

Get a Better Vacation Rental by Choosing Airbnb

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A vacation is a time when you want to get away from it all. You want to soak up the sun on a warm beach somewhere or relax by the fireplace in a setting where snow covers the ground.

Maybe you want to do something exciting like visit another culture and immerse yourself in it, or tackle a bucket list item with a thrill-seeking adventure somewhere else.

When you're planning your vacation, you want to get the best prices around while still being able to have a good time in a great place. Regardless of where you want to be, you can get a better vacation rental by choosing Airbnb.

Airbnb allows people to rent a place – whether it's a whole home or a room in someone else's abode – from ordinary people who have put their property up as a listing for short-term rentals.

Find Deals Using Airbnb

There are some rules that you have to follow when you want to rent a place using Airbnb. You can't just hop on the site, book a place and be done with it - and there is a sign-up age limit.

You have to be at least eighteen to register and book as a guest on the site. The first thing that you'll have to do is to create an account by using Facebook or your email address.

Once you've successfully signed up, you will have to input some information first. This is done to help make your vacation and your host's experience go as smoothly as possible.

You'll have to share your full name and besides your name, you'll also have to give all of your contact information - such as your email address and a way to contact you via phone.

You'll also need to upload your picture. The reason for this rule is so that your host or your host's property manager will be able to recognize you. It makes the transaction smoother on both ends as well as being safer for all parties.

In your profile, you'll provide the area where you live and then add a short message about yourself. Airbnb will confirm your information before you get started.

After you sign up, you'll get an email address that you can use for the site to communicate with potential hosts. This way, your personal email address is protected.

When anyone communicates with you on Airbnb concerning a rental agreement, that information is sent to your private email from Airbnb. You'll be able to email back and forth with the host if needed using this email.

Once you book the listings, your private contact information will still be kept private. Depending on the type of space you're going to be renting, you may end up having to confirm your identity.

For example, if you're going to be renting a private room in someone's house, they may want to check your identity. Using the site is pretty easy when you want to find a vacation place.

You enter the area where you'd like to stay, the dates for when you'd like to rent the place and how many people are going to be in the vacationing party. Then you let the site search.

It will pull up some different options for you. You can narrow your search by selecting the type of space you're looking for - such as a shared room, a private one, an entire house or apartment.

You'll also be able to adjust your search options by the per night amount you're looking to spend for your vacation. There's also a feature that will let you search for certain features that you want the place to have.

When you're doing your search, you can choose a few necessities you may require. For example, if you need to have a place that allows pets, then you'd check that box.

If the place needed to have things like a washer or dryer, then you could select that, too. Then the Airbnb search function would eliminate the results that didn't have your feature choice selections.

When you find something that appeals to you, you'll see the uploaded photos of the host's place. You'll also be able to look at reviews. You ideally want to reserve something with high ranking rather than a low one.

If you're satisfied that you want to rent a specific place you find in your search, you may have the option to instantly book it - but not all rentals have this. If not, then you'll have to use the request button.

You will have to input your financial information from your credit card on the site in order to be able to book a place. But this information is for Airbnb only. The person you'll be renting from will never get your financial information or even be able to see it. They get paid directly from Airbnb.

What You Shouldn't Do When Using Airbnb

There are rules in place on the site for a reason and ignoring them could either impact how your vacation turns out or get you booted from the site. So make sure that you're aware of the rules.

Some of the don'ts that guests shouldn't do take place before they even agree to the rental. While there are great photos of many places on the site, you can't always tell from a photo if a place is the one where you'd be happy spending your vacation days.

So it's tempting to some potential guests to ask to drop by the rental space before they agree to rent it if the place is nearby. These guests want to see what they're getting in person.

But that's not allowed. You need to rent the space first before you get together with any host on the site. This is done to make sure that both parties are safe. Not only that, but it's in poor taste to ask a potential host if you can check their place out first.

You're asking them to go above and beyond the guidelines laid out on Airbnb. This automatically pegs you as a demanding potential guest and hosts don't want to deal with those types of people.

So just by asking, you could accidentally cut yourself out of being able to rent the place. Don't try to save money by changing the rules. There's a fee involved with Airbnb.

What some guests have done in the past is try to get around having to pay this additional fee that's figured into the booking with most hosts. They try to reach out directly to the host to see if they can negotiate a separate deal to keep from paying anything else but the booking.

They want to get out of the cleaning fee and want a lower damage deposit fee as well. This doesn't go over well with hosts and it paints you as a potential problem guest.

If you come across as someone who can't follow the rules on Airbnb, then hosts suspect you won't likely follow their rules, either. Keep in mind that there are some acceptable times when you can reach out to hosts for price changes.

But this is only during situations where it would be beneficial to the host. One of these times might be one where the place wasn't going to rent because it was out of season.

If you offer to rent the place out of season when it's not booked and you ask for a discount, that's acceptable. Don't assume that your host knows answers to things that only Airbnb knows.

If you have a question about the listing, that's one thing but if you have a question about something not working on the site, don't ask your host. Don't skim over the listing.

Make sure that you read everything in the listing. Some guests tend to read a listing so quickly they miss important details such as exactly how much space they're going to be renting.

Don't treat Airbnb like it's social media. It's not the place for you to find companionship or to find a drinking buddy. Your host won't appreciate a stranger coming on too strong and you'll end up not being able to rent the listing.

Don't skip over reading the cancellation policy. This policy spells out exactly what you can expect should an issue arise. There are some hosts who are strict about their cancellation policy, while others are more lenient.

If you think there's any possibility at all that you'll be unable to keep the booking, then look for a host who isn't as strict. Otherwise, you'll end up paying either a full or partial amount for a space you don't get to stay in at all.

Don't keep quiet if there's an issue. The majority of hosts do their best to make sure their guests have a great time. They attempt to look out for the guest's needs and to make him or her feel appreciated.

If something is wrong or if you feel that something should be provided, then you need to say something politely. Tell the host while you're at the residence and give him or her a chance to take care of it rather than blasting them with a low star review for something they may have been unaware of.

Don't overlook the reviews about a place that others have left. If a host is consistently getting bad reviews, that's a good sign that something's wrong. If you book a rental with that host, you could end up being disappointed as well.

Airbnb Provides Vacation Rentals and More

When you rent a hotel room, you know that you're getting a place to stay. Anything else - you're on your own. You have to figure out where to go and what activities that you're going to do in order to have some fun on your trip.

It'd be great if you had a way to combine a place to stay with some unique experiences during your vacation. With Airbnb, you can do exactly that. Airbnb is a site that's mainly used by people to help them find various rental spaces.

But when you can add on an experience, you end up with a better vacation. The difference between an Airbnb experience and not having one is that when it's added on, you get to do something you may not have explored on your own.

You not only get to be involved with what the locals get to be part of, but you get to take part in activities that are one of a kind and that aren't offered through regular vacation planning packages.

Any vacation planner can help book you for a day on the beach. But that planner might not be able to get you a kite surfing excursion with a local expert. He might not be able to get you in spaces or places that are advertised and promoted as an Airbnb experience.

You might be thinking that an experience is made of up of something that's similar to what you can do on your own. But they're not. These are things led by those with deep knowledge of the skill that can make your vacation more fun than you've ever thought possible.

You can do things like go hang gliding, have a writing session with an expert scriptwriter, or learn how to compose a song with a songwriter. You can learn how to make a tangible object or how to go diving.

The possibilities are endless. You'll be able to challenge yourself, to learn something new and engage with people who enrich your life. It's super easy to book an experience just as it is to book a place to stay.

You can get on the Airbnb site and do both at the same time. When you're on the site, just look for the area where the experiences are listed. You can choose a destination for whichever city you're going to be staying in for your vacation.

Or, if you prefer, you can just do an overview of all the experiences that are listed. What some guests do is they will look through the experiences first to see what exciting thing they can take part in and they'll plan their vacation stay around the experience.

There are different kinds of experiences for you to sign up for. You can do one that takes place in a day. Or, you can sign up for one that's known as an immersion experience. This kind of experience is one that unfolds over a period of several days.

You can't look at your calendar and determine when you want to show up for an experience. You'll have to go according to whatever date and time the host has set up for guests.

Make sure that before you book an experience you know everything that's involved with it. Some experiences aren't for everyone and some of them do require certain knowledge or skills.

One of the fun things about experiences is that you can find multiple ones often in the same city or nearby. So you can sign up for all the top ones on your list over the course of your vacation.

For example, you might decide to tour the Louvre with a tour guide who doubles as a stand-up comedian (yes, it's one of the experiences people love in Paris), and then at another time during your stay in Paris, take a tour of the city by foot with another host.

These experiences are as varied as the people who share them with you. You can learn about poetry and performing it in front of a live audience.

Or you can study painting or drawing with a popular artist. You can learn street art.

Dance is one of the popular experiences - especially burlesque dancing where a renowned performer will take you behind the scenes to show you everything that's involved as well as dance moves.

You can arrange your experiences so that they line up with your personality or desire to learn. If you're someone who's creative, then you'd enjoy lining up a series of experiences that deal with the arts like painting, writing, theater and dancing.

These experiences not only show you a good time during your vacation, but many of them teach you a new way to express yourself. There are good reasons to sign up for an experience or two when you're booking your place to stay.

You get more for your vacation money. You'll be able to have something new to do already prescheduled rather than having to find something. You can also learn some valuable skills that you can take back home with you to further enrich your life.

Learning new things are great stress busters so you can continue to have fun long after the vacation is over with. You can also apply a feel good factor to it and do something like volunteer or work with animals while you're on vacation.

How to Look for Good Deals on Airbnb

Not only can you find great places to stay when you use Airbnb for your vacation but you can also get these reservations at a good deal. There will be times when you can get deals that you wouldn't normally get if you'll just be open to changing your vacation stay days.

This is ideal for anyone - but especially for people who can set their own leave hours from their job or who aren't tied to needing to get pre-approval before taking vacation days.

Having an empty Airbnb rental isn't something that most hosts like because it means that they're losing money. Many of them, when the space isn't likely to be booked, will lower their rates.

By taking advantage of this time in between rentals, you can save money on the cost of your trip. You may even be able to save enough to put that extra money toward booking an experience.

You will need to reach out to the host. You're not asking for them to do you a favor. What you're asking for is for them to allow you to get the unreserved spots in their calendar with them taking some off the full price.

Be aware that this money saving tactic will not always be met with success, but it often is. You can save anything from 10 to 25 percent on the cost of the regular booking.

There's also something that you can do that's a bit of a gamble but you can try it. Don't book your spot in advance during certain times of the year. While there are some high seasons for rentals, there are also low seasons and every host knows this.

At certain times of the year, their business is going to slow way down or even trickle to a halt. That's where you come in. By waiting and not arranging to rent the place in advance, you can get better last minute deals.

A host will often want to rent to someone at a discount rather than let the place sit empty and miss out on those profits. The tricky part is that you'll be cutting it close - so you'll need to have a backup plan if it doesn't work out to get the rental host you were hoping for to say yes to a discount - or in case someone else beats you to the punch and agrees to rent the place at full price.

Wait until about six days before you want to leave on your trip and contact the host. Since many travelers find and book a rental on Airbnb several weeks prior to their departure, you have greater odds of getting a yes.

There are times that you don't want to try this. In months where travel is the most popular - such as summer or during a holiday weekend or major holiday such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, you may find it hard to find a place.

You'll want to book in advance during those times. You don't want your prime picks to get rented out right out from under you. But there is a way to get a deal even during a high season time for rentals.

You need to book about six months ahead of time. That's because hosts aren't always thinking of the peak time when you're half a year in the future. You can usually get a discount by booking that far in advance.

Make sure that you do a cost analysis for the entire rental. You'll want to figure in all of the extras and what that's going to add to the bill. The rental cost is often separate from the security or damage deposit and cost of the cleaning fee.

You can look at rentals that are within the same area and choose one that offers you a greater deal with the deposit and cleaning fee. If you have your heart set on one, but their cleaning fee and deposit is a lot higher than your second choice, reach out to the host.

Tell them that you really want to rent their place but find the additional fees are putting it out of your price range. Just ask if you can have a deal on the security deposit and cleaning fee to make it comparable.

Sometimes the hosts will flat out say no. But other times, they'll say yes and you never know until you ask. It's worth a try to save the money. Prices do change on Airbnb.

You can rent a place cheaper during the week than you can on weekends from most hosts. You can also change the duration of your stay and save money so that you get a better deal.

You can find that with some locations and hosts, a week stay is cheaper than renting for a couple of days or a weekend. If you're going to be staying at a location that's popular, but expensive, look to book that stay

with friends, colleagues or even others who are looking for an inexpensive vacation.

By splitting the costs, you can end up saving a lot. Pay attention to rules the hosts have because that can save you money on the costs as well. For example, some hosts will charge you for extra guests, but not all of them do.

So find the listings that will let you bring others so you can split the cost or at least not have to pay that extra charge. Look for listings that have a way to cook. If you can cook your meals in the kitchen, you can save money on the cost of food.

Not every listing will offer you a kitchen, though. Some private rooms only provide a sleeping area and a bathroom so you have to pay more for food dining out.

How to Choose the Best Places on Airbnb

The point of some vacations is to get away and relax. Other vacationers, like families, want a place where they can have fun, but be together. You have to first look for a place that's going to suit whatever it is you're hoping to get from the vacation.

You can choose something that's pretty low key or one where everything is jumping twenty-four seven. Decide if you want to stay on the coast and be near a beach, if you want the mountains or somewhere way out in the country.

Figure out if you prefer your vacation to be filled with sunny days or if you want vacation somewhere that has a chill in the air. Ask yourself if your goal is to relax or if it's to find some kind of adventure.

You can combine adventure and your vacation if you combine your Airbnb rental with an experience. The best places to vacation on Airbnb are going to be the locations that address whatever it is that you're looking for.

Some people look for places where they can discover a new culture. Some vacationers want to take solo vacations and want a place that's going to cater to single travelers.

Others want something romantic with their partner. Some people look for places that are family friendly. Budget limits as well as whether the place is popular versus a hidden gem can factor into what's considered a best place.

The best place in Airbnb is going to be the one that has what you want. So, choose your destination based on your preferences first. Then, if you have a vacation budget, look for rental places in Airbnb by using a filtered search for what you're willing to pay per night.

Then add what's important to you - such as the shopping, activities and events. It can be tempting to stick with what you know best. These are vacation spots that get a lot of advertising as being vacation spots, but be willing to try something new.

Look for listings that fit your needs in terms of housing requirements. Do you need a room or an entire place to yourself? A private pool or a community one? What gadgets do you need in the residence – a big screen TV or WiFi?

Look for listings that have plenty of reviews and make sure there are consistently good ratings. You want to see how the host interacts with those who have left any kind of complaint. If they're defiant, make a decision on who you choose to believe in the matter.

Search for Super hosts who have repeatedly given great experiences with their guests and home rentals. You want someone who has proven themselves to be reliable and hospitable, too.

The Features and Perks Give You a Better Vacation

There are plenty of features and perks that you can get if you use Airbnb to wind up with a better vacation. If you're visiting a foreign country, you

can request a host that speaks your language so you can communicate easier.

Plus, a host can helpfully direct you to where all the fun stuff is. You can't figure that out by reading about it in a guidebook in a language that you don't know. If you stay in a hotel in a foreign country, there's a small chance that hotel staff can't communicate with you.

With Airbnb vacation rentals, you can get very specific in what you're looking for - such as if you want to be near a particular street or tourist attraction. You can't do that with hotels.

One of the best features that you can get from an Airbnb rental is space. If you decide to go on vacation with your entire family and there are five or more of you, you won't be allowed to stay in the same hotel room unless it's a suite - so you'll have to rent more than one room.

That's more expensive and you don't even get as much room as you can get in an Airbnb place. You can get an entire home rental or apartment night's stay cheaper than you can stay in a hotel.

Another perk is that you can rent spaces with more bathrooms, which is a bonus when you have more than one guest. Plus, you can also rent spaces that have fully functioning kitchens.

This not only lets you make meals that are better for you, but you end up saving money, too. The features that are offered by an Airbnb rental are better because you have to pay for these if you try to use them at a hotel.

In foreign countries, you have to pay for anything extra that you might use in an excursion. And in some areas, if you wanted to go out on a lake, you'd have to pay to rent a kayak and many hotels don't even offer those.

But you can find hosts who not only rent you a place to sleep, but provide extras like the use of their kayak, fishing gear, or pool toys, for example. You also won't find things like a fireplace (except in some expensive upscale hotels), but you can in homes or apartments.

You also won't have things like private game rooms or better parking. You can also have things like appliances such as a washer and dryer. Plus, you can get more from the local Airbnb host when you're in a private residence.

Proper Guest Etiquette

You want to make sure that you get a good review because negative ones can impact future rentals from other hosts. Make sure that you show up at the rental place when you say you're going to be there.

Things happen - like a missed flight, heavy traffic and emergencies - and that's understandable, but other than that, you shouldn't cause your host to have to wait for you to get there beyond your check in time.

You should also vacate the premises when it's time for you to check out. It wouldn't be fair to the host for him to be ready to prepare to check someone else in and you're still running around the place packing up your stuff.

Don't change the rules of the rental agreement. If you're going to rent the place solo, that's what your host is expecting and it's what he's prepared for. You can't show up with a handful of other people and expect that your host will just be okay with that.

Don't throw a loud party and expect that it's okay to inconvenience neighbors with parking or the noise. If you're renting a room and you're going to be sharing the kitchen or bathroom, then fit your time to use either room in with your host's schedule.

Don't treat the place that you rent as a college dorm. Leaving trash everywhere and expecting that it's okay because the host has a cleaning service is a sign of a bad guest.

Pick up after yourself and try to leave the place in the same neat condition that you found it in. Don't abuse the amenities and don't expect something that's not spelled out in the rules.

If there's a supply of things for you to use such as shampoo, soap, other toiletries and toilet paper, don't load your suitcase up with any extras that may be in a supply closet.

If you didn't arrange to bring a pet in the original agreement, then don't just assume it's okay if you couldn't find a pet sitter or get the animal to a boarding place at the last minute.

You would need to talk to your host first and respect their decision. Treat your host and your host's space as you'd like to be treated and as you'd like your own space treated.



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