

# Travel Experts Reveal Five Ways to Spot an Airbnb Scam

(Courtesy of Patrick Clarke, TravelPulse)

Vacation rentals platforms such as Airbnb have become the go-to way to travel for many seeking more space along with the many comforts of home that a hotel room simply can't provide. With more and more people taking this route, the travel experts at [Travel Lens](#) have shared some helpful tips that users can follow to avoid getting scammed.

"Rental property sites such as Airbnb have grown in popularity over recent years, with many people opting to book via these sites when planning their vacations. However, with growing popularity comes growing risks, therefore, being prepared to spot any potential scams or fraudulent behavior can be crucial in keeping your personal information safe," says Blake Walsh, travel expert at Travel Lens. "Many of these sites have internal protocols to ensure the safety of their users, therefore by ensuring you keep all transactions within the system of the site, you're already less likely to be faced with a scam."

Nonetheless, here are some things to look out for the next time you're looking to book.

## External Communication

Be wary of hosts who push for external communication as this can be a sign of a scam. Personal emails and phone numbers take users away from the secure, tracked method of the booking site. Hosts requesting that guests pay via an alternative method other than through the site should also be avoided. "If a host is trying to move your correspondence away from the site, this is a sign of fraudulent behavior," says Walsh.

## Email Links

Airbnb users should also look out for fake Airbnb links that may request personal data with the promise of receiving the best deals or first dibs on a new booking. The experts advise guests to avoid clicking these links and to always check the URL in the event that they do.

"Once again, be careful with where you share your personal information, if you have received a request from Airbnb via email, it is best to access the site separately to any links in the email to ensure you will not be taken to a fraudulent site that plans on phishing your data," Walsh advises. "Continue to handle all correspondence through Airbnb's official site and you will have secure evidence and receipts of any transactions made between yourself and the host."

## To Good To Be True

It's always wise to stop and take a moment when something sounds too good to be true. The same goes for Airbnb listings. If you're suspicious, try reverse image searching the photos used in the listing and seeking out reviews and other evidence that the property is real and legitimate. Users can right-click on the image and select the option "search for image with google lens" to start this process.

## Profile

Take a close look at your potential host's profile before booking as Airbnb has begun verifying both hosts and guests. The experts point out that the number of listings on one profile can be a tell as it's unlikely that an individual host will have a large number of properties for rent.

## **Reviews**

Always read the reviews when considering renting an Airbnb. Read up on the property as well as the host and be sure to avoid those with no reviews as that can be a red flag. If that's simply because the listing is brand new, read reviews for the host and go from there using your best judgment.

"Reviews are extremely important on these sites as they validate the legitimacy of hosts and listings, so if you are unsure about a property you are thinking of renting, be sure to check the reviews before booking," Walsh said.