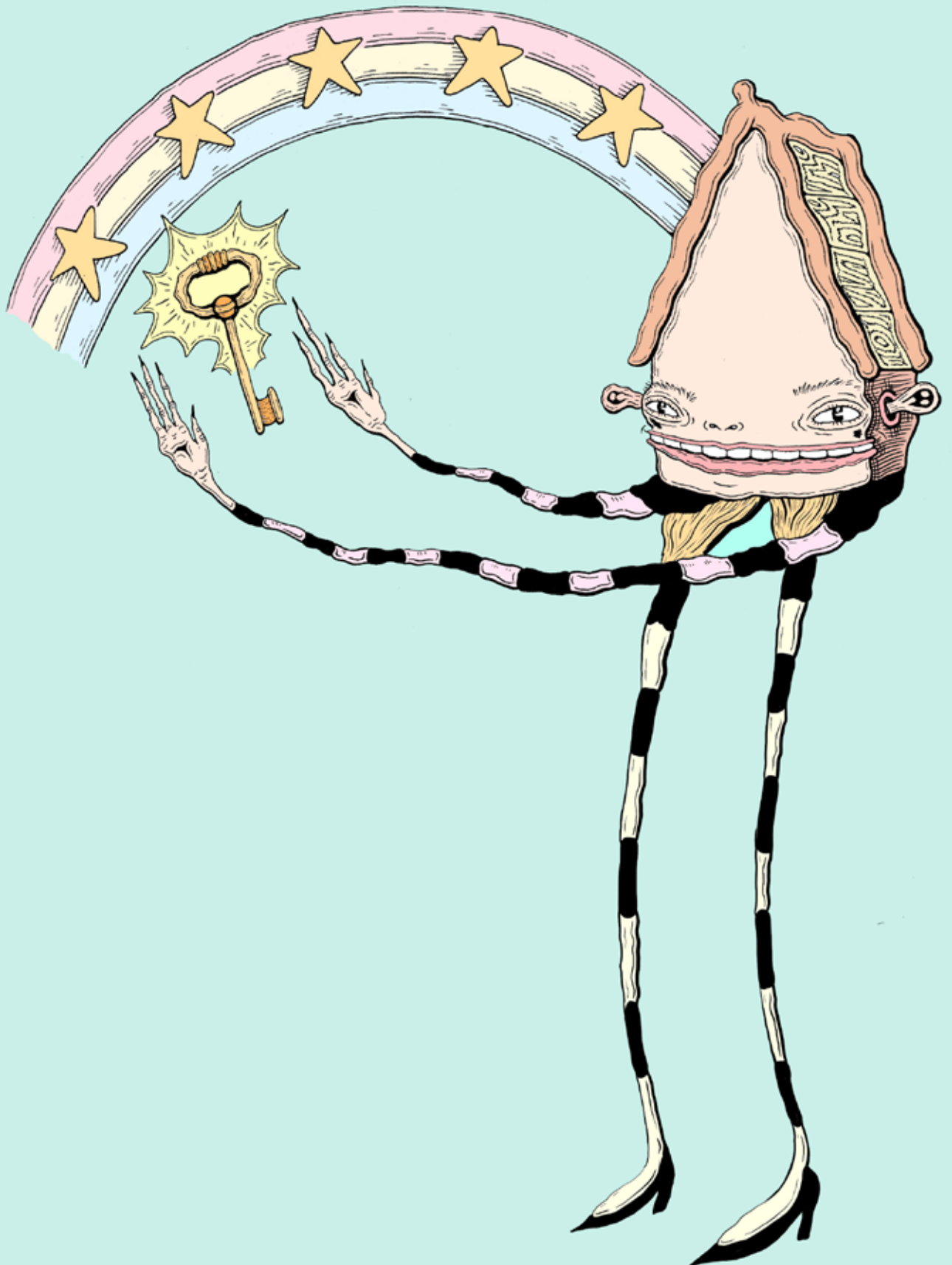
so how do you get 5-star reviews?

First step, truly offer a great guest experience. I believe in you! What kind of service would you want to receive on your vacation? A smooth check in, accuracy of the listing, and having your expectations met. Essentially, feeling like you got what you were expecting at a good value for how much you paid.

Your guests want your house to look like it does in the photos. If you haven't correctly represented your space and have posted inaccurate photos, Airbnb may give them a refund without your consent. Don't claim it to be "spacious" when it is a tiny studio. A guest will leave you 5 stars if they received what they expected to receive.

This is VERY achievable! They are not leaving you a review that says your place is a 5-star resort, 5 stars simply means their expectations were fulfilled.

Another primary guest expectation is that you will be available to receive communication from your guests when they need something, last minute, late, urgently, or somewhat immediately. If you work a full-time job with your phone on silent all day and go offline for days at a time, you may be brewing some potentially harmful future reviews, big refunds, and costly cancellations. I recommend to check your phone every few hours when hosting guests. As Airbnb listings succeed based on their review scores and written reviews, one of your top priorities is setting your guest's expectations accurately. We can break this down into three steps.



Step 1. Accurately describe your space on your listing, don't inauthentically exaggerate. Share any negative features of your space on your listing that guests will definitely notice and have to deal with. They don't want to be surprised by loud noises of a highway or the construction site next door, mold on the ceiling, no hot water, no cooking supplies, no shampoo, no towels, or any other situation that can interrupt their smooth, peaceful travel and enjoyment.

Step 2. Use photos that show the true reality of your home. We definitely want to glamorize your listing with professional photos. But if your photos do not accurately reflect what you are offering and you choose to hide parts of your home that are ugly or less than perfect, you are sure to get 1-3 star reviews consistently.

Step 3. If you will not be available to help your guests 24/7, be sure to set that expectation on your listing. Guests will automatically expect that anytime they write to you with an urgent concern, you'll be available. If you know that you are not online often or have other responsibilities, you can share this on your listing in the "interactions with guests" section to property set the expectation.

the golden key philosophy

Your guests are super excited about their trip! They worked hard to save money for this vacation, and if you haven't truly represented yourself or your service, you may fail to meet their expectations. What your guests think they are getting should be delivered, or you can count on very low review scores, some hate mail, and/or Airbnb automatically processing them a refund.

Use all your energy to make your space great and ready to gently exceed their expectations. Have something awesome in the home that surprises your guests! This could be a small welcome gift, personalized note, a few drinks in the fridge, nice luxurious towels, soft sheets - a small detail that

wasn't expressed in the listing, but your guests are sure to appreciate, notice, and will make them think, "wow! It's even better than I thought it was going to be!" That's the host's golden key, the art of earning 5-star reviews and obtaining Super Host status (explained later).

to be or not to be?

i. can I commit to a 24/7 online lifestyle?

You will be playing a vacation rental property management role, which is usually a 24/7 commitment. As a responsible host, you or your co-host will be available to your guests last minute and semi-around the clock. Sometimes guests will lock themselves out at 11pm and request you come over right away with a spare key, or one afternoon a hot water heater may break and you will spend the whole day meeting handymen and handling the repair. When an urgent request arises, you can also reply to your guests with your soonest availability and try to accommodate them ASAP according to your schedule.

Depending on the issue, they could receive a refund from Airbnb due to any delay in your response or having their trip ruined by your unavailability. Some requests may need to be handled immediately, so the best practice is to always have someone available to speak with guests. I have been at social events having a great time, only to have to leave for an Airbnb emergency. To have designated off-hours, you'll need to hire a co-host to be on duty when you're offline.

In general, guests want to be well cared for and feel that your top priority is their comfort. When hosting, I look at my phone every 3-4 hours to ensure an Airbnb situation hasn't gotten out of control out of nowhere. Week-long, disconnected, offline camping trips will happen after my Airbnb host career ends or I hire an unbelievably proficient co-host. You can definitely hire someone to run your Airbnb App and take phone calls. Still, every detail and nuance of protocol for particular issues

is hard to train someone on, especially if you have multiple rentals with different property owners or in different locations.

There is a sensitivity to handle everything correctly to ensure positive guest reviews and positive client, owner, landlord relations. Can you trust your friend, employee, or co-host to handle every situation with maximum hospitality and problem-solving skills? To follow all of your detailed instructions accurately? If you are the property owner, it will be much easier to train your co-host to provide excellent service to your guests when you go offline. Just know, you are most likely committing to being available or managing someone to be online 24/7, unless you are going to block the calendar when you choose to be offline.

2. do I want to commit to be an amazing host?

To be a fantastic host, and therefore make fantastic money, you must have the hosting trifecta. Excellent communication skills + incredible cleaning team + a smooth check-in/check-out process for your guests. Responding to guest questions, concerns, and extra requests with speed, care, and detailed accuracy is essential, and making sure the guests have checked in without delay or frustration are important communication responsibilities. Lockboxes for check-in are a host's best friend. You will need cleaners that are reliable, make themselves available to you, have excellent attention to detail, and are able to follow your instructions.

3. do I have the time and finances to invest in this?

If you set up an Airbnb from scratch in an empty house, you have quite a task ahead of you. Depending on your budget, availability, and the team you have to assist you, it could take a month from start to finish. Buying all the supplies, furnishing the home, decorating, photographing, making your listing, and doing competition research to price your home accordingly, it is a long list of tasks.

In general, it will cost a minimum of \$2,000-\$10,000 to set up an Airbnb from scratch in the USA, I'm talking an empty house or apartment. It could be the first month's rent + security deposit, purchasing all the necessary items and furniture, paying workers to help move furniture and utility bills. Bedding alone can easily cost \$500+. Be aware it could take a few months to make back your initial investment.

Suppose the market is good for Airbnb rentals in your area, and you have made the basic calculations of your expenses, time investment, financial investment, the achievable price per night, occupancy rate, and profit margin. In that case, you could have just started an amazing small business with plenty of room for growth. If the price per night and monthly income from your bookings will not cover your expenses, you need to re-think your new Airbnb project.

chapter 2

setting up your new space

how exciting!

You've found a space where the local government, owner, and/or landlord has given you permission to do Airbnb legally. Maybe you've just bought a new investment property or you'll be welcoming guests into your own home. Now it's time to set it up!

What is the vibe or feeling you want your space to have? What is your budget for all the supplies, furniture, and decorations? Do you have an SUV or truck for picking up furniture? With this information, you will develop a buying strategy for your new supplies.

what is a buying strategy?

It is the method of using retail shops and online forums to buy your supplies according to your timeline and budget. Ikea, Amazon, Craigslist, Wayfair.com, Overstock.com, second-hand shops/thrift stores, Big Lots, Home Goods, dollar stores, Goodwill, Marshalls, and Wal-Mart are great economical resources for furnishing your new Airbnb. Many of these recommendations are American over-stock retail stores, selling brand new, brand names for 40-60% less than department stores. You may have an equivalent available in your country.

What is your timeline and budget? Depending on your answer, you will buy things quicker for convenience or have more time to shop around for better prices and designs. Maybe you will need to hire someone and rent a truck for moving furniture, coordinating your furniture buying/moving on those days.

developing your buying strategy

Make a list of all the items you need to buy. You can reference the supply list I have provided in the following chapter to have an overview of everything you may need for each room. High-quality bedding can be purchased quickly through Amazon. For all other items, first, go to the stores you like best and buy the cooler, nicer, design items at an affordable cost. You can peruse second-hand shops, Home Goods, Big Lots, Marshalls, Ikea, etc for these items, or any discount retail store.

If you don't find what you love and what's affordable during these exploring trips, head over to Wal-Mart as your last stop to buy everything you couldn't find elsewhere. If you don't find it there, go back to Amazon for convenience and speed. An Amazon prime membership will come in handy throughout your hosting career if your in the USA.

purchasing furniture

There are many different places to buy furniture. Free Craigslist (a classified advertisement website), paid Craigslist, yard sales, Amazon, Alibaba.com, Ikea, thrift shops, second-hand furniture shops, Overstock.com, NextDoor App, Letgo.com, Goodwill, Offerup.com, any second-hand websites. Many items you can also buy new from discount stores like Wal-Mart or Big Lots.

assembling furniture

I resist furnishing the entire home with Ikea goods, as I don't have the

patience for assembly and following the detailed instructions. I usually hire a friend to do it, but at \$15+/hour, it takes my friends so long that I usually could have bought something I liked better with the money I paid for them to put it together. I created a job, this is positive, but Ikea furniture can be mega-intense if you are using it in the entire place. Keep assembly time in mind.

furniture positions

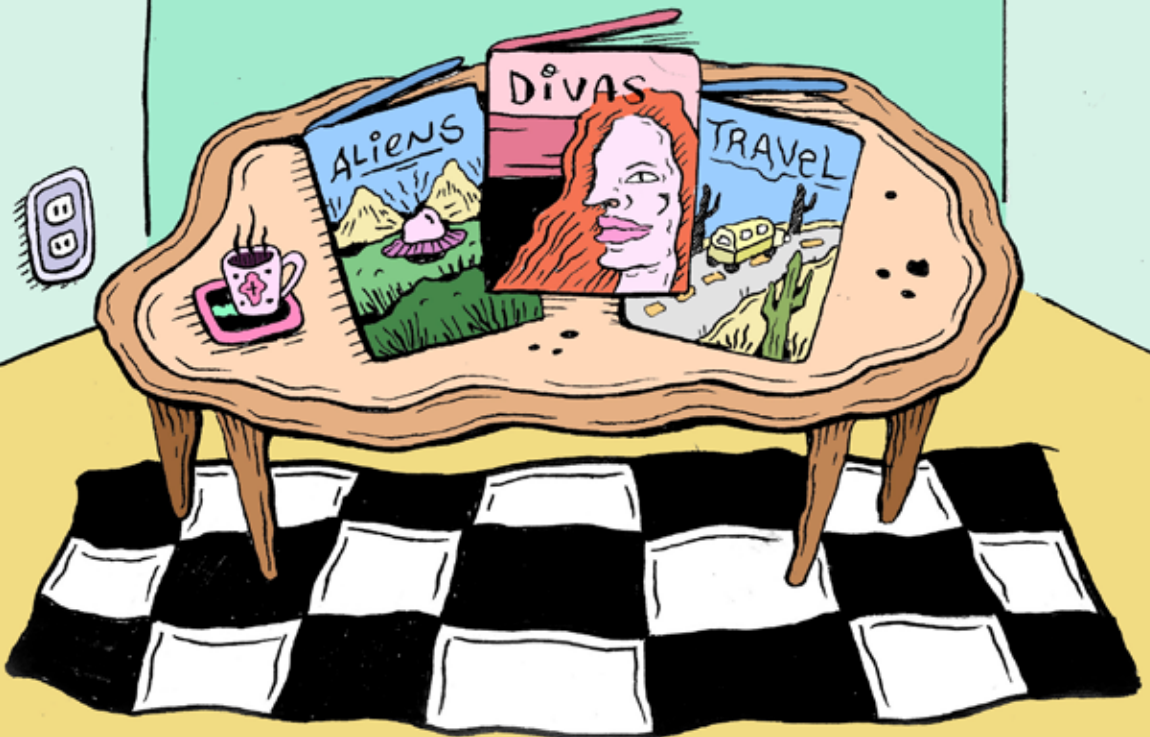
Move around your couch, carpets, chairs, dining table, coffee table, and armoires for best decorative value and spacious living. Try more than one set up, take photos and ask your friends what they think. If you have an aesthetically sensitive friend with good taste, invite them over and have them critique your furniture position ideas. Just because your friend, partner, or family member suggests a particular furniture set up, do what feels right to you. You can also view the photographs and make decisions based on how they look and feel. If you have the budget for an interior designer, I highly recommend hiring one.

decorating the space

The home décor areas of Ikea, Wal-Mart, Costco, Ross, Marshalls, Amazon, Home Goods, World Market, and your local dollar store are great places to find decorations. I like to use succulents or a few little cactus plants in a cute pot as they are low maintenance, candle sets (which is a controversial move due to the risk of fire), high-quality artificial plants in beautiful pots, little statues, colorful books, antiques, baskets, and rocks and shells. A decorative mirror in each room is a great way to fill up wall space and is easy to match to your furniture and artwork.

décor goals

When you look at the furniture you have, the location of your property and the amenities you offer, you can think about what your goals are for



the space. What are the best attributes and how can you enhance them? Do you have an awesome patio? Fill it with plants and a relaxing patio table and chairs, photograph it, and then highlight it in your listing as a zen morning coffee space or romantic evening wine table. Great view? You could highlight that in your featured photo and decorate the space around it. Mountain cabin? You can decorate your place to accent the marketable, unique features you have and let them shine.

theme

Is your home beach-y, neutral, family-friendly, clean and minimal, modern and elegant, bohemian, kitschy, eclectic, or a hotel-style, business friendly place? What kind of environment and experience do you want to create? What design and aesthetics do you want to have? Do you want to cater to business people, couples, large families, millennials? All these groups, or maybe 2 or 3? Setting goals and thinking about the style you want your space to have will guide your purchases along the way. Maybe you are on a very tight budget and will be using free or available second-hand furniture, no problem! See what you can piece together by buying artwork or decorative pillows to tie your odds and ends together.

feel

How do you want your space to feel? Cozy and homey, modern and chic, minimal and grey, colorful and artistic, relaxing and zen, spacious and neutral? You must ask yourself what is the feel of your home, as this will guide your purchasing, decorating and also help you to describe your space when you create your Airbnb listing.

artwork

Artwork can be a very expensive and a subjective topic. I always recommend one or two paintings in each room that work well together and a large decorative mirror on the other wall. I first buy artwork that goes

with the furniture, then complementary decorative mirrors, and lastly, the items for coffee tables, counters, bedside tables, and bathroom vanities. I use mirrors between 1.5'-2.5' x 2'-3'. You can also hang it on top of a dresser for a vanity feel in the bedrooms. You can start to purchase your art and design items in any order, just know that at some point you'll need to tie it all together so it doesn't feel chaotic or random.

home décor items

There are many elegant, simple, and chic items you can place on coffee tables, bedside tables, kitchen shelves, bathroom shelves, to add a homey feeling and 'fill out' the space. Little statues, succulent plants, small boxes, picture frames with lovely nature photos, and used books are a few examples. In general, people choose Airbnb for the "home" feeling (also the kitchen!), so if your furnishing an empty place, be sure to start collecting knick-knacks, books, and fun carpets where you can.

Without home décor items, your place could feel barren and not lived in. I like to use upscale and tasteful artificial plants. They are not easy to find. You may find a lot of plastic, rubber-looking ones, which I don't recommend. Buying inexpensive books at Goodwill, thrift stores or second-hand shops for fifty cents to \$2 will fill up a bookshelf, coffee table, or bedroom shelves.

Goodwill, the Salvation Army, and second-hand shops are a great place to pick up inexpensive or unique decorative items for the home. You can also choose stylish and elegant pots for some house plants, just be sure to select plants that only need water once a week or less. It's not a great idea to ask your guests to water the plants... they want to chill.

chapter 3

purchasing supplies

what kind of bedding should I purchase?

I suggest buying microfiber linens online. They resist stains, lint, and wrinkles. Wrinkles are a huge issue with bedding – you will not want to be paying your cleaner extra time to iron all your sheets and duvets. I buy mostly from Amazon, they have an incredible assortment of microfiber options, and in-store bedding can be much more expensive. I prefer to use medium shades as they show fewer stains and lint. Light colors will stain easily and you cannot bleach them, and dark colors will show lint dramatically. Practical, long-lasting color choices would be medium grey, medium blue, teal, and purple colors.

Your bedding choice is also going to depend on the level of luxury you are offering. If this is an expensive upscale listing, I recommend going with white, as it is the standard sign of a luxury hotel. But know your cleaner will need to bleach them regularly and you can expect to replace your bedding much more often due to stains. As a traveler, I prefer white, but as a host, it is the more expensive choice.

Heavy duty and ribbed towels are recommended, as your towels will be washed an incredible amount and little threads may come loose and pull, destroying the towel for future reservation. Ribbed towels hide

these imperfections. I recommend stocking at least one extra towel for guests. For example, if you have four guests, provide five towels. You can also provide the same amount of towels every time, regardless of your guest count, to keep track of your bedding inventory easily. This will assist you in charging guests for missing towels, but know that most guests will use every towel you give them, so this choice will require more laundry time. If you live near a beach, river, lake, or other swimming areas, I suggest providing separate beach/outdoor towels, as your guests will take your bath towels there if you don't provide an alternative.

the stained bedding challenge

When your guest checks out, and you (or your cleaner) discover a stain, you will want to charge them the \$40-\$80 you spent on the sheet set. They may then retaliate by leaving you a 1-star review and/or detailing everything in their review that was not 100% perfect about their stay as a kind of revenge. It's even possible they lie in the review as a catharsis for their frustration of this unexpected extra fee.

Asking a guest for a 5-star review while simultaneously charging them \$60 to replace your sheets from a small mascara stain is not ideal. There is a delicate, sensitive way to approach this, such as sending a photo and asking if they can pay the replacement, but then you won't want to suggest that they leave you a review. If this is your first, second or third guest and you are desperate for positive reviews to get the business going, I would suggest eating the cost in exchange for a potentially high-quality review!

kitchen supplies

There are quite a few essentials for the kitchen, but how stocked you want to be is up to you. You will need a decent quality set of pots and pans (they will quickly be destroyed if they are very low quality), cooking utensils, eating utensils, plates, bowls, and cups for a few extra

people. For example, if you offer a space for three guests, you should have eating utensils for at least four to five people.

A microwave, coffee maker, dish soap, hand soap, trash bags, a clean sponge, knives, cutting board, cookie sheet, oven mitts, and cooking essentials like oil, salt, pepper, spices, coffee, powdered creamer, and sugar are the basics. Adding additional cooking supplies like a toaster, grater, and whisk are up to you. I like to fill out the kitchen the best I can, as many guests choose Airbnb instead of a hotel so they can cook. I recommend Ikea, dollar stores, Amazon, and Wal-Mart for these items.

bathroom supplies

A sparkling clean bathroom is so important for running a successful Airbnb. As there are very few items going into the bathroom, each one is very important. A decorative, refillable hand soap dispenser, good quality shampoo, conditioner, body wash, non-damaged bath mats, a mold-free shower curtain, and color-coordinated hand towels are the main items. A decorative item on the bathroom sink is a nice touch.

I like to use bath mats from Ikea. They have grey and beige options, among a few other colors. It is a soft, velvety shag mat, washes very easily with towels and is very durable and long-lasting. They make large and small rectangle sizes. The large size is called “Toftbo” and the small size is called “Badaren.” If you choose to use bath mats with a rubber bottom, the rubber will deteriorate after a few laundry cycles and spread to your other bedding.

You can purchase large, pump-style shampoo and conditioner bottles at Costco (wholesale superstore) or online. We used Trésemme as it has a salon-style bottle, a decent reputation, comes in a large size and is affordable and available at Costco in bulk. Using a large, pump-style body wash is also a great option instead of giving a new bar soap to each guest which will be thrown away after their short stay at your place. You

can also buy decorative, refillable pump bottles for your shampoos, label them, and then refill them as necessary.

To summarize, I like to have a colorful hand soap dispenser, a colorful hand towel and then neutral bath mats and neutral shower curtains. Having a super clean and decorative bathroom will add a lot of comfort to your guests, as we all enjoy relaxing in a clean shower. I recommend Ikea, Amazon, and Wal-Mart for these items.

cleaning supplies

Your method for purchasing cleaning supplies and stocking cleaning supplies is up to you, but it is recommended to have a set for your cleaners locked away in the supply closet, as well as some available for your guests. The basics would be a broom and dustpan, all-purpose cleaner, rubber gloves, glass cleaner, cleaning rags, a washable microfiber mop, and vacuum if you have carpets or not.

Guests will often use these supplies to clean up after themselves during long-term stays and before checking out because they also desire to receive a 5-star review from you. You could require your cleaners to bring their own supplies if you prefer not to stock lots of extra supplies. I use Mrs. Meyers's natural cleaners and advertise that I use non-toxic, chemical-free supplies where available. This is a personal choice and also a marketing tool for chemically-conscious guests and families. I recommend Wal-Mart, Amazon, and dollar stores for these items. Consider having a small vacuum for guests to use, and a larger one for you in your supply closet. Vacuums pick up a lot of hair, a super important thing to get rid of.

setting up a locked supply closet

You will need an area to designate as your locked 'supply closet.' Here you will store extra toilet paper, paper towels, dish soap refill bottles,



hand soap refill bottles, shampoos, conditioners, soaps, bedding sets, refill coffee, oil, salt, pepper, trash bags, cleaning supplies, kitchen sponges, pillows, air mattresses, and anything else you use to refill the supplies for your guests. I highly recommend choosing a closet, large cabinet, garage (if stored here, place all items in plastic bins with tight lids for protection), or storage area accessible only to the cleaning team.

If you do not lock this supply area, you can expect your guests to go through it, use whatever they like, and take some of it with them. Especially in American culture, traveling to a hotel or going on vacation puts us in the mindset of luxury and abundance, and we like to use all the towels we can and look through the cabinets for free extra things to enjoy. I use a lock with numbers/letters so any cleaner can access it without needing a key. It is also recommended to keep an extra set of clean bedding here, in case your bedding is damaged there is a clean, spare set on-site.

Set Up Supply Lists

This list is for homes with queen-size beds, a bathroom, kitchen, patio, BBQ area and a living room sleeping option like a pull-out couch, air mattress, folding bed or cot. Edit this list to fit your space!

living room furniture

Sleeper couch

Coffee table

Mirror, paintings

End tables

Lamps

Carpets

TV, cable, Roku, Netflix

TV stand

Air mattress
Folding bed or cot

bedroom furniture

Queen mattresses
Mattress protectors
Queen bed frames
Bedside tables
Lamps
Decorations, candles, plants, books
TV's
Mirrors, paintings, artwork
Hangers for closet
Dressers
Alarm clocks

general furniture

Dining table
Dining chairs
Desk
Desk chair
Desk ornaments
Carpets
Doormats
Patio furniture
BBQ
2 lockboxes
Ironing board
Iron
Twin-size folding bed
Large laundry bags
Laundry basket

Heaters
A/C units

decorations

Decorative candle sets
Artificial plants
Used books
Succulent and cactus plants
Paintings
Large mirrors
Real plants for the entrance, patio and house

kitchen supplies

Hot water kettle
Microwave
Coffee maker
Toaster
Wooden spoon, spatula, whisk, kitchen utensil set
Fork, spoon and knife set for 10 people
Knife and scissor block set
Ziplock bags, aluminum foil, saran wrap, wax paper
Mixing bowls
Dish drying rack
Cookie sheets and bakeware
Oven mits
Dishrags
Kitchen sponges
Dish soap
Dishwasher tabs
Large and small trash bags
Large coffee refill
Coffee

Powdered coffee creamer
White and brown sugar
Coffee filters
Cooking oils
Salt and pepper
Basic spice set
Set of 8-10 plates, cups, bowls, coffee cups, glasses, wine glasses
Wine bottle opener
BBQ grill, lighter fluid, long lighter, grill tongs, charcoal
Large dish soap refill
Tea
Large trash can
Placemats for table
Coasters

one bathroom

2 large shampoo, conditioner, body wash
1 bubble bath if you have a tub
Shower curtain
Shower curtain rings
Decorative refillable soap holder
Decorations, fake plants, statues, succulents, books
Toilet brush
Plunger
Small trash can
Hairdryer

cleaning supplies

Mop, I suggest washable microfiber
Bucket
All-purpose cleaners
Vacuum

Cleaning rags
Gloves
Glass cleaner
Spray bathroom cleaners
Broom and dustpan
Scrub brush/cleaning sponges
Large lint rollers
Laundry detergent

refill supplies

Toilet paper
Paper towels
Trash bags small and large
Coffee, oil, coffee filters, shampoos
Laundry detergent

linens for a queen 1 bedroom + twin bed + 1 bathroom

This list includes one extra bedding set, and one piece per item as a spare.

7-10 bath towels
4-6 hand towels
7 beach towels
3-5 bathmats
3-5 queen sheet sets
3 duvet covers
4 pillows
Extra blankets, throws for the couch, decorative pillows
7-9 washcloths
1 queen comforter
1 twin comforter
Twin bed linens, 2 twin sheets sets, 2 duvets, pillowcases

**linens for queen 2 bedroom + queen pull out + twin bed +
2 bathrooms**

This list includes one extra bedding set and one piece per item as a spare.

18-20 bath towels

8 hand towels

18 beach towels

5 bathmats

7 queen sheet sets, fitted sheet, flat sheet, 2 pillowcases

7 duvet covers that come with 2 pillowcases

8 pillows

Extra blankets, throws for the couch, alternative style blankets

Decorative pillows for the couch

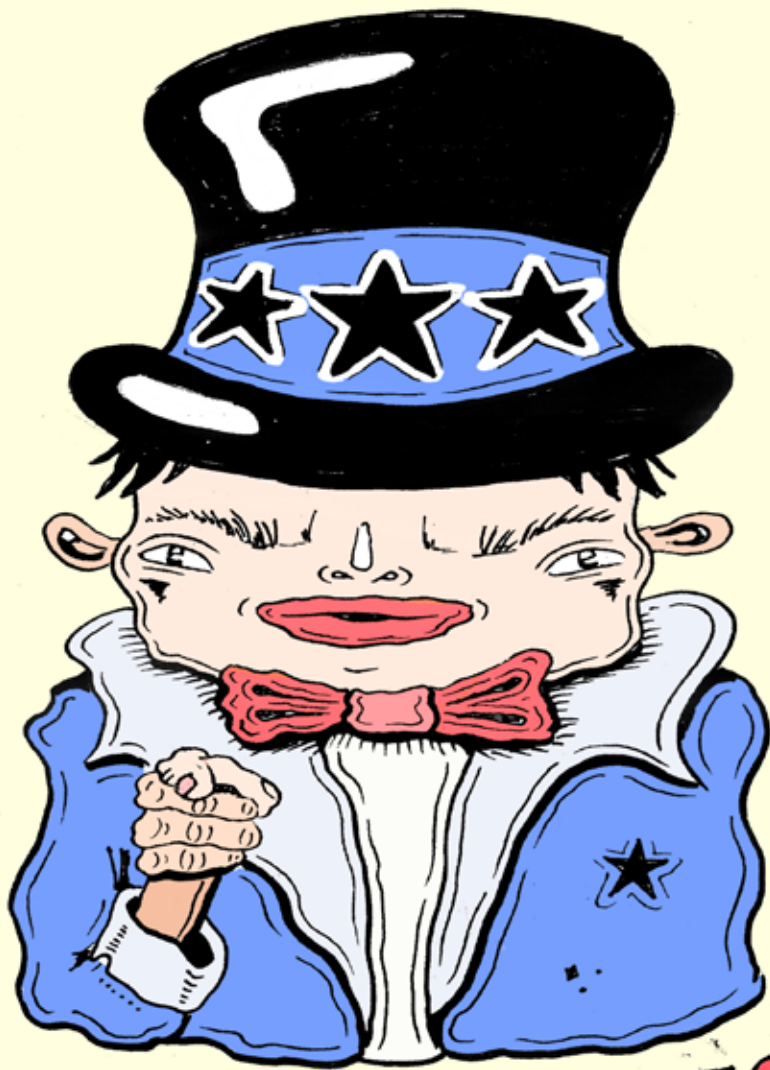
18-20 washcloths

3 queen comforters

1 twin comforter

Twin bed linens, 2 twin sheets sets, 2 duvets, pillowcases

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I WANT YOU

to get 40\$ travel credit when you use Lauren's new host referral link

chapter 4

creating the listing

*If you are a brand-new host to Airbnb, you will get \$40 in free travel credit when you use my new host referral link to create your first listing as a host! www.airbnb.com/r/laurencoats

photography

Hiring a professional or semi-professional photographer with a fisheye/wide-angle lens is the best investment you will make for your Airbnb's success by far. Cell phones and regular digital SLR lenses do not capture the entire space in the photo. These photos can make a space look small, unattractive and unprofessional. Blurry or dimly lit photos will not get you the results you are working so hard for. Please do not underestimate the importance of this mandatory step for your success.

Achieving a highly-priced nightly rate for your rental is a direct reflection of the quality of your photos. New iPhones using the .05x setting will capture quite a bit of the space and produce high-quality images, although hiring a professional photographer with a wide-angle lens is still recommended.

When doing your photoshoot, make sure the home is super clean and that everything is staged and set up beautifully. The hand towels are

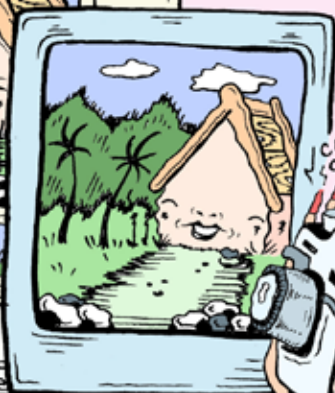
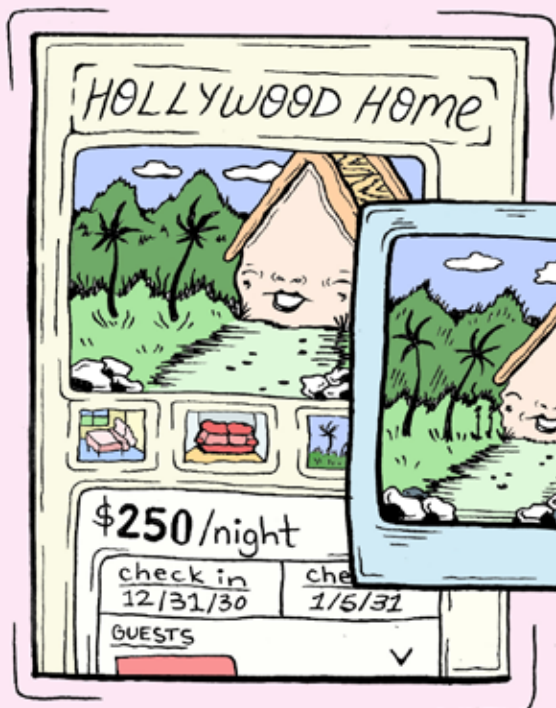
folded nicely in the bathroom, duvet covers are on and stretched flat on the bed, the kitchen is clean and not cluttered, bathrooms are spotless and have something decorative or colorful (empty grey bathrooms don't feel very welcoming). Open all the windows or curtains, turn on every light, and do the photoshoot on a sunny day around mid-day. Doing it in the evening will not give your space a bright, warm feeling. Using a flash on your camera as the main method of illuminating your space is not recommended. Add some fruit on the kitchen table, a book on the coffee table, and small touches that stage the home to look lived in.

To find a photographer, you can put an ad online for a photo student or a real estate photographer to come with a wide-angle/fisheye lens. The cost to professionally photograph an Airbnb space is usually between \$100-\$350. The photographer will do the shoot and then a basic edit of the images for you. No need for studio lights as you'd like your photos to look realistic and accurate.

Airbnb also offers a professional photography service on their website in select areas where they have contracted photographers working with them. I have worked with one in Los Angeles, California, and had a positive experience. Airbnb's price is around \$150-\$350 depending on your homes size. You can get a free quote on their website for your listing, although from the time of the request for a photoshoot until they photograph it and load the images into your Airbnb listing, it could take 3-5 weeks.

photo editing

When selecting photos and uploading them onto your listing, you want to present the four strongest, most beautiful, most telling photos you have first. These are going to be the photos that people see when they are cruising Airbnb for potential homes. After those first four initial photos, you'll want to give them a visual tour of the home. Start with the living room, the sunroom if you have one, the bedrooms, the kit-



chen, the bathroom, the outdoor/patio area, and then the exterior if you wish to show it.

Between 12-22 photos are all you need. Do not put more! If you have a massive property or mansion, you can extend this to 24-25 photos. If you put too many photos, especially repetitive photos of the same areas, you are declaring that you are an unprofessional host who is going to waste their time and provide an immature service. Your professional presentation here with a clear, well-lit, visual storytelling sequence of photos is sharing so much about your professional ability to take care of them as a guest. As they walk from room to room through your photo selection, their imagination is going to light up, the fantasy of what their experience could be will flood their veins, dopamine is released.... An emotional bond has been made. They will pay whatever it costs, they want your house!

title

The title for your Airbnb listing should accentuate its best qualities. Do you have an ocean view? Very easy – your title should shout Ocean View. A sought-after, popular local neighborhood? Put it in the title. Quiet and private, cozy and sunny, spacious, antique, or retro? Highlight the best amenities and unique features in your title. Airbnb's search results algorithm favors longer titles, so add a + sign and include "+ Huge Patio" or "+ High Ceilings" - write the longest title you can. Some hosts believe adding an emoji like a heart or star catches the eye and leads to more bookings. You can do experiments with your title formatting throughout the hosting journey and see what brings more inquiries.

My Airbnb's in Hollywood had every title start with "Hollywood" which was the hottest feature to sell. Location, vibe, stand-out qualities, amenities, major benefits (like quiet, large, cozy, comfortable), or even something unique you offer. You can try out more eccentric titles and

see how it goes. You may want to appeal to the masses or a niche group, both are valuable strategies depending on your location. An important part of host marketing is doing experiments with your listing's design - trying different titles, descriptions, photo orders, etc. You may choose to change these a few times as to see what is attracting the most clicks.

copy

Write an inviting description about your place, highlighting the best aspects of your home, neighborhood, and its unique characteristics. Central location, near specific tourist attractions, peaceful and quiet or isolated, large and spacious, cozy or sunny, private or a busy area, any attractive adjectives and statements you can use to describe your place are welcome here.

In “The Space” area of the Airbnb listing, you can create a story about what it's like to stay at your home. “You enter into our large and spacious, cozy living room with a large wrap-around couch and a large flat-screen TV, great for enjoying a movie with friends. The open and fully stocked kitchen is great for preparing your family meals, and our sunny and beautifully decorated bedrooms have comfortable beds to relax in and have a peaceful rest.” You describe the attribute first, then suggest the benefit, painting a picture of how the guest could enjoy it during their stay. This will, once again, spark their imagination, create a fantasy in their mind, and seal that emotional bond we are looking for to consistently bring in top dollar bookings. The more demand your rental receives, the higher your pricing can go!

interactions with guests

In this section of your listing, you can customize your hosting lifestyle by setting guest communication and host availability expectations. If you choose to be more hands-off, an example for this section of your listing would be, “My full-time job and family schedule keep me very busy. I

will try to make myself available to you when needed, but I have other obligations as well.” This may deter people from booking your place, which will hurt your occupancy rate, but at least you have correctly set the expectation. I say, “I am on Airbnb messenger a few times a day, but texts to my cell are the quickest way to reach me.” Managing many properties without a co-host is a full-time job requiring you to constantly be online and available.

setting guest policies and the house rules

As the host, you will be designing your operating system and the guest experience. If you are managing the Airbnb property for a client/homeowner, or simply creating rules for your own place, you will need to specify in your listing what your policies are. No noise after 10pm? Specific quiet hours? No parties, events, or pets? No late check-in? Late check-in allowed, but you will not be available to help them after 11pm if they have an issue? Clearly setting the policies will ensure your guests have correct expectations. As discussed in chapter 1, when guest expectations are not met, they are likely to leave bad reviews, which will cost you.

chapter 5

hosting 101

What am I going to be doing as a host? What are my responsibilities?

guest communications

This includes answering questions, confirming reservations, sending guests the house manual and instructions before their arrival, giving local dining and activity recommendations, and receiving phone calls and text messages.

monitoring the calendar

The calendar is one of my favorite places on the Airbnb App. When you have launched your properties online, you can see day by day who is checking in and who is checking out displayed as a daily feed. You can also click on each properties calendar, set your prices by night, view your payouts, message guests, stay up to date with your guest's arrivals and departures, adjust the pricing for vacant nights, and review your progress and success with occupancy rates.

managing cleanings

Discussed in detail in the following chapter, cleaning is a complicated



Our local favorite,
Chez Paris, is
to die for!

system if you have many rentals. Hiring and training excellent cleaners is your first step. From there, you will be creating their schedule. The date, name of the property, and guest count should be included so the cleaner knows how many guests to set up for, such as extra beds, towels, and bedding. Knowing the location of your cleaner's washer and dryer, as well as its speed per load, will help you manage it.

keeping track of the bedding inventory

Guests will sometimes destroy or steal a washcloth, hand towels, or bath towels. My cleaner always leaves the same number of towels so we know if some are missing, regardless of the guest count. I have her inspect the bedding while taking it off the bed, looking for stains due to oil, permanent marker, make-up, adhesive, or burn holes. Bedding is costly because you need a lot of it, so staying on top of the inventory is important. Otherwise, you will be paying out of pocket regularly to replace unseen, damaged, or missing bedding.

managing supplies, re-stocking, re-ordering

Depending on your space, you may have many supplies and materials to purchase regularly. Training your cleaners to alert you on re-stocking needs is a great plan. Buying toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies, trash bags, and laundry detergent in bulk and then stocking it in the locked supply closet is recommended. You should be able to trust that your cleaner is not going to take supplies for themselves. You may also have to re-order bedding or furniture if things are damaged or broken. You could also have your supplies delivered to your cleaner's home, which they will bring with them the next time they clean.

managing expenses and recurring bills

You may be running an Airbnb for a property-owning client, at your own house, or in an apartment building. When setting up an Airbnb,

the main expenses are the monthly rent, supplies, furniture, and then purchasing the recurring supplies. This can be an initial investment of anywhere from \$500-\$10,000 depending on your style, what you already have, and the property's rent/mortgage. Then you will need to pay for home repairs and the recurring expenses like utilities and guest supplies. Gas, electric, trash, internet, TV, Netflix, gardener, toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, coffee, kitchen supplies, and cleaning supplies are your main recurring expenses.

organizing repairs

If your space is in an apartment building, this may involve calling the property manager or super to arrange a convenient time for both the handyman and the guest to make the repair. You may need to go on-site depending on the repair and the comfort level of your guests. If you are hosting a personally owned home or condo, you will need to curate a list of local, trustworthy, talented handymen and plumbers. Meeting, employing, training them on the units and where things are is vital for a self-sustaining Airbnb. If your handyman knows your place and can be trusted to have the extra lockbox code, it simplifies your job to call him and send him over (after checking with your guests first of course) to make quick, last-minute emergency repairs.

hiring gardeners and managing trash day

If you manage Airbnb's in personal homes, the grass and landscaping will need regular maintenance. If you are not cutting the grass yourself, you may need to hire a gardener to work independently, coming by every week or two weeks to tidy the yard. You may also choose to hire a neighbor, the gardener, or someone to stop by on trash days to put the cans in the street and bring them back in.

My gardener comes on the day the bins go to the street, and he does this for me. I then have my cleaner bring the bins back in on her next

clean there. I write on her schedule which days she needs to bring the trash bins in, so she doesn't forget. If you find yourself in a bind, you can always ask your guests to take the bins out for you. I cannot recommend this, as most guests would prefer no maintenance responsibilities during their stay.

communicating with Airbnb customer service

You will probably experience a guest issue where you're unsure what to do or how to handle the situation. One great thing about Airbnb is the call center, you can chat with a live person 24/7 about your issues. These days, the standard Airbnb phone operator has limited knowledge.

If you are requesting something they say they cannot do, ask to be transferred to a 'case manager.' These are senior agents who know the website's details, rules and can go into a reservation, make necessary changes for you, or call your guest and get things done for you. The live support agent may deny your request to speak to a case manager, which is okay. You can always hang up and call back to get another agent who may have more knowledge and experience to assist you.

At the beginning of my Airbnb career, everyone I spoke to knew everything I asked. Since 2018, the company has grown tremendously, and I think they've hired a new fleet of less knowledgeable, scripted phone operators. I try to keep my patience as they claim things 'can't be done' or 'don't exist' – because I know they do, I've done it before.

Always be polite! This is your business, your cash flow, your daily bread, and the Airbnb customer service representative is the "boss," they have power over your business. Simply ask for a case manager, and be even more polite and grateful towards them. They can help you. Yelling at an Airbnb employee is a quick way not to get what you want.

managing resolution center claims

The ‘resolution center’ is where you or your guest can make a claim for some kind of payment or refund request related to an issue or complaint. You can view this section in your Airbnb App or on the website. As a host, you are responsible for addressing your guest’s claims and complaints here and also publishing your own damage reports and requests for additional payments.

making damage reports

If your place is damaged in any way, you will want to immediately upload photos of the damage and make a claim in the Airbnb resolution center. This must be done by the main host’s account/the admin account, as a co-host cannot request or send money. If you are not the admin and cannot reach your main host or do not have their log-in details to immediately report it yourself through their account, call Airbnb customer service to alert them of the damage.

In the past, it was required to report and claim damage before the next guest arrived. This could be 3 pm the same day, and maybe you received photos from your cleaner of the damage at noon. You were on a three-hour time race to contact the necessary parties and claim the damage before it was too late. Airbnb wanted to make the correct guest responsible, to be done before another guest checks in.

Nowadays with ‘aircover,’ Airbnb’s new, free insurance policy, they say that hosts have 14 days to make a claim. I have not tested this new policy, but as a general rule, the sooner you make the damage claim and provide evidence, the smoother your claim is likely to be. It doesn’t make much sense to claim something 10 days later when you’ve already had 3 more guests stay at the property. How can you really prove who it was?

upgrading the space

After you've had your Airbnb for a while, you may receive valuable guest feedback or raise enough funds to take your space to the next level of luxury or comfort. You may want to add a fantastic BBQ and patio furniture set, get new art for the walls, add decorative chairs or carpets, or get more upscale bedding. There are endless possibilities for upgrading. You will also want to photograph the upgrades immediately, post them on your listing, and up your pricing accordingly!

use 'insights' to adjust your marketing techniques

Airbnb has added a section called 'insights' on your dashboard. As you begin your hosting career, this is where you are going to be able to do an in-depth review and evaluation of your business. Here you will find tabs such as performance evaluator, opportunities, quality, occupancy and rates, conversion stats, earning stats (income), Super Host evaluation and requirements, as well as a very detailed cleaning section for guidance on keeping your place tip top.

Using this information, you'll be inspired to convert more visitors to guests, see how often you appear in search results (which is an expression of how well you are doing in the Airbnb algorithm), and understand your performance over the past months. Don't get too hung up as a newbie, just keep being an awesome host, keeping your place clean and organized, and communicating in a timely fashion with good vibes. A good product and service will begin to shine and really pull in 5-star reviews over time.

chapter 6

vip communication techniques

pre-written quick reply messages

In the “quick replies” message area of the Airbnb App for hosts or desktop browser window, you can pre-write any helpful messages that you send all the time. I love this feature and highly recommend the time investment for writing informative, caring, clear, and universal messages to improve your speed, thoroughness, and communication capabilities with your guests.

This could be directions, parking instructions, the local coffee shop or breakfast joint recommendation, the wifi details, your early check-in policy, check-out protocol, asking for a 5-star review, you name it! Especially if you have more than one Airbnb, you are going to get tired of typing the same things over and over from scratch constantly. Go for a hike or spend some time petting your dog instead of madly poking away at your cell phone the wifi username and password...again!

for example...

I often get early check-in requests, but my cleaning team needs about 3 hours to clean, so the earliest check-in I offer is 2 pm instead of 3 pm. I have a pre-written, quick reply message I send to my guests when they

request an early check-in. “Hello! I’m so sorry, my cleaning team will not have the apartment ready until 2 pm at the earliest. When they finish, I will contact you right away so you can check in. Feel free to come by and drop your luggage off any time after 11:30 am. Just be sure to leave the keys in the lockbox so the cleaners can enter. Thanks!”

The same goes for review requests. “Hey! I hope you had a great stay at my place! Would you be up leaving a review about your experience? I will also leave a 5-star for you right now! Thanks!” You can also send a pre-written message when checking on your guests, “Hey! How is your stay going?” or when your guest makes a reservation, “We will be very happy to host you, thanks for booking with us! I’ll send more details about check-in and parking details closer to the date. Thanks!” With a touch of a few buttons, you can automate your common responses. I recommend you take the time to write these so they sound personal from you, not robotic or cold, automatic or absent of sentiment.

hands-off hosting

You can create an electronic guidebook, local guide binder and house manual that will do your job for you. Compile a list of all the best local grocery stores, restaurants, activities, and nearby shopping centers and put it in a word document. Assemble all the house instructions like how to use the TV and thermostat, where the towels and alarm clocks are, or how to use the BBQ. Your guests can then be pretty self-sufficient and don’t need to bother you for this information. They will be grateful to have the information at their fingertips and you will have more free time.

house manual

The house manual is a pre-written message that you send to your guests as instructions for their stay. I like to send it approximately 7-14 days before their arrival, but you could send it 3 days before if you prefer.

Some guests get nervous if they have not received it a week in advance, and some will not check it until the day of arrival. The address, lockbox code, parking instructions, location of extra bedding/towels, how to use the TV or coffee maker, how to change the temperature, the wifi details, where to find the alarm clocks, and details about the laundry machines if needed are common things to explain in your house manual. You can also request information from them, like their estimated check-in/check-out times. It's worth investing the time to make a thorough house manual as it will dramatically reduce the number of questions you need to answer while your guests are staying.

for example...

You have not included TV instructions in your house manual, and you have an elderly couple staying in your place, desperate for the nightly news. You may have to give them a tutorial on the phone for half an hour, only to head over in person to get the TV on for them. If you wrote detailed TV instructions in your house manual, you can kindly refer them to the manual for the instructions, and let them know if they still have questions or concerns to contact you right away and you will do your best to sort out the problem for them as soon as possible.

The same goes for any details or questions the guest is asking for. Any and all guest questions can be covered and soothed with a detailed, informative, up-to-date, descriptive house manual.

The pre-written house manual is available in the "quick replies" area of your message center, simply click on a guest message in your inbox and you will see an icon that looks like pieces of paper with lines/text on it. Click on this, and you will find your library of "quick replies," pre-written messages and responses, and the option to edit or create new messages. You will also include a copy of this in the back of your "local guide" binder, or display this information interactively with a Hostfully electronic guidebook (more details on that later).

House Manual Example

Hey! Here is some helpful information for your stay.

LOCATION

The address is xx Avenue, xx, xx. The lockbox code is xxx, and it is on the front gate to the right of the pedestrian gate entrance. When you leave, please lock the doors and return the keys to the lockbox.

INTERNET

The internet network name is Welcome and the password is Freedom144

LAUNDRY

You will see the laundry machines on the back patio in the left corner. If you'd like to use them, there is laundry soap under the kitchen sink.

COFFEE

You will find ground coffee with a pour-over, pour-over filters, sugar, and powdered creamer to the left of the microwave. There is also instant coffee and a traditional coffee maker.

YOGA STUDIO

Walk around to the back of the house near the outdoor dining table and you will find the shaded yoga area.

PARKING

I'm very sorry, but there is only street parking. Please do not park in the driveway as that is only for the neighboring tenants.

ELECTRONICS

The TV can be turned on with the large remote, be sure it is in HDMI 2 input mode. The small remote controls the Roku, where you can find

Netflix and many other entertainment channels.

The thermostat can be found in the hallway near the kitchen door entrance. Here you can adjust the central air to the temperature.

We have an outdoor stereo system. You will find the controller outside on the patio to the left of the patio door. Bluetooth your phone or use the auxiliary cord to play tunes in the backyard.

CHECK-IN/AMENITIES

Check-in is after 3 pm and check-out is by 11 am. If you already know around what time you will be checking in and out, please send me a message and let me know. I can coordinate early check in's and late check out's for you and other guests with this information!

Extra blankets, pillows and towels are in the hallway linen closet. The black garbage cans (in the driveway) are for regular garbage. Recycling goes in the blue can.

THANK YOU!

If you have any issues or concerns during your stay, please contact me immediately. I am a dedicated host and want to ensure you have a wonderful holiday and experience.

I'm on Airbnb messenger a few times a day, but texts/calls to xxx-xxx-xxxx is the best way to get an immediate response.

Enjoy your stay! Lauren

Hostfully's free electronic guidebook

There is a new and outstanding, free electronic guidebook software platform available for Airbnb hosts by a company called Hostfully. If you have ever traveled with a Lonely Planet guidebook, you'll know how incredible it is to have a guidebook with multiple categories when visiting a new city, highlighting popular trendy restaurants, activities, convenience services, and more.

Hostfully offers one free electronic guidebook for hosts and offers affordable rates for hosts wishing to create more than one guidebook (\$4-\$10 monthly subscription fee per guidebook). Google automatically populates each recommendation's data, so you can quickly add your favorite local restaurants, shops, activities, local experiences, parks, sightseeing, even holistic suggestions like yoga studios, spas, or healing centers.

Guests can click the guidebook links, start navigation to the destination, call the business, or go to their website directly within the guidebook. It is very interactive, fluid, and completely integrated with a smart phone. It also has a map feature, which allows guests to create an itinerary based on your suggestions and by location.

The software is very easy to use. Simply go to Hostfully.com and sign up for one free guidebook, or choose a plan for how many guidebooks you would like to create. You then populate the guidebook with your Airbnb rentals address, photo, check-in information, your contact details, and select from their menu of guest check-out instructions (turn off all the lights, lock the door, leave the keys in the lockbox, etc).

Then, you will enter your favorite local suggestions by category. If your suggestion has registered their business with Google, all of the information will automatically populate, such as photos, the address, phone number, website, operation hours, etc. You can also choose their 'wizard' function which will populate all this information for you. Chosen

by AI, it may not be the places you would recommend, so I prefer to do it manually.

There is also an area to create instructional cards for your amenities. For example, you can fill in the instructions for using the washing machine, dishwasher, thermostat, the location of the first aid kit, laundry closet, the location of the cleaning supplies, and how to use the TV. All the information and instructions a guest could ever want is available at their fingertips, on-demand. I'm all about it!

automatic your customer service

I made an electronic guidebook for my Airbnb in less than 3 hours, and I made an extensive list of suggestions. As Hostfully has integrated with Google directly, I saved so many hours of research. The best benefit of making an electronic guidebook is that it allows for “hands-off hosting.” This means that once you set up this automated tool, you have eliminated 90% of your guest's questions.

As my guidebook has all my local suggestions, as well as all of the check-in/check-out details, the wifi details, lockbox code, instructions for how to use the A/C, etc, my guests never need to call or write me for information. They have everything they need to maximize their time in the local area and use the house with ease. This is a 5-star experience.

Creating an electronic guidebook may sound like a daunting task, but trust me, this is the second wisest investment you will make for your business, just behind professional photography. Let's say you are managing eight apartments, and each guest asks you around three standard questions per day. That's thirty-two questions.

The real treat of having an electronic guidebook is the amount of incredible 5-star reviews you will get. Guests will be overjoyed having all this information at their fingertips, as it really gives them the chance to

explore the local area confidently, guided by your local expertise. You'll be sure to receive deep gratitude, as this local resource will totally change their experience.

let it work *for you*

Better reviews = higher-priced bookings = a more profitable business. Meanwhile, you're busy with your hands-off hosting lifestyle. Once you have a local team of maids, handymen, and two trusted contacts who can address emergencies on-site, you're ready to go remote, traveling the world, or your country, as a remote Airbnb host!

The guidebook also has more advanced features like selling late check-outs, experiences, or optional items directly through the guidebook's Marketplace area. You'll link your bank account and guests can purchase things from you directly, outside of Airbnb. If you own a local tourism company or want to partner with local businesses, you can sell their services and take a commission for advertising them. You can also have guests sign documents, agree to rules, provide their passport number and other rental related business functions.

3 formats – link, book and QR

Instead of sending your guests a pre-written house manual, you'll send them a link to your guidebook or they can use the QR code. Hostfully also offers a PDF version, so once your guidebook is complete, you can print it out and have it available in book format for your guests to enjoy while relaxing in the home. The guest does not need an App to use it, it's simply a link that opens in their internet browser.

location guide and binder

This is a binder or booklet you keep on the living room coffee table for your Airbnb guests to use as a local resource. It has a list of all the

close by and walking distance attractions, the local grocery stores, and the popular, highly recommended, amazing dining options around. I recommend taking the time to create a Hostfully electronic guidebook and printing the PDF version to keep in the home for guests, but if you prefer to make a recommendation list manually instead, find my tips below!

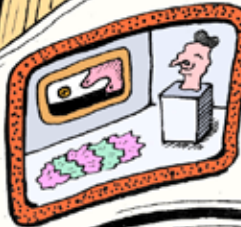
If I'm not a long-time local in the area, I type in the property's location on Google Maps and search 'food' and then "popular." Here, you will find all the popular local eateries. I then assemble these tips into a word document, organizing them by categories (fast, casual, fine-dining, coffee, etc.) and write a short description, the address, the distance from the house, and the phone number. You can also do this with attractions, surfboard rentals, the library, hot air ballooning, popular tourist streets and neighborhoods, or shopping areas. The more, the merrier! Guests will instantly feel how much you care about their trip and comfort.

If you are a true local to the neighborhood, compile an extensive guide for them! It can easily make their trip 100 times more special. This will also assist your mission of getting amazing, 5-star reviews. On the last page of this binder, include a version of the house manual with instructions on how to use everything in the house.

When a guest writes you with a question that you have answered in your binder, you can kindly reply, "Hello! Please check the last page of the local guide binder on the coffee table near the television. We have detailed instructions written there for your convenience. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns with it. Thanks!" You have saved yourself an extensive tutorial with your guest on how to do something in the home.



Local Stores
Bakery-867-5309
COFFEE-330-8004



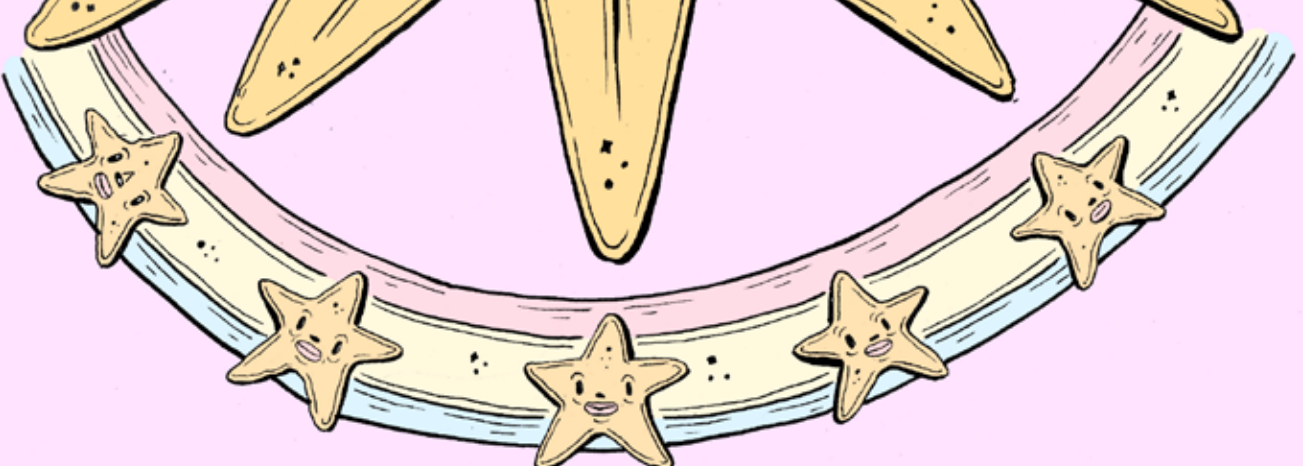
Museums
MOMA-882-4431
KIDS-992-5581



Restaurants
Chez Paris-311-2211
ITALIAN-835-1113



Local Parks
CENTRAL-223 MAIN ST
SUNSET-85 B'WAY



Hollywood Local Guide

Enter your address here

Grocery Stores

PAVILIONS

*slightly more expensive than the average grocery store.

Supermarket chain with standard groceries plus deli items.

Organic products · Produce, Sushi

727 N Vine St, Los Angeles, CA 90038

local.pavilions.com

(323) 461-4167

RALPHS

*average grocery store.

Standard Grocery Store · Produce, Meats

1233 N La Brea Ave, West Hollywood, CA 90038

ralphs.com

(323) 876-8790

SPROUTS

*upscale, health food, organic, vegetarian-friendly.

Specialty grocery store chain.

915 N La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

sprouts.com

(323) 217-1642

TRADER JOE'S

*tropical-themed, healthy grocery store with unique items.

Grocery chain with a variety of organics, dairy, wine & beer.

7310 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood, CA 90046

traderjoes.com

(323) 969-8048

Coffee Shops

STIR CRAZY COFFEE SHOP

Coffee spot with local art, sandwiches, pastries, & free Wi-Fi.

Quick bite · Fast service · Hip

6903 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

(323) 934-4656

STARBUCKS

Coffeehouse chain known for its roasts, snacks, & free Wi-Fi.

Quick bite · Fast service · Hip

859 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

starbucks.com

(323) 493-1868

Bakery

DELICIOUS COOKIES AND MILK

Unassuming bakery known for its specialty cookies.

829 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

deliciouscookies.com

(323) 460-2370

Gourmet Sandwiches

MENDOCINO FARMS

Creative sandwiches, soups, salads, & seasonal ingredients.

Comfort food · Quick bite · Healthy options

7100 Santa Monica Blvd #195, West Hollywood, CA 90046

Located in: West Hollywood Gateway

mendocinofarms.com

(323) 512-2700

Café's

CALIFORNIA CHICKEN CAFE

Menu of rotisserie chicken, wraps and salads plus sides.

Comfort food · Quick bite · Fast service

6805 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

(323) 935-5877

CAFÉ GRATITUDE LARCHMONT

Vegan organic fare and smoothies, hippie-inspired names.

Comfort food · Small plates · Quick bite

639 N Larchmont Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90004

cafegratitude.com

(323) 580-6383

BLU JAM CAFÉ

American cafe for Euro-accented breakfast served all day.

Comfort food · Healthy options · Hip

7371 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90046

(323) 951-9191

Pizza

PIZZERIA MOZZA

*Popular and well-known gourmet pizza restaurant.

Acclaimed wood-burning-oven pizzas & antipasti in busy digs.

Late-night food · Comfort food · Small plates

641 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036

la.pizzeriamozza.com

(323) 297-0101

Restaurants

GRUB

Quirky brunch & American comfort fare served in a 1920s bungalow.

Comfort food · Quick bite · Hip

911 Seward St, Los Angeles, CA 90038

grub-la.com

(323) 461-3663

LALA'S ARGENTINIAN GRILL

Argentine-style meats, salads and pastas with ambience.

Late-night food · Happy hour drinks · Comfort food

7229 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90046

lalasgrillonline.com

(323) 934-6838

THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE RESTAURANT AND PUB

Classic pub grub in a punk rock-influenced British bar.

Happy hour food · Late-night food · Happy hour drinks

742 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

thecatandfiddle.com

(323) 468-3800

PETIT TROIS

Cozy spot with Parisian fare & full bar.

Late-night food · Comfort food · Small plates

718 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

(323) 468-8916

Quick Bites

TA-EEM GRILL

*Great Kosher Mediterranean food, plates are enough for two.

Offers buffet style falafel, shawarma and glatt kosher dishes.

Late-night food · Small plates · Quick bite
7422 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90046
ta-eemgrillinc.com
(323) 944-0013

PINKS HOT DOGS

*Can be quick or a long wait – iconic LA hot dog stand.
Creatively topped dogs draw long lines at this roadside spot.
Late-night food · Comfort food · Quick bite
709 N La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038
pinkshollywood.com
(323) 931-4223

Upscale Dining

PROVIDENCE

Chef Michael Cimarusti's fine dining with innovative dishes.
Hip · Quiet · Great dessert
5955 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038
(323) 460-4170

RAO'S HOLLYWOOD

Replica of the New York eatery, upscale homestyle Italian fare.
Comfort food · Hip · Great dessert
1006 Seward St, Los Angeles, CA 90038
raosrestaurants.com
(323) 962-7267

House Manual and Practical Information

TV Instructions

The TV can be turned on with the large remote, be sure it is in HDMI 2 input mode. The small remote controls Roku and Netflix.

Thermostat Information

The thermostat can be found in the hallway near the kitchen door entrance. Here you can adjust the central air temperature.

Internet

Network Name: Welcome

Password: Freedom144

Alarm Clocks

Alarm clocks are available in the top drawer of the dressers.

Bath Towels, Extra Bedding, Twin Folding Bed

There are bath towels, extra blankets, and pillows in the linen closet at the end of the hallway. There is a twin-sized folding bed in the dining room closet with clean bedding next to it on the shelf. Feel free to set it up wherever you like, in the living room or one of the bedrooms.

Outdoor Yoga Studio

Walk around to the back of the house near the outdoor dining table, and you will find the shaded yoga area.

Trash Cans

The black garbage cans are for regular garbage, blue is for recycling.

chapter 7

I need a break! co-hosts

Do you feel ready to take some time off the App? Don't want to answer another question or critique your maid's work until you have a little me-time? The 24/7 life eating you up inside? Let's prep a proficient co-host to take some weight off your shoulders.

how to depend on a co-host

Now that you have your property all set up, it's time to train some friends, dependable employees, co-workers, or a backup person in the event you are unavailable to do your hosting duties or have an emergency. The co-host should know everything about the properties and the system you have created. For example, where the supply closet is, what goes inside, who are the cleaners, what are their schedules for this month and contact information, what does the listing say and promise to the guests? Which handyman should they call for which repairs, how to use the lockboxes, the location of the emergency backup lockbox, where and what is the bedding, how are the beds made and where do the towels go? They should also be trained on how to clean the apartment themselves if there is a cleaner issue and there are no cleaners available.

You can also train them on the Airbnb App. What is the inbox/messaging system, how does the calendar work, what is your average pricing,

how to write messages or use quick replies, how to make a claim, and how to accept reservation alterations.

This is a lot of information, so you may want to make a reference manual for your co-hosts so they know what to do and what to say in the event of an issue. Sometimes I ask friends to cover for me by taking phone calls, and I alert my guests of the temporary change via Airbnb messenger. “Hello! I am going hiking on Tuesday and Wednesday and may be in an out-of-service area. If you have any pressing concerns, please call my local co-host Tom at ## and he will assist you. I’ll be back online on Thursday! Thanks so much, and sorry for the inconvenience. Can you confirm that you’ve seen this message? Best, Lauren.”

It is important to confirm that the guest has received the message. Otherwise, they may be calling you over and over while you are offline, and when you return online there is a disturbing situation. They didn’t see your message that they should have called Tom! Some guests are not tech-savvy, new to the platform, or simply don’t read all the information you share with them.

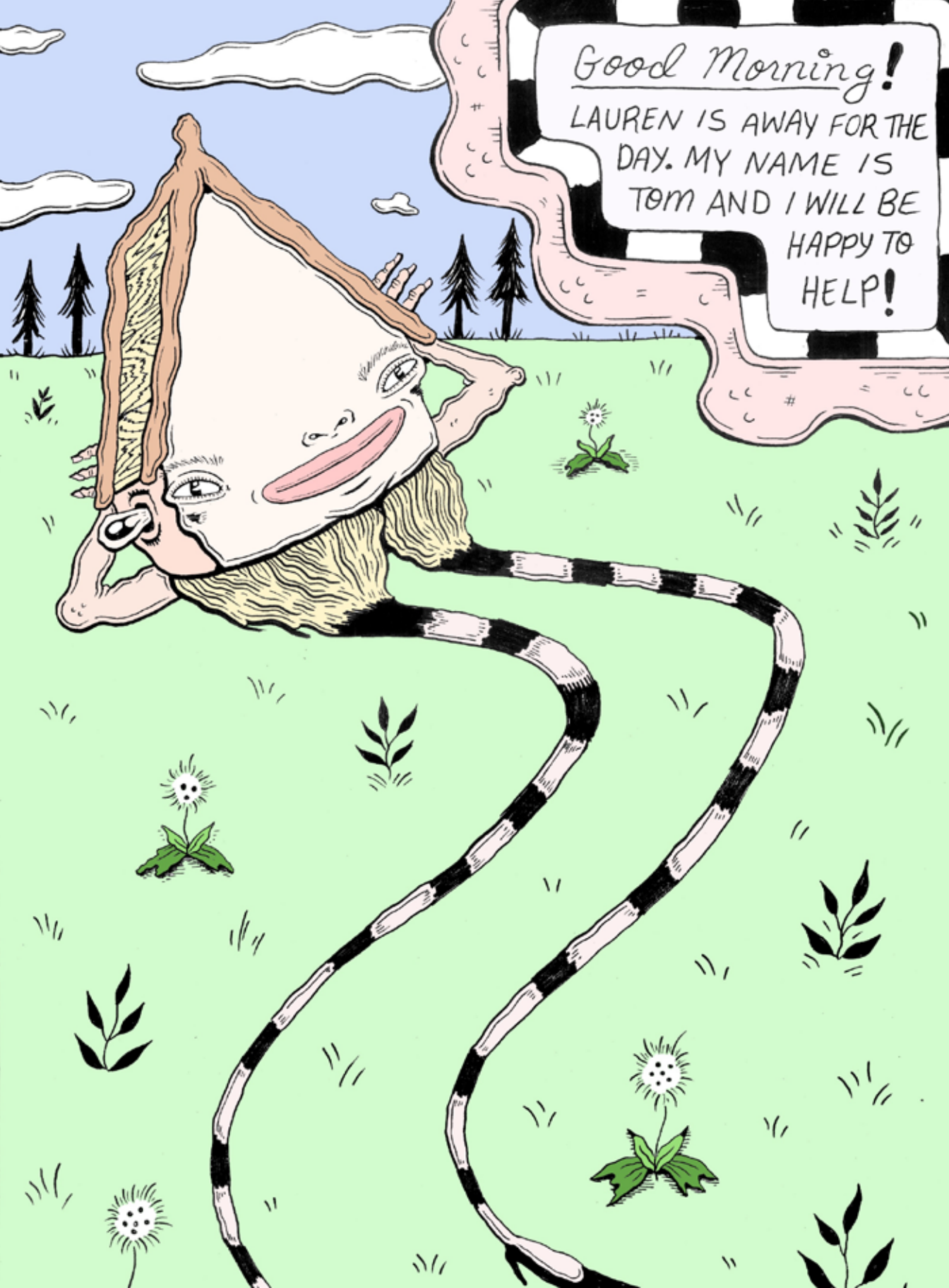
Once you have confirmed with your guests that Tom will be temporarily taking care of them, Tom should check the App every so often, accept/decline guest reservations, address any guest messages that look urgent/emergency, and then take phone calls if guests have immediate issues. A lot of messages could wait 48 hours until you are back online. You can even ask Tom to write to your guests, “Hi! Lauren is hiking, and I am covering for her until Thursday. I’m not sure the answer to your question, but I will have her get back to you right away Thursday morning! Sorry for the inconvenience! Best, Tom.”

check-in days

You may not want to go offline if you have check-in and check-outs on these days, as there are many variables for your substitute-host Tom to

Good Morning!

LAUREN IS AWAY FOR THE
DAY. MY NAME IS
TOM AND I WILL BE
HAPPY TO
HELP!



handle. For example, something is broken, the guest arrived early and didn't tell anyone and they need to be politely asked to leave and come back later, something is lost or a damage claim needs to be filed, bedding is missing and the cleaners don't have extra so new bedding needs to be immediately purchased, etc. Tom may not remember, know what to do or who to contact, and it could be a mess for your guests checking in. He would also have to be on top of the cleaners, making sure they showed up and set up the house correctly, or go and clean himself if they didn't show up.

With reservation requests, you have 24 hours to respond, or you are penalized in your "response rate" score and your Super Host status is threatened. So technically, you can go offline for 23 hours without incurring a penalty for being an unresponsive Host. Another option is to train Tom to peek into the inbox every 23 hours and accept/decline requests based on your guest policies. For example, a potential guest has made a request and wants to have a birthday party at your place, but you say on your listing no parties or events. Tom would have to decline that for you.

I mostly do Instant Booking and accept most inquiries unless there is a red flag in their message or in their reviews. I am able to do this because I host pretty basic, cute apartments that are set up just for Airbnb guests. They are not my personal home, are not filled with my personal sentimental furniture, and they are not luxury spaces. If any of these conditions apply to you, you can check the potential guest out by reading through all their reviews and asking them personal questions like why are they coming and what are their planned local activities. You can ask them whatever you like within reason to feel more comfortable with their reservation and to confirm that they are not going having a party. Be aware that the more invasive your questioning, the less likely they will want to book with you. Privacy is epic with Airbnb guests, as a lot of them are already skeptical about your professionalism and quality of service compared to a hotel.

Accepting guest reservations is completely up to you, and you should be comfortable and personally confident about each new guest you approve to host. This will vary greatly depending on the quality and value of your home. For example, your place is a luxury Malibu beach house with \$100,000 worth of furnishings. With such an investment, you'll want to screen your guests much more in-depth than if you are offering a riverside campsite for \$25/night.

keep in mind..

It is crucial to have someone with extensive knowledge of your rentals and protocols if you want to go offline or be hands-off regularly. I've managed many Airbnb units, all owned by different clients, and each rentals protocol was unique. Therefore, it was very challenging for me to train someone on every detail of my client's sensitivities, preferences, expectations, pet peeves, and the specific protocol for each guest issue or repair.

My strategy is to go offline for 23 hours at a time when I have no check-outs/check-ins and pay my co-host Tom \$20 an hour to take phone calls and handle pressing guest issues while I'm out of the picture. I don't ask him to go into my Airbnb App or messenger, I handle that every 23 hours, but let him do the on-site, emergency tasks for my guests via receiving phone calls. I personally find it more stressful to trust Tom to do everything correctly while I'm offline and risk him making a wrong move, which could cause me to lose my clients or get a bad review from a frustrated guest.

I personally choose to alert my guests to call Tom with emergencies and check my Airbnb messenger every 23 hours. I am a one-man show except for my cleaners and handymen, but there may be an easy way in your business structure to share the reigns with another so you can disconnect in a stress-free way. You will have to over-communicate to make sure the other is always up to date. If you are the property owner,

you can relax much more, as you don't need to worry about losing your clients, just losing future guests to a bad review that was left because your co-host Tom made a wrong move.

Note that this is my personal opinion and choice while managing six or seven Airbnb rentals at once. If you have 2 or 3, especially if you are the property owner, depending on a co-host may be much easier. I highly recommend training at least one trusted friend or loved one on the details of your business, you never know when you are going to need back up.

Another great option would be having a business partner and manage everything together. You'll be splitting the profit, but you'll have flexibility in your personal life to take vacations, attend social events out of town, turn your phone off for more than 23 hours, or simply focus on other passions.

chapter 8

how to set the pricing

step 1: competition research

It's time to check out your local competition and see how you can maximize your listing to compete and succeed.

The first step will be to look for rentals and listings in your area that are similar in guest count, amenities, space, and comfort. Type in your neighborhood or city into Airbnb's "traveling" platform. Here you will enter your guest count, home type, how many beds, your amenities, facilities, neighborhood, and I would slide the price filter down to under \$300 if applicable, as you don't want to search through the luxury mansion versions of your guest count. Do not fill in specific dates as you will not be able to see all the available listings around you.

After filling in the filters, click search and see what places come up. You can also view the map version to check out your neighbors' listings. Takes some notes about what they are charging, how many are rentals are available, what amenities they don't have that you have, etc. Next, do this search with only your guest count, so you can see the wider range of competition in your area.

Depending on your location, many listings will come up, and you can now review their marketing copy. How do they highlight the nei-



ghborhood? Go through their listing and see how they describe the benefits of the location, take notes and use these insights to highlight your location on your listing.

Some listings will appear to be luxurious versions of your place and some under furnished or unattractive. You will want to check out the listings that offer the same number of bedrooms, bed count, and amenities. Check what amenities they offer, read their reviews, and learn what's going on with your competition. For example, a review like: "It's so messed up there is no map to the bus stop, it's so hard to find!"

If you are also advising your guests to use that bus line, have a map in your home for guests to reference. You can learn a lot about what guests want and need by looking at your competition's reviews. Suppose your competition has a glorious backyard and personal laundry room, and you are offering an apartment with no yard and no laundry facilities. In that case, you may reduce the price of your place. By checking on your neighbors, you can evaluate the market around you.

Then you will want to check out your competition's calendar by clicking "check availability." Here you will see how they manage their pricing. By moving your cursor over the calendar's available days, you can see how the nightly prices differ. Informed hosts will fluctuate their pricing for weekends, weekdays, holidays, and local events. Have the Super Bowl around the corner from you? Double or triple the price of those nights. You will see that your local competition is adjusting and changing their nightly price based on season, month, day, holidays, and the local events calendar.

After reviewing the listings close to you that have similar amenities, you can choose to price your place lower to win over new reservations, in the same range, or slightly higher and glam up your listing with high-quality photos and décor to outshine the local option. You can gain inspiration by studying the listings around you that are succeeding. Success can be

evaluated by high review scores, positive written reviews, and a fully booked calendar. Note that some people live in their space part-time, so their availability may not accurately reflect their success. Look at what these hosts are doing on their listing, what guests are asking for, and what you could provide that they can't. What is the niche you can fill?

the airbnb smart pricing feature

This is an optional feature and algorithm of Airbnb that will automatically set or show a suggested price for your listing based on similar listings around you, the amenities you offer, your ratings/review scores, and the supply/demand for each date. If you are the last listing available and ten people are searching, the price will automatically go up because there is no supply and lots of demand. If there is no one searching your area for a few days, Airbnb will drop it to the lowest minimum price you have specified to try to attract bookings for you.

I look to smart pricing for insight into supply and demand but don't use it often or live by it, as its suggestions are not reliable. If you choose to use it, you'll need to set minimum and maximum amounts, as sometimes it will suggest \$42/night, and sometimes \$188/night for the same home. It is a computer recommendation, so it may not factor in your incredible decorations or your place's special feeling. It gives a rough market value for your space based on demand.

When in your "calendar" you can click on a series of days and then click on "see price tips" located under the smart pricing box. Here you will see what they are recommending for each day. If you set the price within 5% of their recommendation, they claim to advertise your listing more and that you are more likely to get booked. Sometimes it is way too low or high for my comfort, so I choose my prices based on my knowledge of the price points that have gotten me booked quickly in the past, and the price points I set that didn't attract anyone.

AirDNA

This is an independent, online data portal of all Airbnb and VRBO (HomeAway) vacation rentals in your area. This will give priceless insight into the pricing trends of your local market. AirDNA typically charges \$40 for access to your area's data for a month. You will see the top percentile and lower percentile ranges of all comparable listings in categories such as occupancy rate, price per night, and general market trends of your area's vacation rentals. It has filter options for finding comparable homes, such as three bedroom/two bath, etc. I highly recommend signing up for a one-month subscription. You can review this data and find out what the top, mid-range, and lowest comparable rentals are receiving per night, as well as how fully booked they have been over the last few seasons.

Remember, the prices shown on AirDNA include the cleaning fee, so you will need to calculate a slightly lower rate unless you do not charge a cleaning fee and you include cleaning for free in your nightly rate. If you are looking to buy a property to invest in and set up as a vacation rental, AirDNA also offers services for researching that. This is a top-notch, professional tool for dedicated, serious, and thorough hosts who seek to be successful long-term. The data is presented in a visually compelling way with graphs and charts, and very easy to use and understand, I love it. Visit them at www.airdna.co

pricing experiments

Pricing is a game and flow of experimentation. You'll get personal experience with which rates quickly attract renters, which seasons require lower prices, and have a better understanding of your local market by regularly checking in with smart pricing suggestions. I review my calendar to change my pricing twice a week, seeing which days were booked and what gaps/available windows those bookings created, and I adjust my pricing accordingly. For example, I receive a new booking that crea-

tes a one-night availability on each side. Because I have a high cleaning fee, I will dramatically lower the price of those two nights, to help them get booked and still be affordable.

my beginning price, why so low?

Pricing is an intricate game that you will catch onto with time. For your first week/weeks of rental, you will want to make the price lower than usual to attract more people to book. This is because your home and listing do not have any reviews yet. Airbnb listings live and die by reviews. Each guest you host can leave a public review on your page and rate you by stars in a few categories, so you will want to do everything in your power to honestly represent your space in the listing. Remember, they even have a category for guests to review that says “accuracy of listing.” It’s all about the expectation management!

At first, you will lower the price, get some guests to book, and share with them that they will be your first guests. For example, “Hello Emily! We are so happy to host you. Indeed you will be our first guest (or you will be one of our first guests!), and we are looking forward to your feedback and tips on how we could make our space and guest experience even better. Please be in touch if you have any questions or issues, as we want to guarantee you have a 5-star experience in our home.”

Emily will probably be understanding and feel special for being first, and glad that you care about her opinion and comfort. Once Emily’s been in for a day or two, ask her how it’s going. Once her reservation goes well and she has checked out, you can write her a message to ask how her stay was. If she says “great!” then you can ask, “So glad to hear that Emily! Would you be up to leaving us a nice review about your experience? As you are our first guest, it would add so much to our listing and new business. I will also leave you a 5-star right now! It was a pleasure to host you, come back anytime! All the best, Lauren.”

extra person fee

In your listing, you have the option to add an ‘extra fee’ for extra guests. For example, you rent your place for \$100 per night for up to three guests. After three guests, you charge \$10 per person, per night. If they have six guests, you will be receiving \$130 per night during their stay. This allows you to cover additional utility costs and deep cleaning because the place will probably be messier. You will have to use more bedding and towels, set up more beds, and purchase a folding bed or air mattress, which are all additional costs for you. These small details can add up quickly, as you have many people staying in your space and using the facilities.

cleaning fee

Setting the cleaning fee is up to you. You can charge exactly what you pay your cleaner, slightly more to receive more income or cover the cost of your cleaning supplies, or less and cover the cleaner’s fee in the nightly booking price. You could also choose to have a higher price per night and no cleaning fee, paying the cleaner out of pocket. Do some basic calculations and see what’s best for you.

security deposit

Setting this amount on your listing is up to you. It may seem intimidating to guests if there is a \$400 security deposit. They may assume that amount will be held on their card upon booking and released after their check-out. In reality, Airbnb does not charge this at the time of booking, they only charge this if you make a damage claim in the resolution center, and the guest agrees to it, or Airbnb rules the “resolution case” in your favor.

for example...

I make a claim for \$200 because the guest broke my coffee table and TV, and I alert the guest about it. Airbnb accepts and validates my claim, and they charge the guest \$200 because this \$400 security deposit allows Airbnb to do so. I personally choose to put a \$150 security deposit in the USA, as it's not too high and not too low for either host or guest.

Aircover

Airbnb has recently started offering 'aircover' which is free insurance coverage for your rental automatically. This includes \$1 million in liability insurance, \$1 damage protection, pet damage protection, deep cleaning protection, income loss protection if you need to cancel confirmed bookings due to damage, and they offer a 14-day filing window for damage claims. They are also promising quick reimbursements, typically within 2 weeks and a fast-track for Super Hosts with a dedicated line of support specialists.

This is a new policy that I did not have access to while running my business and I can see the huge gap it is filling. It used to be extremely challenging to get Airbnb's help if you had a guest do severe damage in your place and didn't have the original receipts of every item purchased, with proof that it was part of your Airbnb unit, such as in-unit photos.

I imagine you will still need all the documentation and receipts for everything you've purchased showing the value if you want to use aircover. I would not rely too heavily on this promise, as the terms and conditions are written as an insurance policy and it does not cover things deemed as wear and tear, acts of nature, etc.

There are also affordable short-term rental insurances you can buy for peace of mind from a private insurance company. In my experience

hosting more than 4000 travelers over a few years, I have made maybe ten damage reports, mostly for damaged sheets or missing plates/cups. I recommend doing your due diligence by screening renters as I have advised in previous chapters, and deny bookings that feel sketchy to you, following your intuition about a reservation is a great way to minimize risk.

chapter 9

your cleaners and the logistics

Having a super clean space shares the #1 spot for the most important hosting duty, just alongside your excellent photography, brilliant communication skills and smooth as silk check-in/check-out process.

bedding sets and cleaning times

Bedding management is a crucial aspect of running your Airbnb smoothly. There are complicated logistics to be worked out here depending on how many properties you have. As standard check-out/check-in times give about a four-hour window for the cleaners to prepare the home (11 am check out, 3 pm check-in), your cleaning team may be done cleaning in one or two hours. They will not have enough time to do all the laundry on-site (2-3 loads = 3-4 hours). If you have one cleaner coming in to clean, it may take them 2-3 hours to clean, but you will have to pay them to wait for the laundry to be ready (upwards of 3.5-4 hours for everything to dry and be ready). If you have 2-4 check-outs in one day, doing all the laundry on-site is impossible.

creating bedding sets

This is an extra, clean, full bedding set for the entire home: Fitted sheets, flat sheets, duvet covers, pillowcases, towels, hand towels, wash-

cloths, and bathmats. With extra bedding sets, the cleaners can enter, clean, change the bedding, and move on to the next apartment or finish quickly. They could also start the laundry while cleaning and keep that going at each rental. Wash a load at one home, take it with them wet and dry it at the next. Cleaners will then do the rest of the dirty laundry at home on their own time. I buy high-quality, large square plastic bags with zippered tops for these sets, as everything fits in one place and retains its folded shape. You will often see cheap Chinese versions of these bags with a blue, black and red pinstripe design.

The amount of time needed to do three laundry loads is an average of 3 hours (depending on your machines). If a cleaning team needs to clean three apartments in four hours, and it takes three hours to do all the laundry per place, that's twelve hours of laundry. You will have to work out the payment arrangement (a flat fee per job or hourly) for your cleaner to incorporate doing the laundry at home. Sometimes one cleaner will pick up the laundry from each rental, go to the Laundromat, and then return each clean set to each apartment. This will be two to four hours of work, plus the cost of the Laundromat.

I don't recommend this system. It is an expensive investment to order duplicate bedding sets, but you will save time and money in the long term by allowing your cleaners to do laundry at home in their off-time. You will want your cleaning team to have a car and laundry machines at home so they can safely transport and do the laundry easily without visiting Laundromats.

bedding set logistics

My best recommendation is to purchase enough extra bedding 'sets' so the cleaner can move quickly and turn over all needed apartments without being delayed by the laundry. You will also want to consider having universal bedding/towels for all your places, so the bedding is the same and interchangeable for all your Airbnb's. If you choose to do

home-specific bedding, you may need to have more than one duplicate bedding set, as different cleaners may be cleaning on different days. For example, Molly cleans apartment 1 on Tuesday. On Thursday, Mary is set to clean apartment 1. Will she have to drive across town to pick up the clean bedding from Molly? This will add one to two hours to her cleaning process, therefore costing you more money.

I also recommend having spares for all your bedding in the supply closet. In case of damage, you have replacements on hand and can avoid having to re-order/re-stock one of all your bedding supplies. The most common causes of bedding damages are oil stains, makeup stains, and burn holes.

When you make a damage claim in Airbnb's "Resolution Center," you will have to select the price of the replacement, and if you have it on hand, it is an easy way to get reimbursed quickly for the damage, and it saves the headache of re-ordering one of everything.

washing style

I recommend washing all the sheets and duvets together, and then the towels and bathmats together, so it's best to choose colors that can be washed together. If you mix towels with sheets, you can expect a fair amount of lint on your sheets. If this happens, re-wash your sheets with detergent and baking soda, and then dry them with a few dryer sheets to help release the lint. As a last resort, you will use a lint roller.

hiring cleaners

This may or may not be the biggest challenge with your Airbnb business. I have divided this section into two parts. 1. For the single host who has only one place. 2. For the multi-unit host, running 2-10+ Airbnb's.

I. single unit cleaner's strategy

If you are a single unit host, you may be offering your backyard backhouse, a room in your own home, or a nearby place that is easy to manage yourself. You will be cleaning yourself or employing a friend, partner, relative, or local cleaning professionals to help you out. Your needs are pretty manageable, as you'll have 1-3 cleans per week depending on your guest's length of stay.

I recommend you train a few friends and a few local cleaners on how to prepare your place if you are unavailable or choose to be a remote host for one unit. Your trained cleaners should know how to set up the bedding, where to put the towels, what supplies to check and refill, where the storage closet is, how to check for damages and what items to check to make sure they weren't stolen.

It is important to schedule your cleaners the best you can in advance. As you are not providing a full-time job for your cleaners, you can expect that they may not always be available or totally reliable as they have other responsibilities and employment. Therefore you will want to train multiple part-time cleaners who can fill in at the last minute if needed. Oftentimes, you may get a last-minute booking, and if you are unavailable, it could be stressful to find someone last minute to clean and prepare the place for your next guests.

Typical cleaning hours are between 11 am-3 pm, so your cleaners should be available during those hours, seven days a week. Experienced, professional, detailed cleaners are recommended - not everyone knows how to properly 'clean.' Fresh, clean bedding and a super clean bathroom are the most important focuses. You may want to have an extra bedding 'set' for each cleaner you are regularly using, so your cleaners can do the laundry on their off-time at home.

for example...

Perhaps it takes the cleaner 1.5 hours to clean and prepare your place, but it takes them 3 hours to clean and do two laundry loads on-site (one load of bedding, one load of towels). Will you pay them \$18/hour for 3 hours, a total of \$54 to clean your place, and hang around to wait for the laundry? Or will you pay them \$27 for cleaning ($\$18/\text{hour} \times 1.5$ hours) and then \$10 to do the laundry at home on their own time (total of \$37)?

They will probably enjoy doing laundry at home while cooking dinner or watching TV and getting paid for it, I know I did! You could choose to pay a flat fee per clean and have them hang around and wait for the laundry to be ready so you don't have to buy duplicate bedding sets, but this is not the most efficient route. You would save money in the long run by investing in extra bedding sets from the beginning (\$54 versus \$37 over and over, this will add up).

managing your cleaners, single unit

If you are always using different cleaners, it is recommended to give each of them a bedding set because you will save money in the long run. It is more likely they can make themselves available last minute for 1-2 hours to clean, instead of 3-4 hours to do the laundry on-site as well. You also have the option of doing the laundry yourself and preparing it for them. They could pick up the clean bedding set from your home when they are on their way to clean and drop off the dirty laundry when they finish. You could also drop it off to them or have it ready in the supply closet. There are many options here for saving money by doing the laundry yourself.

Cleaners usually work independently. They arrive and clean without seeing you or you checking their work before the guest's check-in, so it is vital to train them properly and give them a detailed cleaning checklist



so they don't forget anything. I check my new cleaners' work for the first 3-5 cleans, and if I find many errors and see that they are not able to follow the cleaning checklist properly, I search for a new cleaner. I have included a cleaning checklist template in this book.

cleaner communication protocols, single unit

When the cleaner first arrives, they check for the keys and then text you that they have the keys. Secondly, have them scan for stolen items and damages. You have a limited time window to report damages/missing items to Airbnb, so you will want to get photos from your cleaners and upload them right away to the "resolution center" in the Airbnb App so that you can be reimbursed by the guest with Airbnb's help. Then the cleaner will start the laundry, or not if they will be doing it all at home, and clean everything, with the final step of texting you when they leave so you know it's done, and you can offer the next guest an early check-in since the place is ready!

2. multi-unit cleaning strategy, running 2-10+ units

This is my specialty. I have been running 3-7 Airbnb's simultaneously since I began my hosting journey and have discovered a million ways not to run the cleaning system.

my best recommendation

Assuming that your Airbnb's are in the same city or similar neighborhood, you will want to hire a professional cleaner with a staff of their own. My "head cleaner" has four or five workers she has trained, and she brings one or two of them with her depending on how many cleanings she has for the day. I require her to train them at least five to eight times on a home before I allow her to send them to clean a rental alone without her. She works as a head maid, managing her own team of cleaners, managing all the laundry and bedding sets, and paying

them all individually from what I pay her. This is really, really, really the best way to run multi-units in the same area. It eliminates the need to schedule and communicate with many cleaners and organize replacements if a cleaner does not show up.

your cleaner is a property manager too

Your cleaner is more than a cleaner. They do many other property management tasks. They check for damages, take photos and send them to you immediately, look for stolen items (hairdryer, iron, ironing board), check for lost keys, inspect the bedding for damages and send photos, pick up trash around the property, alert you when supplies are low so you can re-stock, manage your supply closet, refill the supplies in the home, alert you when something is broken, they make the beds look hotel style, they set up extra air mattresses or couch beds when needed, alert you when the gardener or trashman didn't come, they might even meet handymen and show them around for you if they are there cleaning anyway. You need cleaners with the ability to do more than just clean, they should be able to follow your instructions as well.

benefits of a head cleaner system

I have experimented with hiring cleaning companies for all my places or for individual apartments, hiring and training specific cleaners for specific apartments, training many cleaners on many apartments, using professional Airbnb cleaning services, paying my friends or acquaintances to work independently with my cleaning checklist or with me supervising.

My take away from years of success and failure with cleaners is to hire a head cleaner. Let the head cleaner employ workers, train them, manage them, schedule them, and be responsible for them. If you can give them enough jobs, they will make themselves available for you, and reliability is sorted because many trained backup cleaners want work from you.

They have now made their own little cleaning company with many employees that depend on this relationship with you. They don't want to lose your business, so they will make things happen for you.

I use universal bedding (the same for every place) for all my Airbnb rentals, so I give my head cleaner three full bedding sets for six apartments, and she cycles them through and does all the laundry herself at home. Your head cleaner and some cleaners must have a car (for carrying lots of dirty bedding and cleaning supplies) and laundry machines at home. If they are paying to do laundry at a Laundromat, they are losing money and 2-3 hours just to do your laundry.

some tips about other cleaning systems

If you hire an Airbnb-specific cleaning company or cleaning team, know that they are doing many other cleans between 11 am-3 pm and may breeze through your place without checking details or being thorough. They may tick all the boxes on the to-do list but may cut corners because they are on a super limited time frame.

My “professional Airbnb cleaners” left towels wet, beds unchanged, were relatively unavailable, and ‘forgot’ to check for damages as they were racing to clean many rentals (not all mine) in just four hours. If you can find a reliable and top-notch Airbnb cleaning service, congrats! You have alleviated a large responsibility from your plate.

managing multiple cleaner's yourself

If you choose to hire multiple cleaners that work separately, you will constantly be chasing them for availability. For example, Susan is free Thursdays and Fridays, Ellen only Wednesday-Friday, Sammy is free Sundays and Tuesdays, etc. You will be balancing many people's limited availabilities and chasing to book them and map out your cleaning schedule.

What if Ellen doesn't show up due to a personal emergency, and the others aren't free, and you are out of town? It happens. You may have to cancel the next reservation, potentially ruining someone's hard-earned vacation plans and lose your Super Host status. What if your guest extends their stay for an additional day, and you need to rework Ellen's schedule last minute, but no one is free on such short notice? You're in a bind.

cleaning crew availability and training

You want to have a cohesive team of cleaners working together to cover for each other. By using the "head cleaner" system, you are eliminating a ton of work for yourself, creating jobs, and allowing someone else to handle details, schedules, stress, and the availability puzzle for you. You're also letting them be the boss and run their own business inside your business, potentially maximizing profits for themselves and allowing them to create jobs for their friends or family.

Your cleaning crew will need to be available seven days a week, between 11 am-3 pm, or whatever your check-out/check-in window of time is. I like to hire cleaners and check their work the first few times they clean, evaluating their natural inclination for detail. I have hired and let go so many cleaners because they do not clean to the standard I need to ensure my guests are happy.

Believe it or not, everyone does not know how to clean in a detailed manner, and you will want an experienced cleaner with an impeccable eye for detail. I give my cleaners a cleaning checklist and require them to initial after every task is done. See the template in the book following this chapter.

reliable cleaners + lockboxes = the best system

Hopefully, after the initial hiring and training of your cleaners, you have secured a team of super talented and trustworthy cleaners that work

independently. If not, your full-time job is interviewing, training, and checking on your cleaners in training.

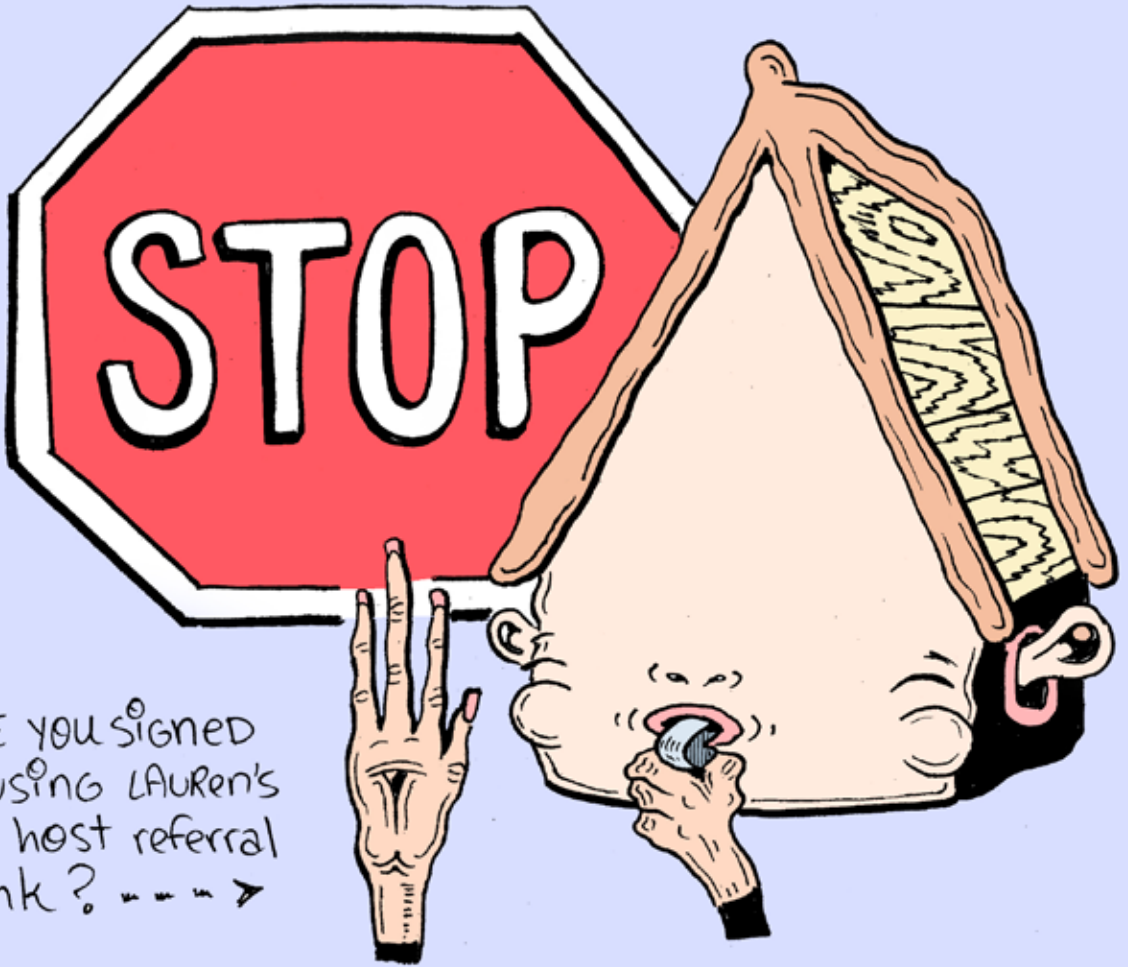
If you have a lockbox, then check-in and check-outs can be very simple. First, you text your cleaner or have them text you, letting you know that they have arrived and started cleaning (their arrival will also let you know that the previous guest checked out and left the keys in the lockbox). A bit later, you receive a text that they have finished cleaning and the place is ready. Now you can text your next guest and offer them an early check-in if they desire since the home is ready. Later, you will message your new guest and confirm that they figured out the lockbox and have checked into your place ok.

This system is deleting the two hours that some Hosts put in driving to the property to check their cleaner's work and then waiting around for the guest to arrive at the supposed "arrival time" to hand off the keys. With the lockbox system in place, I sit on my patio, drink tea, text away while my cleaners do the dirty work, and my lockboxes do my Host check-in duties for me.

cleaning review scores

Your cleaner's attention to detail will make your Airbnb succeed with fantastic cleaning review scores or make your Airbnb fail with a few bad cleaning reviews. "There was hair in the tub! Hair on the sink! Ew, gross!" Your cleaner can potentially destroy your business in one day if the guest leaves a bad enough review. You can definitely bounce back but most likely, you will feel a large dent in your pocket from this situation.

In the emergency situation that the guest is disgusted by the status of your place, you can usually offer your guest a partial or full refund in exchange for them not leaving you a review. Sometimes, this may be worth it and necessary. Once, I had a guest find a used deodorant stick



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in the bed after my new “Professional Airbnb Cleaning Service” did not change the beds, just made them up. I gave the guest a full refund in exchange for her not leaving me a review.

Refunds saved the day! The guest does have fourteen days to leave a review, so you will have to tell them that you will issue the refund after the fourteen-day window is over. Since you have written this promise to them on Airbnb messenger, they should feel confident that they will definitely get the refund after fourteen days because Airbnb can hold you responsible for your promise. I can't say that Airbnb loves this system, but so far they haven't commented or complained about it.

Your cleaners need to know and understand Airbnb's cleaning review score system, be extremely reliable, and understand that if they mess up and a guest leaves a bad review, they may have lost their job and messed up your business. They have to really understand Airbnb's review system to take care of your business for you properly. I treat my cleaners with the utmost respect and appreciation because my business is literally in their hands.

If you want to drive over and check every home after every clean, then you are taking the responsibility out of the cleaner's hands. But if you have many Airbnb's, logistically, this could be impossible so having trustworthy, incredible cleaners is a preferable way to run your show. If you want to go do another job during the day or relax at home with your dog and cook Italian food from scratch, you will need a good cleaner that works independently.

cleaner communications

Another important quality in your cleaner is their communication abilities. Does your cleaner take instructions and follow them? Can they stay in contact and keep you updated on their arrival, departure, supply needs, re-stocking needs, damages, issues at the house? They must write

you these details ASAP and keep you in the loop, promptly sending photos of issues and problems. Otherwise, your guests will be the ones to tell you something is broken or missing, and it will be too late to charge the previous guest.

If you find that your cleaner is not communicating, and your reviews and scores are going down because of the issues that could have been avoided if she would have communicated better, you can design a detailed communication protocol for her to follow. Your other choice is to jump back into the full-time sea of hiring and training (and firing) cleaners, which can last weeks or months.

cleaners, bedding sets and laundry

I have spoken extensively about laundry already, but it cannot be pronounced loudly enough that you should invest in duplicate bedding sets and have your cleaners do the laundry at their house. This is a smooth, no-hassle, proven system. You do not want to limit yourself by having a cleaner hang around for four hours waiting for laundry to be ready. They could have gone and cleaned another apartment for the same price.

Instead, you had one cleaner hanging around for four hours at one apartment and had to hunt down another available cleaner to clean and hang around at another apartment, and you paid them all double to wait for the towels to dry. You do have the option of only providing a duplicate set of towels, hand towels, and bath mats, having them wash all the sheets, duvets, and pillowcases on-site which is easily accomplished in a two-hour window.

It's best to maximize your cleaning team's speed and efficiency because availability and your cleaners' cost are important factors when managing your Airbnb's cleaning needs and your profit margin. The less cleaners you have, the more jobs you can give them, so the more they will

want to make themselves available to you. There are fewer people to manage, train and depend on, and you can develop a great communication system between you and your cleaners if you are working together regularly.

cleaner payments and appreciation

As for payment, I like to pay per job. I experimented with hourly but found that sometimes it's a quick clean, and sometimes it's a more extensive clean or set up, but it always balances out the same for the cleaner over time, and I don't have to worry about cleaners hanging around to get paid more. If I pay a flat rate of \$60 to clean a one-bedroom and do the laundry at home, sometimes it will take her 1.5 hours to clean and then an hour of laundry at home, sometimes it might take 3 hours to clean and set up, and one hour of laundry at home, in general, she is always making \$15-\$25 per hour.

The only issue here is that they may try to rush through the job since it's a flat rate, so you have to keep your standards high and perhaps regularly check their work, have them send you photos, and keep them responsible for errors. I charge my cleaners between \$5-\$10 per mistake I find when I check, although I rarely charge unless it's an obvious mistake like not leaving any bath mats or not cleaning out the refrigerator. Therefore, my cleaners are financially responsible for their quality of work.

I also choose to pay my cleaners very well so they don't want to lose the job, they follow my instructions, stay reliable and make themselves available. It's a win-win, mutually beneficial relationship. I don't like the thought of spending another two months interviewing, hiring, training, inspecting, and firing cleaners who don't care about their work or my self-built business.

My head cleaner is an amazing woman that I respect, so I treat her with an attitude of deep appreciation. When she makes mistakes, I am

pretty easy on her, as I need her commitment, reliability, high standard of work, fantastic communication skills, and incredible cleaner management abilities. My world would be so much harder without her, so if she forgets something, I ask nicely to remember to do it in the future, and she does. If she didn't, I would have to take measures to ensure the house is cleaned properly for my guests.

This may mean hiring a new cleaner, inflicting large financial penalties, or lowering her payment and paying a third party (usually a friend) \$20 to go over and check her work. It will take them 10-15 minutes to check everything, but I pay them for their driving time, etc. Remember, no one is perfect, but when you give your cleaning team a checklist and ask them to do a final check, they are responsible for making sure that everything is done correctly 95%-100% of the time. The success of your business depends on it.

In the past, I have had to train and fire so many cleaners for so many reasons, it was emotionally exhausting and too much drama. Finding a hard-working, reliable, highly detailed, intelligent, adaptable person who is great at following specific instructions and makes themselves available is a miracle. I wish you the best for finding yours! Shout out to my #1 Mrs. Erica, words can't express my love and gratitude for how she changed my life.

When you have found one, your job responsibility gets cut in half. Show them appreciation, respect, spoil them, treat them like queens and kings! They are the foundation of your business operations, besides you. Please don't treat them badly or look down on them, they are keeping your business profitable by showing up and doing a great job.

paying the cleaners

It is essential to set up a payment system with your cleaner, what day they will send their invoice, and what day you will pay them. I have

my cleaner send the invoice Sunday night, and I leave her a check in my mailbox before Monday night. I also do PayPal and Venmo for her when I am out of town. Sometimes the schedule you made for the cleaner does not reflect exactly what cleans were done.

Let's say you received two new reservations in the middle of the week and added those cleans to her schedule with a casual text, or the guest extended their stay one night and now the dates on the schedule are not accurate. It can be challenging to keep up with what you owe if you are running five apartments, and you had three different cleaners do a total of eighteen cleans, many last minute or with date changes. Creating a manageable invoicing and payment system with your cleaners will erase a lot of stress and money mismanagement.

chapter 10

review system & Super Host

Positive 5-star reviews are the #1 determining factor in making you a profitable business. Therefore, getting them and improving your rating towards Super Host status may be a top goal for you, depending if this is a side hustle or your main stream of income.

asking for a review

First and foremost, if your guest had an issue during their stay (bug in the bed, sink not working, broken dining table, door handle fell off, not enough towels), any issue at all, even tiny, I recommend you **DO NOT** ask them or mention anything about leaving a review. Chances are, they will mention the problem, exaggerate it, and maybe even try to get a partial refund for their 'inconvenience.' I have a straightforward, pretty fool-proof method.

problematic guests

If your guest experienced any kind of issue during their stay, leave it alone. They are not your review target. No review is a **MILLION** times better than a negative review. Guests who didn't have their expectations met can be ruthless, and they probably don't understand what it's like to run a business that lives or dies by reviews. They may not comprehend

the number of variables you are juggling and could slam you hard. They could be having a bad day and vent their misplaced anger into your review. They may even have the personality of always searching for something to complain about, an unconscious negative thinking process that must point out other people's failures. They may feel deep satisfaction retaliating against you for something that was beyond your control. Don't underestimate who you're dealing with.

very happy guests

For guests that are ecstatic at checkout, "Hi! We just checked out and had the best trip ever! Thanks so much for opening your lovely home! We will definitely come back and stay with you again!," you will simply say "Thanks so much! I'm so happy you had a great time. Would you be up to leaving us a review about your experience? I will also leave you a 5-star review right now. Come back anytime! Thanks so much, and safe travels." I ask them to review me and gently let them know that I will be leaving them a 5-star review, hinting that that is what I'd like to receive also.

unknown guests

After a non-problematic guest checks out, I always write them, "Hey! How was your stay with us?" In my experience, about 50-60% of people answer back. Many people check out, sign off Airbnb, and forget about you. If they do write back, "It was incredible, we loved it!" – Follow the protocol for Very Happy Guests. If they say, "Oh, it was fine," you could investigate further, but I recommend you only do so if you are VERY needy for more reviews. In this case, you would respond, "Oh ok! Did you have a good time exploring (insert your city name here)? Did you like the decorations of the house? Was it comfortable for you?"

This is a bit risky because they could just jump to leaving all their

'helpful' or obnoxious criticisms as a review instead of writing you back personally. But they may reply, "Oh, the house wasn't so great, it was ok" or "It was an excellent house, just my grandma got sick, so the trip wasn't as we had hoped." Here you will gain insight into their experience and be able to guess if they had a good enough time to ask them to leave you a positive review.

You are aiming for 5-stars for every review, 4-stars is not actually a positive review. You only want enthusiastic, highly pleased guests to review you. Guests who had an ok good time will probably feel generous giving you 4-stars, which will drag down your average and put you towards the bottom of the Airbnb search algorithm.

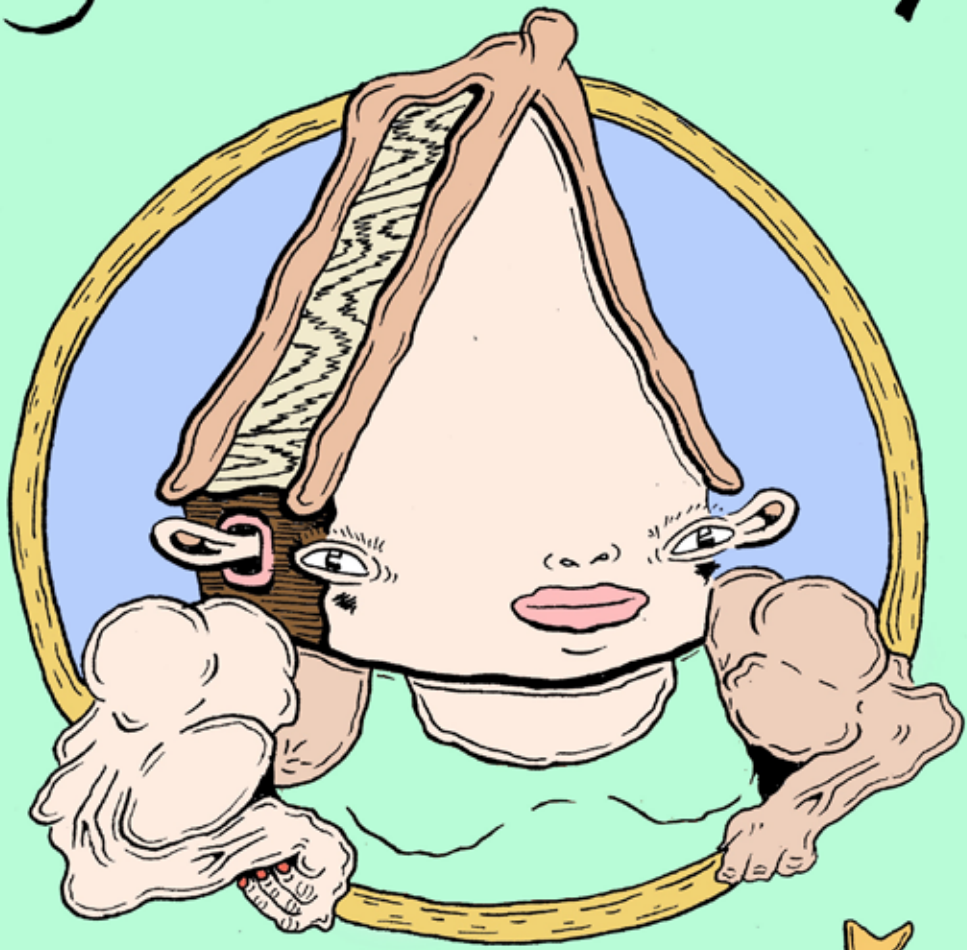
host review wisdom

If a guest had an ok or underwhelming trip, don't ask for a review. One bad review can temporarily close down your listing's success or deter all future guests from booking. I recommend only asking for a review of their experience if they clearly stated that they loved the place.

I once had a group of Grandmas on a girl's week trip at my place, and after their stay, they praised me and thanked me sincerely for a fantastic holiday. I then reached out and asked for a review, only to find they made a laundry list of every tiny detail of the place that wasn't perfect, in an exaggerated way. "The tub was so hard to enter! It's too tall! They desperately need a railing and handlebar to step into the tub! It is not safe to bathe here!"

I was so upset but was able to empathize with their senior-perspective complaints. I had personally met them, given them a tour, sat with them for an hour chatting and giving recommendations, they told me they loved the house, why would they jeopardize the business I worked so hard to take care of and to build? Unless you are a homeowner or small

SUPERHOST



business owner, sometimes guests have no idea how hard it is to upkeep a property and run/manage your own small business and are merciless with their criticism. Some people see the world as a cup half empty, and inviting them to share their opinion is a risky game.

Super Host status

Super Host status is a profound place to be as an Airbnb host. You will attract more reservations, benefit from a significant increase in earnings, you'll be featured higher in the Airbnb algorithm search results, and will be included in promotional emails. A Super Host is an Airbnb host who has met certain credentials, so guests know they will receive superb hospitality.

what is required to be a Super Host?

A 4.8 overall rating for your listings over the past year, <1% cancellation rate (which means you can basically never cancel on a guest), you host a minimum number of reservations per quarter, and you have a 90% response rate, which means you respond to guest messages within 24 hours at least 90% of the time. There is a filter for guests to search only for Super Host listings, and you will receive a special badge on the corner of your photo as a promotion tool. If you call Airbnb directly and offer an understandable reason why you need cancel, often they will waive the penalty so you can keep your Super Host status or eligibility.

When I travel with Airbnb, I always go for a Super Host listing if it's available and economical. As Airbnb is a home-sharing platform with little regulation besides reviews, this badge creates a deep sense of trust in travelers, and is worthwhile to pursue. An evaluation takes place every three months to re-certify your status.

chapter II

importance of traveling & hosting

A wise man travels to discover himself, to travel is to take a journey into yourself, travel far enough you meet yourself, to travel the world is to meet your soul, travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer...

Traveling is a heart and mind-expanding activity, whether you are a Western person visiting a third world country for the first time or just a curious explorer flying into a new city. Each new culture, new experience, new exploration takes us one step closer to getting to know who we are beyond our conditioning, cultural programming, everyday routine and stressors. We start to see our natural passions express themselves, we discover new things that deeply resonate with us, it is true that traveling in a new environment can bring priceless self-awareness. As you travel into new cultures, you have the ability to observe your behavior through a new lens, and a deeper level of your true essence is revealed to you.

When we host travelers, we are giving the ultimate gift. We are honoring another human being that has sacrificed and worked hard for this opportunity to travel and live their dreams. This can be a time of self-healing and life-changing experiences, and it should be respected with grand importance. Your guest has the ability to enjoy life without the stress and burdens of everyday life's responsibilities. They have the possibility to reset, re-charge, re-connect and gain inspiration for their



life path. They may be seeking a cure for a hopeless depression they can't shake. It is a precious moment.

I encourage you to host intentionally, consciously, responsibly, and provide a truly beautiful service and experience. You are offering a secure place to rest in an unknown and sometimes intimidating new place, and sometimes you are unknowingly providing emotional support to a weary, fearful traveler. With this deeper understanding, you now have the opportunity to achieve a new level of fulfillment with your work, as every ounce of energy spent making your space comfortable, beautiful, clean, and ready is not lost. It is an investment in someone else's happiness. Oftentimes positive reviews and gratitude-filled messages confirm this. Tired travelers are the norm, so be prepared, patient, understanding, and hospitable! It is your responsibility.

By hosting your own Airbnb, you are working for yourself. You are your own boss. You decide your lifestyle, schedule, work hours, employee's, the design, essence, and energy of the space and experience. This is personal power and freedom. You also create jobs for others (your cleaner, handyman, co-hosts), a precious gift and contribution to your community. You can be the boss you always wanted to have and be independent of the 9-5 system. You are creating a space for people to travel comfortably and be inspired by new experiences in a new place. Your work can positively change lives or destroy the \$1000's of dollars investment your guest made for their well-deserved vacation.

I love to take care of guests and be friendly, check on them, upgrade the spaces with nicer art, decorations, and appliances as possible. I care that they enjoy their stay, that they can relax there and seek the inspirational experiences they crave.

chapter 12

thank you!

If you are a brand-new host to Airbnb, you will receive \$40 in Airbnb travel credit by signing up with my new host referral link to create your first listing as a host. Simply type in this link, set up your new listing, and let the journey begin!

www.airbnb.com/r/lcoats2

I offer consulting as a marketing strategist for Airbnb hosts, vacation rentals and property rentals in general, nowadays you have many options beyond Airbnb. Contact me for a 1:1 and let's discover how I help expedite your dream.

Schedule on Calendly: **www.calendly.com/laurencoats144**

May you thrive in your Airbnb hosting career, meet beautiful new people through your business, host wonderful travelers, impact lives in a positive way, get rich and enjoy the process. *With joy, Lauren*



about the author

I welcomed over 4000 travelers while running my Airbnb management company in California. I'm a self-taught, all-in-one DIY Airbnb host, property manager and official Airbnb brand ambassador.

Traveling to more than 30 countries as a truth seeker, I come to the hosting business with a deep understanding of what a traveler needs to be comforted and relaxed on the road. I know what a welcoming home away from home really feels like, and what it does to harmonize my body chemistry so I have the power to keep exploring.

How about the *amazing illustrations* and cover design by my friend and artist Danielle O'Malley. What a spectacular creator and radiant goddess. Check out her Instagram [**@danielleomalley**](#) and website [**www.danielleardenomalley.net/shop**](http://www.danielleardenomalley.net/shop).

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