

# The independent hotelier's direct booking checklist

## 1 Your website: The digital first impression

- Your site loads fast and navigates easily
- Booking takes two or three steps
- Your photos shows rooms, common areas, the view and breakfast
- Your amenities list is specific, not generic

## 2 Your rates: The most powerful direct booking tool

- Your direct rate never exceeds what guests find on any OTA
- You offer at least one direct-only incentive
- You know your OTA commission cost and spend to win bookings direct

## 3 Your visibility: A chance to be found first

- Your Google Business Profile is claimed and up to date
- Your website copy includes the words guests actually search for
- Your property appears in Google's hotel search results with live rates

## 4 Your reputation: Earn trust before they arrive

- You have a steady stream of recent reviews
- You respond publicly to every review, positive and negative
- You ask guests for a review after every stay

## 5 Your checkout: The make-or-break moment

- You accept major cards and digital wallets
- Your checkout looks professional and secure
- Your cancellation policy visible before the payment screen

## 6 Your guest communication: The bridge to the next stay

- Your pre-arrival email includes a useful tip or practical detail
- Your post-checkout follow-up includes a thank-you and a direct booking nudge
- You're active on at least one social channel

### What your score means:

- 19:** Everything is in place, so keep it sharp and revisit every few months
- 13–18:** You're closer than you think, identify the gaps and work through them one by one
- 7–12:** Some groundwork is done, start by focusing on the sections with the most unchecked boxes
- Under 7:** A lot of opportunity ahead, so tackle one section at a time and build from there

for independent hotels

