

Homads

THE HOST HANDBOOK

How to host *well*, and safely.

Everything you need to list with confidence, screen guests, price your home, and earn the kind of reviews that keep it booked.



What good hosting really takes

Mid-term renting is its own thing. Your guests aren't tourists, they're people living in your home for a month to a year, often while life is in motion. The hosts who do best treat it like a small business and a hospitality job at once. This guide covers both sides: how to keep yourself and your property safe, and how to turn a listing into a home people are glad they chose.

! Five habits of hosts who do well

If you build nothing else into your routine, build these.

- Write the listing you'd want to read.** Honest photos, a clear description, and a price that matches the home. Overselling leads to bad reviews; underselling leaves money on the table.
- Screen every guest the same way.** A consistent set of questions and checks protects you and keeps things fair.
- Put everything in a written agreement.** Dates, rent, deposit, what's included, house rules, and how either side can end the stay.
- Reply fast and keep it on the platform.** Quick, clear answers win bookings and leave a record if there's ever a dispute.
- Make move-in easy.** The first hour sets the tone for the whole stay and most of your review.

The short version

Be the host you'd want if you were the one moving in: clear, responsive, and fair. Almost everything else follows from that.

A listing that books itself

Most guests decide in seconds from the photos and the first line. A strong listing does the selling for you and sets honest expectations, which is what keeps reviews high later.

★ Photos that earn the click

- Shoot in daylight with the curtains open. Bright, natural light beats any filter.
- Tidy and stage first. Clear counters, made bed, a few warm touches like plants or fresh towels.
- Lead with your best room, then show every space a guest will use, including the kitchen, bathroom, and work area.
- Show the real thing. Photos that oversell are the fastest route to a disappointed guest.

★ Words that build trust

- Open with who the home suits best, such as a relocating professional, a traveling nurse, or a family between houses.
- Be specific about what's included: furniture, utilities, Wi-Fi speed, parking, laundry.
- Name the trade-offs honestly. A third-floor walk-up or street parking is fine if you say so up front.
- Spell out the basics: minimum stay, who pays utilities, pet and guest policies.

Price it like a pro

Check what similar mid-term homes nearby actually charge, then position yourself honestly within that range. A slightly lower price that stays booked year-round usually beats a high price that sits empty half the time.

What to ask before you say yes

Good screening is the heart of safe hosting. Ask every guest the same questions, judge the answers consistently, and trust the process over a gut feeling about someone's photo or tone.

Why are you moving, and how long do you need?

A clear, specific reason and a defined timeline are good signs. Vague or shifting answers are worth a second look.

Who will be living here, and is anyone else staying?

You're confirming the home fits the household and that no one undisclosed will move in.

How do you plan to pay, and can you show proof of income or funds?

A guest who can comfortably cover the stay is your single best protection against problems later.

Can you provide a reference from a past landlord or host?

A quick call or note from someone who has rented to them before tells you a lot.

Are you comfortable with a written agreement and the house rules?

A serious guest says yes easily. Pushback on basic paperwork is a flag.

Be consistent, and be fair

Use the same questions and the same standards for everyone. It protects you legally, it's the right thing to do, and it keeps your decisions based on facts rather than impressions.

Guest red flags, and scams aimed at hosts

Most guests are exactly who they say they are. A few are not, and the signs are usually clear once you know them. If you see more than one, slow down.

Wants to skip the agreement Pushes to move in fast without signing anything.	Paperwork protects both sides. A guest avoiding it is avoiding accountability.
Overpays "by mistake" Sends more than the rent, then asks you to refund the difference.	A classic overpayment scam. The original payment later bounces and you're out the refund.
Wants to pay off-platform Asks to move payment to a private channel to "save fees."	Off-platform payments strip away your protections and records. Keep it on the platform.
Story keeps changing The headcount, dates, or reason for moving shifts each message.	Inconsistency is the most reliable sign that something isn't right.
Refuses any verification Won't share ID, proof of funds, or a reference.	A genuine long-term guest expects to be vetted and is happy to cooperate.
Heavy pressure to decide now Rushes you to accept before you've done your checks.	Urgency is meant to skip your screening. A real guest can wait a day.

Never accept an overpayment refund

If a guest sends more than they owe and asks you to return the balance, **stop**. Wait until the original payment has fully and irreversibly cleared before refunding a cent, and when in doubt, decline and report it. This is one of the most common ways hosts lose money.

From move-in to five stars

Bookings come from your listing. Reviews come from the stay. Here's how to run one that guests rave about and that protects you along the way.

1**Make move-in effortless**

Send clear arrival instructions ahead of time, have the place spotless, and leave a short welcome note with the Wi-Fi password, trash days, and how to reach you.

2**Document the condition**

Take dated photos of the home before move-in. It's the simplest way to settle any question about the deposit fairly at the end.

3**Set expectations early**

Walk through the house rules and how to reach you for repairs. Guests who know what to expect rarely become problems.

4**Respond quickly during the stay**

A fast fix on a small issue, like a leaky tap or a tricky lock, is what turns an okay review into a glowing one.

5**Handle the deposit fairly**

Compare your move-in and move-out photos, return what's owed promptly, and explain any deductions in writing. Fairness here is what earns referrals.

6**Ask for the review**

A happy guest will usually leave a great review if you simply ask. Those reviews are what book your next guest.

The habits that keep you booked

✔ What the best hosts do consistently

- Keep the calendar and pricing current so the listing never goes stale
- Answer enquiries within a few hours, even if only to say they'll follow up
- Refresh photos whenever the home changes, and after any upgrade
- Keep every agreement, receipt, and message in one place
- Build a small bench of trusted help: a cleaner, a handyman, a plumber
- Read their own reviews and fix whatever keeps coming up

Keep your records

Save the **signed agreement**, the **move-in and move-out photos**, and your **full message history** for every guest. If a deposit, a damage claim, or a dispute ever comes up, this is what settles it quickly and in your favor.

★ Your checklist before every booking

Tick every box before you confirm a guest. If you can't, slow down and finish your checks first.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I screened them with my standard questions | <input type="checkbox"/> A written agreement is signed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I confirmed who will live here | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment is going through the platform |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have proof of income or funds | <input type="checkbox"/> I took dated move-in photos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I checked at least one reference | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing about the request felt rushed |

Host with confidence.

Get the basics right once and good guests, steady bookings, and strong reviews tend to follow. We're glad to have you hosting with us.