

the STR Launch Checklist

100+ Steps from Purchase to First Booking

Legal | Setup | Furnishing | Tech | Listing | Photography | Go Live

THE ULTIMATE PRE-LAUNCH CHECKLIST

Every single thing you need to do before your first guest walks in the door. 100+ items organized by phase. Print it, check it off, and launch with confidence.

PHASE 1: LEGAL & BUSINESS SETUP

- ❑ Form an LLC (or consult attorney on entity structure)
- ❑ Obtain an EIN from the IRS (free, irs.gov)
- ❑ Open a dedicated business bank account
- ❑ Research local STR regulations and zoning laws
- ❑ Apply for STR permit / business license (if required)
- ❑ Register for state and local tax collection (occupancy/tourism tax)
- ❑ Obtain STR-specific insurance policy (not standard homeowner's)
- ❑ Consult CPA on tax strategy and deduction planning
- ❑ Set up accounting system (Stessa, QuickBooks, or Baseline)
- ❑ Create a filing system for receipts, invoices, and tax documents

PHASE 2: PROPERTY PREPARATION

- ❑ Deep clean entire property (professional recommended)
- ❑ Complete all necessary repairs and maintenance
- ❑ Paint interior walls (neutral, warm whites recommended)
- ❑ Update flooring if needed (LVP is the STR standard)
- ❑ Update lighting fixtures (bright, warm, modern)
- ❑ Install new hardware on cabinets and doors if dated
- ❑ Update bathroom fixtures (faucets, showerhead, towel bars)
- ❑ Ensure all smoke detectors and CO detectors are installed and working
- ❑ Install fire extinguisher(s) (one per floor minimum)
- ❑ Check and service HVAC system
- ❑ Service or replace water heater if needed
- ❑ Ensure all windows and doors lock properly
- ❑ Pressure wash exterior, driveway, walkways
- ❑ Landscaping: mow, mulch, trim, plant flowers
- ❑ Paint or stain front door (curb appeal matters)

PHASE 3: FURNISHING & DESIGN

- ❑ Create a design plan / mood board for each room
- ❑ Order all furniture (allow 4–8 weeks for delivery)
- ❑ Purchase hotel-quality white bedding for all beds (sheets, duvet, pillows)
- ❑ Purchase matching white towel sets for all bathrooms
- ❑ Buy kitchen essentials: cookware, dishes, utensils, glassware
- ❑ Purchase small appliances: coffee maker, toaster, blender
- ❑ Buy living room decor: throw pillows, blankets, art, plants
- ❑ Style coffee table, nightstands, shelves, bathroom vanities
- ❑ Install window treatments (blackout curtains for bedrooms)

- ▢ Purchase area rugs for living room and bedrooms
- ▢ Buy outdoor furniture and accessories (if applicable)
- ▢ Set up entertainment: smart TV, streaming apps, Bluetooth speaker, board games

PHASE 4: TECHNOLOGY & AUTOMATION

- ▢ Install smart lock on front door (Schlage Encode, Yale, August)
- ▢ Set up WiFi (reliable router or mesh system, 100+ Mbps)
- ▢ Create a WiFi name and password card (frame it or print on magnet)
- ▢ Install smart thermostat (Nest, Ecobee)
- ▢ Set up smart plugs for lamps (optional, but nice)
- ▢ Install noise monitoring device (Minut or NoiseAware)
- ▢ Set up property management software (Hospitable, Guesty, or OwnerRez)
- ▢ Configure automated guest messaging sequence (8 messages)
- ▢ Set up smart pricing tool (PriceLabs or Beyond Pricing)
- ▢ Connect PMS to all booking platforms (Airbnb, VRBO, Booking.com)
- ▢ Set up cleaning coordination tool (TurnoverBnB, Breezeway)
- ▢ Test all tech: lock code, WiFi, TV, thermostat, smart plugs

PHASE 5: GUEST SUPPLIES & AMENITIES

- ▢ Stock full-size shampoo, conditioner, body wash in matching dispensers
- ▢ Provide hand soap in matching dispensers at every sink
- ▢ Stock toilet paper (3 rolls per bathroom minimum)
- ▢ Provide paper towels, dish soap, dishwasher pods, sponge
- ▢ Stock trash bags (kitchen and bathroom sizes)
- ▢ Provide laundry detergent if washer/dryer available
- ▢ Set up a coffee station: coffee maker, coffee, filters, sugar, creamer, mugs
- ▢ Stock tea, hot cocoa, and a kettle
- ▢ Provide cooking basics: olive oil, salt, pepper, spices
- ▢ Assemble a welcome package: wine/beer, local snacks, handwritten note
- ▢ Create a guest guidebook (digital or printed with QR code)
- ▢ Provide extra blankets and pillows in each bedroom closet
- ▢ Stock a first aid kit
- ▢ Provide an iron and ironing board (or steamer)
- ▢ Set up a hair dryer in each bathroom

PHASE 6: LISTING CREATION

- ▢ Schedule professional photography (after everything is styled)
- ▢ Write a compelling listing title (property name + top 3 amenities)
- ▢ Write a detailed, engaging listing description (500+ words)
- ▢ List all amenities accurately and completely
- ▢ Set house rules (clear, friendly, enforceable)
- ▢ Set check-in and checkout times
- ▢ Configure pricing: base rate, weekend rate, minimum stay, cleaning fee
- ▢ Set up length-of-stay discounts (weekly and monthly)

- ▣ Enable Instant Book (recommended for maximum bookings)
- ▣ Upload 20–30 professional photos in strategic order (cover photo = hero shot)
- ▣ Create listings on Airbnb, VRBO, and any additional platforms
- ▣ Sync calendars across all platforms via PMS / channel manager

PHASE 7: PRE-LAUNCH FINAL CHECKS

- ▣ Test the entire guest experience: book yourself for a night
- ▣ Verify smart lock code generation and delivery
- ▣ Verify all automated messages send correctly
- ▣ Verify WiFi speed (run a speed test)
- ▣ Verify all appliances work (stove, oven, dishwasher, washer/dryer, microwave)
- ▣ Verify TV and streaming apps work
- ▣ Verify thermostat works (heating and cooling)
- ▣ Walk through with fresh eyes: is anything missing?
- ▣ Have a friend stay and give honest feedback
- ▣ Confirm cleaning team is scheduled and has access
- ▣ Confirm insurance policy is active and covers STR use
- ▣ Take a deep breath -- you're ready to go live!