

A Tiny House Blog Publication

TINY HOUSE

FOR MICRO, TINY, SMALL, AND UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS

www.tinyhousemagazine.co



VOLUME 7 :: ISSUE 80



tiny rentals

BIG RETURNS

part 2

written by :: johanna elsner

Congrats on making the decision to swing those micro doors open and invite overnight guests into your tiny space! Clearly, you are privy to the financial rewards of nightly hosting on sites like Airbnb, but providing accommodations to nightly guests (aka strangers) for the first time also comes with a bit of a learning curve. Thankfully, hosting tips, tricks, and how-to's are abundant on the web but "tiny" hosting, much like tiny living, does come with it's own set of rules and know-hows. For that reason, we have compiled the must-haves and need-to-know intel for tiny hosting to piggyback all that online info and to help you become a tiny *Super Host* in tiny time!

Go tiny! Again!

Most likely, your space is already furnished and/or lived in. If not, this is a great time to adorn your tiny with some basic décor and pieces. This also means that if you have or are living in your tiny, it may be time to pare down (again). Remember, most of your guests will not be tiny dwellers or minimalists and because they *are* traveling, they will most likely have luggage, electronics, or even groceries in tow. Simplifying a smaller space even further before hosting is critical for this reason. Yes, the goal is to offer a unique experience more so than the local hotel competition, but guests also need to be able to spread out and easily find their way in your small space. (This is also important in making post-check out cleanings and inventory checks a quick and painless process.) But it's ok to think "hotel room" for a moment here. The necessary furniture and a few pictures on the walls are really all that is needed to make your space feel like home in addition to the essentials below. (But you already know this. You went tiny!) Storing luggage or having a

space for a laptop may be crucial for some guests in determining if your space is right for them and freeing up useful areas like staircase storage, counter tops, or excess loft space will be key in hosting these guests for multiple days.

Invest in Your Business

Now is the time to invest a little in your new-found "hospitality" business. These purchases are not only tax deductible but stocking up on well-made items like quality linens and must-haves like propane will give your guests a sense of "perceived value" as well as keep you from replacing items often or in a pinch. (Ie. Positive reviews!) While tiny *Super Hosts* like Perch & Nest will offer an essentials checklist with their hosting service, you can create your own simply by going through your space and noting what is needed to operate your home (times two). For example, you should have two sets of sheets for each sleeping surface and 2 pillows per number of guests permitted to reserve your space. The same applies to towels, dishcloths, and so on. This will allow you to always have clean items ready to go or extras available upon request. The same rule applies to propane tanks and composting toilet bags and/or matter. If your tiny utilizes these types of fixtures, you should be prepared to empty or exchange at any given time. You do not want to be caught in the middle of the night without a replacement LP tank or unable to prepare a potty for an incoming guest. But again, keep these supplies to the minimum while being sure to include the essentials. A wine tool and can opener are still great items to have on hand even if your space does not include a kitchen. You may even consider offering a coffee maker and coffee and tea. Having a deck of cards, a couple board games, or a few books on hand is

also not frowned upon especially if your space is off-grid or lacks Wifi as long as you are mindful of your available space and these items are able to be stored out of the way. Starting your rental with hardy but simple basics will keep the last minute requests at bay but also up your listing amenities game. Carrying this tactic with you once you list your space is also smart business. If a guest requests something you do not have, consider making the purchase during their stay. (We did this with a steam iron not too long ago.) Going this easy extra mile will not only promote a positive experience for your guest but further add to your listing's amenities. (Again, it's tax deductible!) But don't get too crazy and end up back at step one! It's ok to say, "no" if you don't have or want to offer an item as long as your rental listing does not include that item as an amenity.

Make Rules

This is probably the most important aspect of any Airbnb listing and even more so in a tiny space. Publishing your house rules and manual within your online listing as well as in print inside your home will not only allow guests to easily access information before and during their stay, but this document will also protect you and your home by allowing Airbnb support to assist you in the (hopefully rare) event of a guest dispute. There are plenty of templates available online to guide you through creating a thorough house manual. However, tiny specific instructions should also be documented thoroughly since many aspects of tiny living are not "a given" like so many traditional house norms. You might need to include information like how to operate or empty your toilet, what to do if water or propane becomes unavailable, or how to use



your induction cooktop. At Perch & Nest, all of our grey water drains directly into our soil. Therefore, “Biodegradable Products Only.” is part of the kitchen and bathroom information in our manuals. (We also provide the proper types of kitchen and bath soaps to make it easy for guests to remain compliant.) Rules such as “No smoking. No perfumes. No aerosols.” and “No Pets.” are strongly recommended in tiny renting as all of these things are difficult to “freshen up” after in a small space. And because many tinys are parked in a location with other tiny’s or dwellings, parking information should also be made clear including number of vehicles allowed and where to and not to park.

Create an Easy Check-In

Of course, professional photos and an honest and catchy description are important pieces to a successful rental listing, but one of the most overlooked and more helpful (Airbnb) features available is “Check-In Instructions”. This feature allows you to streamline guest check-in by creating step by step instructions with photos on how to access your property, park, and what to do next. Meeting guests is great but not always possible for the host and/or the guest. This tool allows you to provide guests with detailed and pertinent access info at any time during your check-in window whether you are available or not. (This perk may also allow you to extend your check-in window enticing even more potential guests.) We prefer to use this feature along with a friendly reminder message the morning of each reservation that includes “Feel free to self check-in any time after 3p using the Airbnb check-in instructions provided.” This confirmation reminds guests of your check-in window and also informs them how to access

the property without tying you or them down to a specific check-in time. This is also a great time to give guests a (documented) reminder that a manual full of “tiny info” is inside the home and/or how to contact you during their stay.

Establish Pricing

Establishing a nightly rate for a tiny home can be a bit daunting. Comparably sized spaces in your area will most likely be fetching a much lower rate than you may be able to charge for a free standing “whole house” rental. (Not to mention, it’s a tiny house!) On average, you may be able to charge as much as 25-50% more per night compared to an apartment or room of the same size in your location. This may take some trial and error but don’t be afraid to start a little higher and scale back if you feel your booking numbers are inadequate. We have found that charging a little more while offering a little less has actually been the most beneficial for us and our guests. (Yes, you read that right!) While we know we may not be able to charge but so much for a tiny space that sleeps two, we can charge a higher nightly rate because the space is an “entire place” and advertise a “No Cleaning Fees!” rental. If you have ever traveled through Airbnb or a similar site, you know the fees can add up. This often makes potential guests cautious in booking within a certain price range. But by offering an “all inclusive” rate (excluding taxes), you will keep your total booking rate low in comparison to other local properties. In exchange, you might require that guests complete a list of departure tasks such as removing sheets from the bed, washing dishes, or taking the trash out prior to check out. This system is a win for both parties in small and





economical rentals as the guest has no hidden fees and the host is able to book back-to-back guests by keeping cleaning and turnover time to a minimum. Opting in to available features like instant bookings and smart pricing in addition to allowing single night stays are also great ways to keep your tiny consistently reserved.

Ultimately, most hosts find tiny renting to be overwhelmingly rewarding. Not only are you gaining potential income by opening your home to others, but the tiny curious will enjoy “going tiny” for a night and possibly solidifying their own tiny dream. And the unsuspecting traveler may just fall in love with tiny by booking your home simply because of it’s location. What’s better than working from home and spreading the love of tiny living?

Now is the time to invest a little in your new-found “hospitality” business. These purchases are not only tax deductible but stocking up on well-made items like quality linens and must-haves like propane will give your guests a sense of “perceived value”.

