



Pointers On Booking The Perfect Vacation Rental

(NAPSA)—Good news for travelers: As more and more families are discovering, vacation rentals can offer twice the space at half the price of a hotel room and are easier to book now than ever. That may be one reason, according to the global travel market firm PhocusWright, online bookings of vacation rentals increased from 12 percent in 2007 to 24 percent in 2012.

Built-In Savings

There are a number of ways to save when staying in a vacation rental. For example, extra bedrooms mean additional family members or friends are able to join in the fun and split the costs. Preparing your own food, instead of going to restaurants for every meal, and having access to a washer and dryer both offer even more ways to minimize expenses. With baggage fees possibly tacking on an additional \$100 to \$200 per family each way, travelers have the option to pack less, travel lighter and save more.

Other potential cost-saving benefits found with vacation rentals include Wi-Fi, as well as entertainment for the kids, such as swimming pools and game rooms. Plus, unlike in a hotel where the only adult time is if parents secure a babysitter, those in vacation rentals can sip wine and share stories on the patio, or gather together to watch movies in the living room, after the kids are in bed.

“My kids love it when we travel with their grandparents. We do so at least once a year and have found that it’s easiest for everyone to stay together in a vacation rental,” said Erin Gifford, mother of four and founder of family travel website Kidventurous.com. “It’s nice to be



Go the rental route on your next vacation for more family togetherness while spending less.

able to spread out and each have our own space after fun-filled days of taking in attractions. We also like being able to cook, play games and spend time with each other under the same roof.”

Top Five Planning Tips

Use these hints to help secure the perfect vacation rental for your family’s next getaway:

1. Book Early

Moms and dads know all too well that planning is key when doing anything with kids—especially traveling. Booking a rental as early as you can is important because each property is unique. You want to have as many options as possible to accommodate your group, such as checking to see if a crib is available or if the property is pet friendly.

2. Read Reviews

Learn from other guests’ opinions. They’ve stayed at the properties and offer unbiased, firsthand accounts of what to expect. Reviews clue you in on details that may be overlooked in the listing, such as the need to bring your own beach towels.

3. Go the Extra Mile

Look for vacation rentals that aren’t located near popular attractions, such as the waterfront or

theme parks. The farther you are from tourist areas, the better the deal.

4. Stay Off the Beaten Path

Search for properties in lesser-known destinations for a more peaceful getaway that costs less because demand isn’t as high.

5. Use Reputable Sites

Search and book through professional online vacation rental sites, such as HomeAway.com, which offers access to the most vacation rental options in the industry. Alternatively, try VRBO.com, which has been around for nearly 20 years.

More Advice

The cardinal rule for booking a vacation rental is to always pick up the phone and call the homeowner or property manager. Not only will they know the specifics about the property, but they give an insider’s perspective on the destination itself.

Gifford recently booked a vacation rental via HomeAway and added, “Speaking with a property owner or manager provides insights into a rental and the surrounding community that I only get over the phone. It gives me those extra details I need to determine ‘yes’ or ‘no’ when considering a particular vacation rental.”

Once a final decision is made on a property, travelers should request a rental agreement that outlines all rules and cancellation policies so everyone is on the same page. If possible, pay online by credit card or through secure services like PayPal, and avoid mailing cash or using a wire transfer service.

Learn More

For further facts and to view some available rentals, go to www.homeaway.com.