



*A Step-by-Step Guide
To Setting Up, Marketing
and Managing
a Short-term Rental*

by Steven Unger

Air BnB Success

***A Step-by-Step Guide
To Setting Up, Marketing
and Managing a Short-term Rental***

srunger72@gmail.com

January 26, 2023

v 1.0

Copyright 2023 by Steven R Unger

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	1
Introduction	2
Chapter 1 – Preparation.....	3
Chapter 2 - My Story	11
Chapter 3 - A Short History of the B&B Industry	13
Chapter 4 - About airbnb	15
Chapter 5 - How to Leverage Your airbnb Listing.....	19
Chapter 6 - Types of Short-term Rentals	22
Chapter 7 – Marketing Your Short-term Rental	24
Chapter 8 - Managing Your Guests	27
Chapter 9 - Setting Up Your Short-term Rental	32
Summary	40

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the 30,000 guests my husband and I hosted at the Lion and the Rose in Portland, Oregon over 18 years. Getting to meet so many wonderful people was like having a sidewalk go through our living room.

This book is also dedicated to our amazing staff who literally made our guest's stays possible. These include family members Russ and Karen Carsey, and a few we have come to consider family -- Dusty Sealey and Paula Navarre.

Introduction



For 18 years my husband Dusty and I hosted over 30,000 guests at a historic 8-guestroom Victorian B&B in central Portland, Oregon. We were listed on the National Register of Historic Places and top-rated by Trip Advisor.

Over the years we kept pace as the bed & breakfast business changed radically to become the short-term rental business.

- We listed rooms on our own website, airbnb, vrbo, expedia and hotels.com
- We experimented with various levels of service
- We rented out our basement apartment as a separate unit
- We've seen it all. We know the ins and outs.

Each host's goals and needs are unique. What follows is a step-by-step guide to setting up and operating the short-term rental of your dreams.

Steve & Dusty

Chapter 1 – Preparation

Getting Ready

Before you begin to walk down the road (take action) it is important to think through where you want to go. There are many possibilities and options. The question is which ones are right for you.

When you start out you often don't know what you don't know. So, to help you on your way we have developed 50 questions that you need to consider. The tables on the next few pages are set up so you can circle the options that apply to your property and your interests.

50 Important Questions

1 - Contact Info			
a) Name	First	Last	
b) E-mail	Email		
c) Phone (Optional)	Phone		
2 - Your Property			
a) City / State	City	State	Zip Code
b) Property Location	Downtown	Center City	Neighborhood
c) “	Suburbs	Countryside	Resort Area
d) Property Type	Grand Mansion	3-5 Bedroom House	1-3 Bedroom Cottage
e) “	Duplex	Triplex or Quad	Apartment
f) Guest Units	Private Bath	Shared Bath	Both
g) Walkability	Must Drive	Some	Good
h) Do you have multiple properties?	No	Yes	How Many

Notes:

3 - Type of Rental			
a) How do you wish to rent your property?	Long-term (Month-to-month)	Short-term (Under 30-days)	Both
b) How often do you want to rent your property?	All Year	Part of the Year	When on Vacation
c) Does your municipality have a short-term rental ordinance?	Yes	No	Don't Know
4 - Type of Service			
a) What level of service do you want to provide?	Full-service Traditional B&B	Minimal Service airbnb	Other
b) What do you want to rent?	Room(s) in House	Whole House	Both

Notes:

5 - When there are <u>no</u> guests			
a) Who will live in the property when there are no guests?	You	A Manager	No One
b) How many people will be living in the property?	# Adults	# Children	Other
c) Do you want to have a home office in the property?	None	1 Office	2 Offices
d) Do you want to run a business from the property?	Yes	No	
6 - When there are guests			
a) Who will live in the property during guests' stay?	You	A Manager	No One
b) How many people will be living in the property (excluding guests)?	# Adults	# Children	Other
c) Do you want to run a business from the property	Yes	No	

Notes:

7 - Your Background

a) Partner status?	Single	Married Life-partners	Business Partners
b) Do you have experience in the hospitality industry?	None	Some	A Lot
c) Does one of you love to cook and share food?	Yes	No	
d) Is one of you “super handy” and likes to fix things?	Yes	No	
e) Computer skills?	None	Low	Medium
f) Do you like meeting new people?	Yes	No	Sometimes
g) Are you extraverts or introverts?	Extravert	Introvert	Both

Notes:

8 - Property Management			
a) Who will manage the property overall?	You	A Manager	Other
b) Take reservations?	You	A Manager	Other
c) Greet Guests?	You	A Manager	Other
d) Answer Guest questions?	You	A Manager	Other
e) Manage reservations on your computer?	You	A Manager	Other
f) Collect keys on departure?	You	A Manger	Other
a) Check for damage?	You	A Manager	Other
b) Responding to e-mail?	You	A Manager	A Service
c) Responding to phone messages?	You	A Manager	A Service
d) Marketing the property?	You	A Manager	A Service
e) Special Events	You	A Manager	A service

Notes:

9 - Breakfast Service			
a) What type of breakfast would you offer?	None	Continental	Full
b) Where would breakfast be eaten?	Dining Room	Guest Room	Terrace
c) What type of tables?	1 large table for all guests	Individual Tables for each guest	
d) Would breakfast be optional?	Yes	No	
e) Would there be an extra charge for breakfast	Yes	No	
f) Who would join the guests at breakfast?	You	Manager	No One
10 - Housekeeping			
a) Housekeeping schedule	Daily	Periodically	End of Stay
b) Type of housekeeping service	Full (like hotel)	Limited (wastebaskets, toilet paper)	End of Stay
c) Do you wish to charge extra for housekeeping?	Daily	At end of stay	
d) Who will perform housekeeping	You	A Manager	A Service

Notes:

11 - Special Services			
a) Weddings	No	You	A Manager
b) Wedding Showers / Baby Showers	No	You	A Manager
c) Afternoon Tea	No	You	A Manager
d) Happy Hour	No	You	A Manager
e) Salon Evenings	No	You	A Manager
f) Catering Services	No	You	A Service
12 – Finances			
a) Do you have a second stream of income to supplement rental income?	Outside Job or income	Capital or Savings	Loan or Gift
b) Can you qualify for a Residential Mortgage?	Yes	No	
c) Can you qualify for a Commercial Mortgage?	Yes	No	

Notes:

Chapter 2 - My Story

How I Became an Innkeeper

Some people dream of running a bed & breakfast. I was not one of them.

In 2001 I had been working in Silicon Valley in software marketing for 18 years. My latest job, though stressful, was challenging and satisfying. Then in June of 2001 I was returning from a vacation and was notified of an emergency teleconference on the day I was flying home. I landed at the Oakland airport and called in. 3 minutes later I was out of a job.

While our late-stage startup had paying customers, we had to cut our cash burn in half to get a fourth round of funding. So, half the company, myself included, was let go with one day's notice and two week's severance.

Previously in the Silicon Valley, if you were laid off you could generate 2 or 3 new job offers in 2 or 3 months. But this was mid-2001 and the Tech Bust was in full swing. It was taking people a year or more to find a new job if you were lucky. In the end my husband and I decided to move to Portland, Oregon and "re-invent" ourselves as innkeepers. We told our guests that we were "high tech refugees" who come to Portland in search of honest labor. Basically, we bought a job.

Flash forward 18 years

We have steadily grown our Bed & Breakfast (the Lion and the Rose) from 1,100 room-nights in 2002 to over 2,000 in 2014. Our average stay is 2 guests for two nights. We now host about 2,000 guests a year in 8

guest rooms. We have seen it all, and experimented a lot. We know what works and doesn't work.

BTW ... I have also been a member of the airbnb Community (as both Guest and Host).

Chapter 3 - A Short History of the B&B Industry

Purpose of this Section

This section will give you an overview of the “traditional” B&B industry. It is helpful to understand the evolution of the B&B which lead to the creation of airbnb.

Back in the Day

B&B's appeared first in Europe and then spread to the United States in the 1970's and 1980's.

- Originally B&B's depended on write-ups in hard copy guide books to attract guests.
- Reservations were made over the phone or by snail mail.
- Reservations confirmations were mailed or faxed back to guests.
- Innkeepers needed to stay close to their phones and answering machines.
- As PC's were introduced, specialty software packages were offered to help innkeepers manage their reservations.
- Guest rooms accessing a “shared bath” were more common.
- Having a shared telephone or a telephone in each room was a plus.

Then Came the Internet and Cell Phone

Technology really revolutionized the B&B industry.

- The B&B's website became the #1 marketing tool for a B&B.
- Online availability calendars and online reservations became the norm.
- E-mail communication replaced paper mail and fax.
- Cell phones gave innkeepers much greater freedom.
- Electronic key code locks allowed guests to enter the B&B on arrival even if the innkeeper was out on errands.

About the Traditional B&B Website

Historically, the number one marketing tool for a B&B was its website.

Having a website that is easy to navigate and has great pictures was critical. B&B's are not commodities -- they are each unique. So potential guests need to go to the B&B website to read your story.

By the time airbnb was underway a B&B's website provided a lot more than the standard airbnb listing.

- Large picture slide shows at the top of the screen
- "Responsive Design" so the website appears correctly on cell phones and tablets as well as PCs
- An integrated BLOG to improve your listing position on Google

But these are the days gone by. The growth of airbnb (and similar short-term rental platforms) have forever changed the short-term rental business.

Chapter 4 - About airbnb

The History of airbnb

While airbnb started out as “couch sharing”, it quickly moved on to “private room” rentals and then to “entire place” (or whole house or apartment) rentals.

With the advent of the Covid-19 epidemic airbnb’s primary focus was on “entire place” rentals. In fact, airbnb created a new travel category – the “urban vacation rental”. Prior to airbnb there were no vacation rentals in cities.

Whole house Vacation Rentals have existed for decades in resort areas (like the Oregon Coast, Key West, and Cape Cod), where they are usually regulated by municipal ordinances that take many forms. However, when airbnb started the cities had no regulations to govern short-term whole house vacation rentals.

In many ways today the traditional bed & breakfast has been replaced by airbnb “private room” and “entire place” short-term rentals.

The Good News About airbnb

How serious are you about renting out an extra bedroom?

This e-book assumes that you have a room or property that you would like to rent out on a regular basis. This could be:

- A guest room
- An extra bedroom
- A basement apartment

- An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) like a Coach House
- A separate building on your property
- A property that you own separate from where you live.

The good news is that airbnb has made starting a short-term rental easy and low cost.

As shown in the chart below there are several things you need to operate a short-term rental. In the old days you had to go to several vendors and set up accounts for each one. Using your airbnb “landing page” as your initial website is much easier and more cost-effective.

Requirements	Traditional B&B	Supercharged airbnb Listing
Website	Custom (often in WordPress) with Integrated BLOG	Airbnb Listing Page (with custom URL)
Online Availability Calendar	Rezovation, RezStream	airbnb
Reservation Booking Engine		
Web Based Guest Management Software		
Credit Card Processing	Bank or Merchant Services Provider	airbnb
Collect and remit applicable Lodging Tax	By Innkeeper	By Innkeeper or Sometimes done by airbnb
Property and Liability Insurance	Commercial Insurance	Limited Property and Liability Coverage from airbnb
An On-site Manager	The Innkeeper	Optional

As shown in the table above, airbnb can serve as your **Online Availability Calendar**

- You want your guests to know if your rooms are available on the nights they need. The airbnb Availability Calendar meets this need.

And airbnb can also serve as your **Booking Engine**

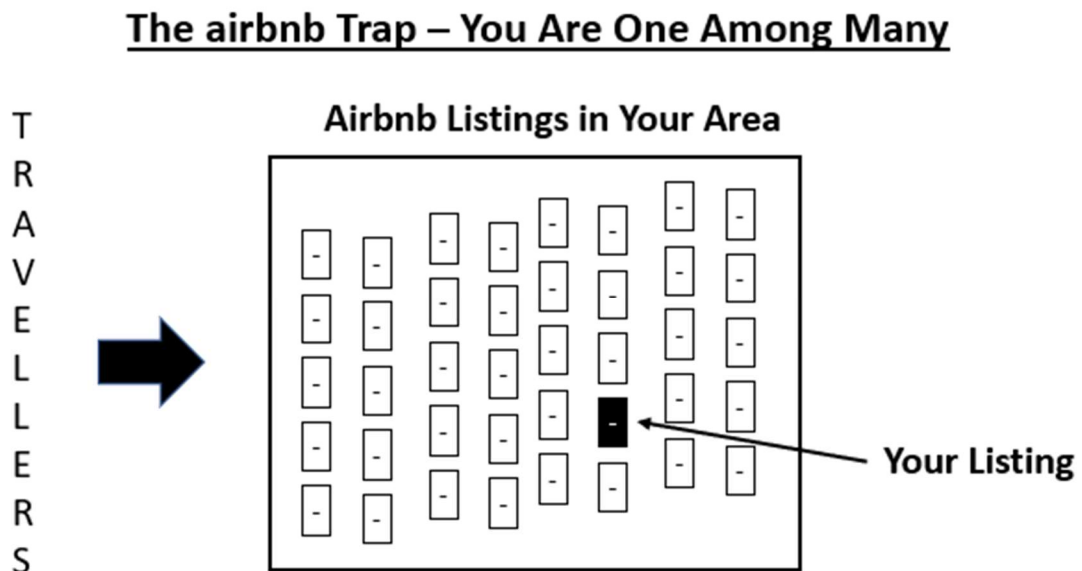
- After your guests decide to book you want to make it easy for them to place a reservation online. Again, airbnb provides this function.

The Bad News About airbnb

So, an airbnb listing is a great thing, but it can also put you in a box.

You need to go to airbnb and enter your city and state. See what comes up. How many listings are there? If just two or three, now sweat. If there are 50 or 60 listings, how will anyone find yours among the rest?

The chart below shows a simplified version of this concept.



In terms of increasing occupancy, there are two limiting factors with standard airbnb model.

- First, your listing is only viewed by travelers who go to airbnb.

- Second, you are competing against all the other airbnb listings in your area.

For many airbnb hosts who rent a room or two occasionally focusing exclusively on airbnb may be just fine. But if you want to increase the frequency of bookings there is a whole world out there.

Chapter 5 - How to Leverage Your airbnb Listing

Buy a Friendly, Memorable URL

The biggest problem with your airbnb Listing page is that it has a complicated URL (web address). You want a URL that is simple and memorable. The good news is that you can buy a web address that you like for about \$10 per year and then have it automatically forward to the URL for you airbnb Listing Page.



In the scenario above the potential guest does not see all the other airbnb listings in your area, just your listing.

This is Critical ...

Once you have purchased a custom URL (web-address) that forwards to you airbnb listing page you should list your property and its URL on the major websites (like Google, Yelp, Trip Advisor, City Search). The guest will click through directly to you airbnb Listing Page without seeing all the other airbnb listings for your town.

In the future you could add a website of your own that refers potential guests to your airbnb landing page when they are ready to book a reservation.

Adding a Website of Your Own

In stage 1 your airbnb listing can serve as your website”

Is an airbnb listing a website?

Well, yes and no. Not all websites are big. Some are small. Some even have just one page. What’s important is that you can access that one-page website over the internet and that it tells your story. To get started your airbnb listing can serve as a Landing Page and your micro website.

In stage 2 you can add a 1-page website separate from airbnb.

The good news ...

- You can tell more of a story about your short-term rental.
- You can list your property on other booking engine (like booking.com and vrbo).

The bad news ...

- The problem with listing on multiple booking engines is that each one has an availability calendar that you must continually update. This can be quite time consuming.

In stage 3 you can add guest management software

The good news ...

- Most reservation or guest management systems have an option to interface to multiple booking engines which can solve the problem of synchronizing your reservations so that you do not double-book.

The bad news ...

- You need to pay for and learn how to set up and use the reservation or guest management software and implement the interface to multiple booking engine.

Chapter 6 - Types of Short-term Rentals

About Location

Where you are located makes a difference.

In general there are two types of locations..

- **Destination Rentals** are usually located in areas where people go for a holiday or vacation. In Oregon, for example, this would be the Oregon Coast or Ashland – the home of the Oregon Shakespeare Theater – a small town with 300,000 visitors a year.

Guests arriving at a resort or destination rental probably depend more on the rental for food storage and use of a kitchen. These guests often spend more time in the rental.

- **City Rentals** are located in metropolitan areas where people come for many reasons: to see the sights, to enjoy city life, to visit friends and family members, to attend a wedding, conference or convention, for a weekend getaway, to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, etc.

Guests at City Rentals are usually on the go and do not spend much time at the rental during the day. They also want to experience local eateries and city entertainment.

Types of Short-term Rentals

Is there a resident host or manager?

There are two major types of short-term rentals:

- **“Home Stay” Rentals.** At Home-Stay Rentals guests are clearly renting rooms in the host’s home with a host or manager in residence during the guest’s stay. Most airbnb “Private Room” rentals qualify as Home-Stay Rentals. At Home Stay rentals guests often have an area for food storage and use of the host’s kitchen.
- **“Whole House” Rentals.** Whole House Rentals (or airbnb “entire place” rentals, or vacation rentals) are short-term rentals where a host or manager **does not** reside in the property during the guest’s stay.
- **Hybrid Rental.** Where a host or manager resides on the property where the guests are staying, but in a separate unit. The guest might rent the second unit in a duplex, or a basement apartment with its own door to the outside and a small kitchen.

Chapter 7 – Marketing Your Short-term Rental

Travel Websites

- **Google:** Google isn't just a travel website, but it lists all kinds of business, including lodging and short-term rentals and it has reviews.
- **Yelp** (www.yelp.com): Yelp review are also important.
- **Trip Advisor** (www.tripadvisor.com): Trip Advisor has become a booking website.

About Booking Websites Other than airbnb

If you go online, you can easily become overwhelmed by the number of booking websites. But take heart. This large number is really an illusion.

There are only about 4 travel websites:

- **Expedia:** Expedia's holdings include CheapTickets, Hotels.com, Hotwire Group, Orbitz, Trivago and Travelocity
- **Priceline:** The Priceline Group owns Booking.com, Kayak, Agoda and Momondo
- **Airbnb:** A public company
- **Trip Advisor:** A public company

As a result, if you link up to Expedia and Priceline you pretty much cover the field.

Note that if you want to invest in reservation management software you can offer a “direct book” discount to guests who book on your website. However, the price of the room should appear on your website at the full price without the discount (the same as it appears in airbnb). The various platforms like

airbnb just want to make sure that another platform is not getting preferred treatment.

Local Tourist Bureau

Many cities and towns have their own bureau to encourage tourism. If so, be sure to list your property. They will also usually advertise local events that attract tourists. For example, Portland, Oregon's travel bureau is "Travel Portland" (www.travelportland.com)

Short-term Rental Associations

To accommodate the growing numbers of short-term rentals in the U.S., Hosts have banded together in local, state, national and international associations that hold conferences and training sessions. At large events, they sometimes they have an exhibit area for Vendors who offer products and services for Hosts. Here are some examples:

- Portland, Oregon has a local association – Host2Host (<https://www.host2host.org>)
- The State of Oregon has the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA) (www.oregonrla.org/blog/short-term-rentals), and
- There is the National Short-term Rental Association (www.nationalshorttermrentalassociation.com).

Search Engines

Some guests may go to Google and enter "City, State, short-term rentals or vacation rentals". What's important to us is that your URL appears on the first page of listings for our city, preferably in positions 1, 2 or 3. If you have a website, It is important that your website is "optimized" with key words and meta-tags that bring us to the top. While we primarily

focus on Google, you might also pay attention to Yahoo and Bing.

Social Media

You should maintain a page on Facebook and post your BLOG entries to that page. I personally do not believe that most people search for short-term rentals on Facebook, but they can advertise a happy experience to their friends.

Posting pictures on Instagram or on Twitter are possibilities as well as posting videos on YouTube and Tik Tok.

If you have a website separate from airbnb, you can post links to these platforms.

Chapter 8 - Managing Your Guests

Types of guests

In our experience there are 4 broad categories of guests: Low Maintenance, High Maintenance, Typical, and 5-Star.

- **Low Maintenance Guests** come and go without hardly saying a word. Their beds look like no one has slept in them. They hardly use any towels.
- **High Maintenance Guests** have lots of questions and special requests. They use every towel in the bathroom every day. Their pillows and blankets are tossed around the room. Or they may have lots of special needs that they never told you about until *after* they arrived.
- **The Typical Guest** is generally considerate and appreciative. They are glad to have you ask them how their day went or where they went for dinner. They appreciate your suggestions or guidance. They may enjoy spending some time with you. Fortunately these are the majority of the guests.
- **5-Star Guests** are those whose life is devoted to being professionally unhappy with everything. Nothing is quite right or good enough. They may be manipulative. Yet, sometimes you can break through their facade with much empathetic listening.

The Role of Host Is Critical

In all cases the interaction between the guest and the host is critical. The guests are most often looking to the host to provide suggestions and guidance. The host needs to be available if problems come up (toilets that back up, T.V.'s that don't work, etc.). The rule of thumb in the B&B industry

is that hosts should be “friendly but not familiar”. There are some guests you will want to adopt and there are others that you will be glad to see leave. But if you don’t enjoy hosting most of your guests consider buying a vacation rental.

Contacting the Guest Prior to Arrival

I always recommend contact guests before arrival.
Contacting them through airbnb is probably the best.

- You can thank the guest for their reservation
- Verify the number of guests staying and the number of beds required
- Ask if they have any special needs or requirements
- Check on their tentative arrival time, and
- Ask them to contact you or call you on the day of arrival to reconfirm their check-in time.

In a later communication you can send the guest any “rules and regulations” that you may have and give them information about your area.

Keys, Locks and Doorbells

For a variety of reasons, I recommend having a video doorbell at each entrance door.

I also recommend have a key code lock rather than keys for entry. This way you don’t have to worry about lost keys and can change the code whenever you want.

Another advantage of key code access is that it is easier to “walk the guests in” over the phone if you need to. I personally don’t like leaving my house keys “under the door mat” or “in the mailbox” or “?”.

Communicating Rules

As noted previously, if you have specific “rules” that your guests must follow, it is better to communicate these before they arrive.

In particular you may want to cover “quiet hours” in consideration of your neighbors, and the number of non-guests who can come by to visit (e.g. group gatherings or parties).

Arranging for the Guest’s Arrival

If at all possible, it is important to reconnect with the guest on the day of their arrival. You want to minimize the chance of surprises.

Guest Information Book

Most hotels provide guests with an information book and I recommend that you do the same. Items to cover include:

- **House Rules**
- **Storage** of food items
- Use of **kitchen**
- Use of **laundry**
- **Wifi** access
- Use to **T.V. and remote**
- Use of **phone**
- Disposing of **garbage**
- List of **nearby restaurants**
- Information about **local attractions**
- Information about nearby **public transit**
- Instructions about **check-out**
- **Emergency contact** phone numbers

Checking in During the Guest's Stay

If you do not reside on the property and if the guests stay is more than 4 nights, you might want to have a reason to come by to “water the plants” or “pick up something from the garage” or “drop off extra toilet paper” or just to ask if everything is OK or if they need anything.

About Chores

In general, you do not want to load your guest down with chores other than cleaning up after themselves (e.g. meals and washing their dishes).

Try to limit the chores required for the guest's departure. It is easier and more cost-effective to have your housecleaner do these activities. It is just a cost of doing business.

Arranging for the Guest's Departure

On the day before departure, I recommend reconnecting with the guests to verify the time of departure and/or any special requirements the guest may have (for example storing luggage until they leave for the airport in the afternoon).

If you do not have a new guest checking in the same day of the departure, this can be easy. If you do have to clean up the property for a new guest, you may have to make special arrangements.

House Cleaning After Departure

You need to do a thorough cleaning of the property after the guest departs. I recommend hiring a professional cleaning service.

An additional possibility is to purchase an “ozone generator” that literally eliminates any existing odors and disinfects the

rooms. You set it up, turn it on, and come back two hours later after the ozone has dissipated.

Enlisting Support from you Neighbors

In addition to communicating with your guests, you also need to communicate with your neighbors. Think of your property as located on the center square of a tick-tack-toe board. These are the folks you want to talk to.

Assuming that you have a short-term rental permit from your municipality, you are not asking for your neighbor's permission or approval. But you do want them to know that you do not want them to be disturbed by your guests.

You can tell them about your policies and procedures, but the most important thing is to provide them with a phone number (or numbers) to call if they experience a noise problem or other problem.

Chapter 9 - Setting Up Your Short-term Rental

Get Legal

Terminology

In most cities airbnb rentals are considered “short-term” rentals or “transient lodging”. This is usually defined as rentals of less than 30 days in length. Rentals of 30 days or more are usually referred to as “household rentals” or “month-to-month” rentals or “long-term” rentals.

“Short-term” rentals are usually regulated by municipal ordinances that vary greatly from one city to the next. Some cities have one ordinance for “Bed & Breakfasts” and another for “Vacation Rentals”.

Some cities have a definition of what constitutes a “legal bedroom”. This may include having a window for egress in an emergency.

Get for copies of any ordinances

We suggest you call or go to your City Hall and ask them: “is there an ordinance for short-term rentals of less than 30 days at a time?” You might also ask if there is an ordinance covering “Vacation Rentals”.

Permit Number

To its credit airbnb has introduced a field in your Profile for a “permit number”. So, if your city issues you a permit or license number, be sure to put this in your airbnb Profile. This tells your guests that you a “legal” whereas others might not be.

Inspections

Some cities require an inspection to be licensed. Don't freak out. Usually these focus on "legal bedrooms" and "items of imminent danger" like exposed wiring.

Insurance

The elephant in the room

The **bad news** is that most standard Homeowner's Insurance will not cover property damage or liability for airbnb hosts. The **good news** for airbnb hosts is that airbnb has taken significant steps to provide their hosts for items not covered by their Homeowner's or Renter's insurance.

1. Currently airbnb will cover up to \$1,000,000 in property damage.
2. More recently airbnb has introduced "secondary liability coverage" that goes into effect after you primary liability coverage, if any, is exhausted.
3. You can read this coverage at <https://www.airbnb.com/help/article/937> .

Finally, some insurance carriers are providing new insurance policies for short-term rental hosts. Here are two examples:

- Safely: <https://safely.com/short-term-rental-insurance/>
- Proper Insurance: <https://www.proper.insure/>

The Guest Room

Must Haves

These are the basics:

- The most important part of the guest room is the bed and mattress. The mattress needs to be firm and fully supported underneath so that it does not sag in the middle or when you are sitting on the edge. A box spring or platform bed is fine.
- One approach is to select a firm mattress and put a memory foam topper on it. You can buy these “toppers” at Costco and they are not expensive. They can make a less expensive mattress feel luxurious. And, it is much less expensive to replace a topper than a whole mattress.
- Bed linens need to be high thread count cotton or a high quality no-iron Microfiber sheets. Avoid cheap polyester sheets.
- Fiberfill or memory foam pillows. Down is wonderful but people are allergic. Always good to have two extra pillows in the closet
- Nightstands with reading lamps and a clock radio or an Amazon Echo or similar device. Make sure it is easy to set the time and alarm on the radio.
- A dresser. The dresser can be in the closet if space in the room is scarce.
- Electrical outlets or power strips to make it easy to charge phones and tablets and also to plug in CPAP machines for guests with sleep apnea (more common than you would think).
- Easy to operate shades, blinds, curtains, or drapes for privacy.

- 2 or 3 attractive, well-sized and well framed pictures on the walls.

Nice to have

If you want to go beyond the basics, consider:

- If the room is large enough, it is great to have a worktable or small desk for people to use their notebook computer. Otherwise, be prepared to let them use your dining room table.
- A cable T.V. and a DVD player.
- A chair and lamp for reading or watching T.V.
- A small bookcase.
- If there is an overhead light, have it on a dimmer switch.
- A mirror – preferably full length. Can be on the back of the closet or bathroom door.

The Closet

Must have

- At least 2 linear feet of hanging space.
- Wood or high quality plastic hangers in the closet. If plastic, buy the higher quality kind.

Nice to have

- An iron and a small ironing board stored in the closet.

The Bathroom

Must have

The biggest question is whether the bath is private or shared. You can always charge higher rates for a

private bath even if the bath is across the hall. If the bath is shared than you need to make sure it is easy for your guests to use.

- An adequate supply of bath and hand towels and wash clothes.
- A bathmat in the tub/shower
- An absorbent bath mat to put on the floor outside the tub/shower
- Extra toilet paper
- A box of tissues
- A mirror for putting on makeup
- A wastebasket

Nice to have

If you want to go beyond the basics, consider:

- Special cloth towels for removing makeup. This will save your other towels from makeup stains.
- A plunger if the toilet gets clogged
- Bath gel, shampoo, conditioner and body lotion
- Extra toothbrushes and tooth paste for guests who run out or forget their own.
- A mini-fridge and microwave

Food Service

For most short-term rentals providing breakfast service is optional. This assumes that you offer guests a place to store food items and use of the kitchen to prepare their own food.

It also makes a difference if coffee shops and restaurants are within walking distance or a short drive. If not, the guest will need to use your kitchen.

Your Kitchen

The Basics

If you allow guests to use your kitchen, then you need to provide the following:

- A cupboard or cabinet where the guest can store their food.
- A mini-fridge or shelf in your refrigerator where guests can keep food cold.
- Use of a microwave, toaster, and blender.
- Instructions on where plates, glasses, cups and silverware are stored.
- Instructions on what to do with dirty dishes.
- Instructions on where to put trash and information about recycling.

Amenities

Heating and Air-conditioning

Perception is reality. What may feel fine for you could feel hot or cold to guests. Here are some suggestions.

- Be clear in your listing if your home is or is not air-conditioned. Also whether it is central air-conditioning or room air conditioners.
- Have a fan or heater in the guest room closet in case the guest would like one. Some guests like to sleep with the sound of a fan.

- Tell guests whether it is OK for them to open windows for ventilation.

T.V.

If you have a shared T.V.

- Show the guests the remote controls and explain how to use them.

Phones

Not so important anymore

- Most guests have cell phones so having an in-room phone is not important. However, guests without cell phones may want access to a shared phone. If so, you need to be clear about limitations.
- Also, if the guests do not have a cell phone, you will need to give them instructions on how messages can be left for them.

Wireless Internet

Many guests use their cell phones or tablets for wireless access. However, some may not.

- Give them all necessary network names, passwords and instructions.

Parking

An issue that can irritate your neighbors

- Explain where it is OK and not OK to park and why.
- Explain any special parking restrictions that would require the guest to move their car.

- Let the guests know where they can store bicycles if they have them.

Summary

So, whether you have a grand mansion, a cottage home, a duplex or triplex, or an urban apartment, and whether you want to make breakfast for and chat with your guests or hardly see them at all, you have the tools to make your dream a reality.

Since each host's goals and needs are unique, and now that you have read the book, we can offer personal coaching to help you set up, market and manager your short-term rental.

Please contact us by sending and email to:

srunger72@gmail.com