

## From Empty Property to First Booking – 10 Steps to Get Your Listing Live

A practical checklist for diaspora property owners ready to start renting on the Balkans. Work through each step and tick off as you go.

### 01 Choose Your Platform

- ☐ **Booking.com** = higher visibility, instant book & more corporate guests — great for steady flow.
- ☐ **Airbnb** = experience-focused travelers, better storytelling tools — ideal for unique properties.
- ☐ **Use both** for maximum reach — sync calendars to avoid double bookings from day one.

### 02 Photos That Work

- ☐ **DO:** Shoot in natural daylight, wide-angle lens, tidy every room — start with the best room.
- ☐ **DO:** Include outdoor views, local scenery & unique details that tell a story.
- ☐ **DON'T:** Use dark, blurry, or portrait-mode shots — these kill click-through rates instantly.

### 03 Set Up Google Business Profile

- ☐ **Claim & verify** your property address so it appears on Google Maps searches.
- ☐ **Add exact GPS coordinates**, opening hours, your booking link & contact info.
- ☐ **Upload 5–10 photos** directly in GMB — this boosts local search visibility significantly.

### 04 Listing Texts That Convert

- ☐ **Title formula:** [Vibe] + [Space type] + [Key feature] — e.g. "Peaceful Stone House with Sea View".
- ☐ **Description must cover:** what's special, nearby attractions, who it's perfect for.
- ☐ **List all amenities** — Wi-Fi, parking, A/C, BBQ grill. Guests filter by these on every platform.

### 05 Pricing Strategy for the Balkan Market

- ☐ **Peak season (Jul–Aug):** raise prices moderately, but avoid overpricing — some Balkan markets saw bookings drop after too-aggressive hikes.
- ☐ **Research 5 similar listings** nearby — price competitively, not cheapest, to avoid low-quality guests.
- ☐ **Activate smart pricing** tools on both platforms to auto-adjust for local events & holidays.

### 06 Calendar & Availability Settings

- ☐ **Sync calendars** across Airbnb + Booking via iCal to prevent double bookings automatically.
- ☐ **Set minimum stay** (3–7 nights in summer) to reduce turn-over costs & admin work.
- ☐ **Block personal-use dates** immediately — update the calendar before going live to guests.

### 07 Payment Setup & Tax Overview

- ☐ **Connect your bank account** to each platform — IBAN from EU/ Balkan bank both work.
- ☐ **Check local rental tax rules** in your country (e.g. Serbia, Croatia, BIH — rules vary widely).
- ☐ **Consider a local accountant** for year 1 — get the tax ID and registration sorted early.

### 08 Set Up Social Media Presence

- ☐ **Create a Facebook Page** for the property — add address, booking link & cover photo.
- ☐ **Set up Instagram** with a clear bio, location tag & 6–9 launch photos before going live.
- ☐ **Post 3x at launch** — exterior, interior best shot & a local view. Use location hashtags.

### 09 Get Your First Review

- ☐ **Invite trusted friends/family** for a first stay (even discounted) — genuine reviews count.
- ☐ **Write a welcome note & local tips guide** — small gestures lead to 5-star mentions.
- ☐ **Follow up after checkout** — a polite message asking for an honest review works very well.

### 10 Handover: DIY vs. Outsource

- ☐ **Do yourself:** possible, but time-intensive — ongoing pricing & calendar upkeep, especially from abroad.
- ☐ **Outsource locally:** Cleaning, key handover, linen laundry — find a trusted local contact.
- ☐ **Property manager** (10–20% of revenue) = best option if you're abroad & can't visit often.