

The Airbnb Pricing Checklist — Sean Rakidzich | rakidzich.com

The exact pricing checklist used to manage 100+ Airbnb properties generating \$1M+/month. By Sean Rakidzich.

By Sean Rakidzich · Cracking Superhost · rakidzich.com

- Identify 8-12 direct competitors within 1.5 miles Same property type, same bedroom count (+-1), same guest capacity. Filter to Superhosts only for your pricing ceiling — their rates represent the market maximum for quality. TARGET: 8-12 comps minimum
- Record each comp's nightly rate for next 90 days Screenshot or spreadsheet. Note their weekday rate, weekend rate, and any visible pricing patterns. You need 90 days because 30-day snapshots miss seasonal swings.
- Calculate comp set median (not average) Averages get skewed by one outlier charging \$800/night. Median gives you the true market center. Drop any comp with fewer than 10 reviews — insufficient data. USE MEDIAN, NOT AVERAGE
- Note each comp's occupancy (booked calendar days / total days) Manually check their calendars on Airbnb. A comp at \$200/night with 40% occupancy is earning less than one at \$150 with 85%. Revenue matters, not rate. COMMON TRAP: Copying the highest-priced comp without checking their occupancy
- Identify your amenity differential vs. top 3 comps Hot tub = +15-25% pricing power. EV charger = +8-12% in metro areas. Dedicated workspace = +5-10% for business-travel markets. Pool = +20-30% in summer, +0% in winter. Stack these — they compound.
- Check comp review scores and review count A 4.95-star comp with 200+ reviews can command 15-20% more than a 4.7-star with 30 reviews. Your review score IS your pricing power. Below 4.8? Fix guest experience before touching price. RULE: Below 4.8 stars = fix experience first, price second
- Set base price at comp set median (from Section 1) This is your starting point, not your final price. Resist the urge to start high — you need booking velocity to build reviews and ranking.
- Apply amenity multiplier from your differential analysis Stack your premiums: hot tub (+18%), dedicated workspace (+7%), EV charger (+10%), game room (+5%), sauna (+12%). These are averages from our portfolio — your market may vary by +5%. CAP TOTAL AMENITY PREMIUM AT 40%
- Apply review score multiplier New listing (0 reviews): multiply by 0.80-0.85 — you need to earn trust. 4.8+ with 50+ reviews: multiply by 1.0 (no discount). 4.9+ with 100+ reviews: multiply by 1.10-1.15. Superhost badge: add another 5%.
- Validate against your break-even number Your base price at 65% occupancy must cover: rent + utilities + cleaning + supplies + platform fees (Airbnb takes ~14-17%) + your time. If it doesn't, the deal doesn't work. Walk away or renegotiate the lease. RED LINE: If base \times 0.65 occupancy < total monthly costs, do NOT sign the lease

- Set your cleaning fee separately $\text{Cleaning fee} = \text{your actual cleaning cost} + \$10\text{-}15 \text{ buffer}$. Don't bury cleaning in the nightly rate — it destroys your search ranking for short stays. Don't inflate it either — guests filter by total price. **WARNING:** Airbnb now shows total price in search. Inflated cleaning fees no longer hide.
- Set minimum stay: 2 nights (most markets), 3 nights (premium) 1-night stays have the worst RevPAN (revenue per available night) after accounting for cleaning, turnover time, and guest quality. The exception: urban markets near airports or hospitals where 1-night demand is consistent.

Want the algorithm that sets these prices automatically?

RE: Algorithm breaks down exactly how Airbnb's search ranking works and how to manipulate pricing, availability, and listing signals to maximize your visibility and bookings.

- 21+ days out, unbooked → drop price 5% every 3 days If a date is 21+ days away and still open, start the clock. Every 3 days without a booking = another 5% drop. Floor: never go below your break-even from Section 2. **MAX DISCOUNT:** 25% below base before you hit floor
- 7 days out, unbooked → drop to 80% of base (aggressive fill) An empty night at 80% of base is infinitely better than an empty night at 100% of base. At 7 days, the probability of a full-price booking drops dramatically. Be aggressive. **EMPTY NIGHTS = \$0 REVENUE**. There is no "saving" that inventory.
- 3 days out, unbooked → drop to 65-70% of base (last-chance) This is your last-chance window. Some revenue beats zero revenue. Last-minute travelers expect deals — give them one and fill the night.
- Local events detected → raise price 25-80% Concerts, conferences, sports events, graduations, festivals. Set Google Alerts for your city + "event" + "festival" + "conference". Check your city's event calendar monthly. Major events = 50-80% increase. Minor local events = 25-35%. **TOOL:** Google Alerts, Eventbrite, local CVB calendars
- Occupancy above 80% for next 30 days → raise base 8-12% If you're consistently above 80% occupancy, you're leaving money on the table. The market is telling you your price is too low. Raise it gradually — 8-12% at a time, then monitor for 2 weeks.
- Occupancy below 55% for next 30 days → drop base 10-15% Below 55% means you're overpriced for this market at this time. Don't wait — cut now. You can always raise later. Revenue lost to empty nights is gone forever. **CHECK FIRST:** Is low occupancy from pricing or from a seasonal dip? (See Section 4)
- Weekend premium: Fri-Sat +15-30% above weekday base This varies by market. Tourist/leisure markets: +25-30%. Business travel markets: weekends might actually be LOWER. Urban mixed markets: +15-20%. Check your comp set data.
- Gap night pricing: single nights between bookings → drop 30-40% A 1-night gap between two bookings is almost impossible to fill at full price. Drop it 30-40% and capture something. Better yet, set up orphan-night discounts in your pricing tool. **PRO MOVE:** Auto-detect gap nights and push instant-book discounts
- Map your market's high/shoulder/low seasons from AirDNA or 12-month comp data Every market has a rhythm. Beach town? Summer peak, winter dead. Ski resort? Inverse. City center? More stable but dips in Jan-Feb. You need at least 12 months of data — don't guess.

- High season: +20-40% above base price Your peak months. Demand exceeds supply. Push pricing hard and don't discount early bookings — they'll fill at premium. This is where you make the money that covers low-season dips. HIGH SEASON = 60%+ OF ANNUAL PROFIT
- Shoulder season: base price, focus on occupancy over rate Transition months. Demand is moderate. Keep pricing at or slightly below base. Prioritize occupancy — 85% at base is better than 60% at base+15%.
- Low season: -15-25% below base, reduce minimum stay to 1-2 nights Survival mode. Cut prices early, reduce minimum stay, consider weekly/monthly discounts (20-30% and 40-50% respectively). Some markets: pivot to mid-term rentals (30+ nights) for insurance adjusters, traveling nurses, relocations. LOW SEASON PIVOT: 30+ night bookings at 50% discount often beat nightly with 35% occupancy
- Holiday premiums: Thanksgiving +40-60%, NYE +60-100%, July 4th +35-50% Major US holidays are pricing events. Set these 90+ days in advance. Require 3-5 night minimums over holidays. These are your highest-margin nights of the year — don't undersell them.
- Set pricing adjustments 90 days ahead on a rolling basis Don't wait until the month starts. Update your next 90 days of pricing every single month. Many guests book 30-60 days out — your prices need to be right when they're looking. CALENDAR REMINDER: 1st of every month = 90-day pricing refresh
- Check occupancy rate for next 14 and 30 days 14-day occupancy below 60%? Immediate price cut. 30-day occupancy below 55%? Reassess your base price. Above 85% on both? You might be leaving 10-15% on the table. TARGET: 70-85% occupancy (market-dependent)
- Scan for gap nights in the next 21 days Single-night orphans between bookings. Apply 30-40% discount. Open instant book if not already. Consider messaging recent guests about extending their stay to fill the gap.
- Review booking pace vs. same period last year (or last month) Are you booking faster or slower than normal? Faster = raise prices. Slower = investigate. Is it the market, your listing, your reviews, or just your pricing? This comparison prevents panic-discounting.
- Check for new competitor listings within your comp radius New listings often launch with aggressive pricing. A new Superhost with a better-amenitized property at your price point is a real threat. Adjust your positioning within 1 week of detection.
- Check upcoming local events (next 60 days) New events get announced constantly. Check your Google Alerts, local event calendars, and Eventbrite weekly. A missed event = missed premium pricing opportunity.
- Calculate RevPAN for the past 7 days $RevPAN = Total\ Revenue / Total\ Available\ Nights$. This is the only number that matters. High rate + low occupancy = bad. Low rate + high occupancy = might be bad. RevPAN tells you the truth.
- Review and respond to all new reviews Reviews directly impact your pricing power. A 4-star review should trigger an immediate guest experience audit, not a pricing change. Respond to every review within 24 hours — the algorithm rewards engagement. 4-STAR REVIEW = GUEST EXPERIENCE AUDIT within 48 hours

Ready to go deeper on pricing strategy?

Target Price is my complete pricing system: the exact formulas, spreadsheets, and playbooks I use across our 100+ property portfolio. It turns this checklist into a full operating system.

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