

Festive season accommodation

Vacation accommodation is an important holiday aspect. Rental prices can vary based on factors such as the number of rooms, amenities and location/destination. Therefore, when researching vacation rentals, beware of discount rental offers and always check the prices of several properties in the area to understand going rates. Remember: "If it looks too good to be true, it probably is."

This accommodation safety guide will help you detect and avoid holiday rental scammers:

Consider the website's payment methods and security policies

The safest way to pay for your vacation rental is by credit card. Regardless of where you live, credit cards offer more consumer protection than any other payment method. If there is a problem with your rental, or if you are the victim of a vacation rental scam, you can dispute the charges with your credit card company and have them taken off your bill until the matter is investigated.

Verify that the property exists

To avoid false addresses and vacant lots use mapping applications such as Google Maps or WAZE to verify that the rental you are interested in actually exists. Alternatively, if you know someone who lives near the rental property, ask them to visit the property for you.

Conduct online searches

Before paying a deposit, do some research on your chosen property and its owner. Conduct an online search for the owner's name, the property address, and images of the property and, if possible, who owns the rental website and who pays the property taxes. If you notice any discrepancies, or if you find the same advertising text or photos posted by two different owners, think twice about renting the property, especially if you have been asked to pay the rent in full by EFT or a similar method.

Rent known properties

As you begin to plan your trip, ask family members and friends if they know of available rental properties in the places you would like to visit. You will be able to ask the previous renter about payment methods, rental policies and any other concerns you might have.

Professionally-managed apartments and cottages are useful alternative. This option provides you with 'peace of mind' as there is a reputable agency or institution responsible for the booking process and you will be able to hold them liable should any problems arise.



Spend wisely