



Painting our legacy on the canvas of history

Encore! Mt. Morris

AirBnB Frequently-Asked Questions

For additional details, create a free account at the [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) site and then:

- go to the Help Center for hosts (<https://www.airbnb.ie/help>) or
- go to the Airbnb Community for discussion and sharing information (<https://community.airbnb.com>) or
- call the customer support center at +1-415-800-5959 or +1-855-424-7262

What is Airbnb? Is it the same as a bed and breakfast (B&B)?

Airbnb.com is an international online marketplace that enables registered users (aka hosts) to publish accommodations, services/experiences and access to unique events on airbnb.com for members (aka guests) to book. Also provided are a 24/7 customer support line, liability insurance and a software platform for locating short-term lodging, handling reservations, and payments. The “breakfast” part is not often provided with airbnbs or can include a snack breakfast such as bananas, granola bars and a coffee maker. Sometimes, regular Bed and Breakfasts list themselves on airbnb.com also, but will indicate that as the type of accommodation it is. Bed and Breakfasts must comply with regulations for B&Bs, such as a food license. B&Bs are usually privately-owned, manage their own transactions, and serve a hot breakfast. At this time, there are no ordinances or hotel taxes that apply to airbnbs in Mt. Morris.

How do I become an Airbnb host and does it cost anything?

- There is no cost to register as an Airbnb host. However, 3% of the nightly rate your guests pay goes to airbnb.com.
- To become a host, you will fill out a detailed online application providing information about your accommodation, your house rules (more on that later), a brief description of attractive features (such as a patio, firepit, etc.), and photos of yourself and the rental space. Your address and contact information is only shared with guests who make a reservation.

How do potential guests find my listing?

Most people use the Airbnb app on their smart phones, but they can also create a free account and search via the web site, as well. Either way, potential guests search by zip code and the number of miles from there that they are willing to stay. They are shown multiple pictures and a brief description of your space, as well as a link to additional photos and information, all of which you have provided for your listing.

How much freedom do I have in controlling who my guests are and when they can stay?

- The calendar is yours to leave open or mark black out dates. It's best to do this well in advance, as there is a penalty if you cancel a confirmed reservation and it also affects your host rating. If you must be gone unexpectedly, instead of cancelling, it might be better to enlist a friend to serve as the host during your absence.
- You can decide how often you are willing to have guests and how much notice you must have before a guest arrives (same day or up to 7 days ahead).
- You decide if there is a minimum number of nights your guest must stay. Keeping this number low encourages more reservations. Setting the number at 3 or higher reduces the fast turn-arounds for cleaning/resetting the space, but can reduce the number of interested guests also. You can also change this limit based on the time of year to suit demand.
- You decide when guests can sign in (anytime? 8am-midnight? 12 noon-9pm? flexible?)
- Guests have a rating, earned by staying other places and being rated by those other hosts. Tip: Do not rent to people with even 1 negative rating.
- If a potential guest agrees to your house rules during the reservation process and has positive ratings overall, you can have Airbnb Instant Book (automatic confirmation process; more reservations likely) or you can require that you receive all requests for a reservation to accept or decline. The latter is reassuring, but may result in fewer reservations. If you use this method, it is very important that you reply quickly, so most hosts use the Airbnb app on their smart phone to manage these notices promptly.
- You set your own house rules that your potential guests see before they request a reservation. They might include such things as: Will you accept children 2-12? Infants? Pets? Do you allow smoking? Do you allow special events or parties, and if so, do you allow alcohol? Do you require quiet hours? Are there other amenity limitations, such as no swimming under 14 without an adult present?

What kinds of information will I be asked to provide about my space?

- A name for your property and a brief summary about your space.
- What type of space it is: house, apartment, guest room, camper, house boat, tree house, B&B, town home, farm stay, etc.
- How many people you can accommodate at once.
- Number of bedrooms, bed sizes and number of beds in each room.
- Number of bathrooms and whether they are private or shared.
- Whether your guests will have access to other shared spaces (e.g., kitchen, living room, pool, laundry, parking, elevator...)
- Whether essential amenities are provided (e.g., towels, bed sheets, pillows, soap, TP)

- Whether non-essential amenities are provided (e.g., iron, hair dryer, wifi, shampoo, closet/drawers, TV, heat, AC, breakfast coffee/tea, desk/workspace, fireplace, outdoor fire pit, children’s play equipment, other)
- What types of features you might have that would be of concern to some (e.g., must climb stairs, potential for noise, pets live there, surveillance devices/weapons/dangerous animals on property, other)
- Whether you are willing to accept larger groups or provide a discount if they stay a week or more
- A nightly rate, but Airbnb.com does help you with a rate suggestion based on what you are renting, the demand in your area, the season, etc. You can also explore typical rates asked by others in our area on the Airbnb site. Often the initial rate is modest to encourage reservations/reviews when getting started. Prices can be adjusted up later. You also have the option of offering a 20% discount to the first three reservations to encourage people to stay in your place and post positive reviews about your space and hospitality, since you do not have a host rating yet. You can ask a flat rate per night, an “each additional person” add-on rate (\$10?), a discount if people stay a week or a month (under 30 days to avoid regulations for rental properties). You may also add a cleaning fee. Finally, if you sign up for the recommended “automatic seasonal rate adjustment,” Airbnb will adjust your rate up and down throughout the year based on anticipated demand. You set the lowest and highest rate you will accept.

Assuming I have chosen to accept or decline each reservation request, what information am I provided to make that decision?

- Guest contact information.
- Payment details.
- Why they are coming.
- When to expect their arrival (and how many)
- A guest photo and rating from past Airbnb stays.
- Any questions they have for you.
- This information can be sent to you via text or email, but even more efficient is the Airbnb app, if you have a smartphone.
- Using the app on your phone, you can Accept or Decline reservation requests immediately and add a message, if you desire. You can also receive requests from your guests about any issues during their stay via the app, which allows you to respond promptly.

How is guest arrival and exit managed?

- You can be at the rental location when they arrive.
- You may leave the house unlocked at the time you expect the guest, leaving keys on the kitchen counter for them to find (telling them this ahead of time).
- If you prefer, you can keep the house locked, but inform them ahead of time where to find the key.

- You should leave a letter on the counter that reminds them of the house rules and includes any instructions such as how to operate the TV, tips for things to see or do in the area, and what to do when checking out.
- For efficiency, checking out may entail taking the garbage and recycling to a designated spot, stripping the beds and putting the sheets in the laundry room, gathering the towels and also putting them there, loading the dishwasher and turning it on, leaving the keys on the counter, etc.
- All hosts and guests are expected to rate each other after the stay. If you do not do it, it affects your rating, so compliance with this requirement is high. In fact, it can lower your rating if you do not provide ratings of your guests.

Addition tips not listed above that were mentioned at the Airbnb information meeting by an Airbnb host:

- Keep a box of receipts of all expenses related to your accommodation rented through Airbnb, such as paint, maintenance or improvements to the property, etc. These can be applied to your taxes.
- Provide a copy of the community guide created by your area Chamber of Commerce, brochures or rack cards about area events and locations to visit, and a recent copy of Airbnb Magazine (provided free to Airbnb hosts).
- Post a whiteboard in an obvious spot with a Welcome XXX, and your name and phone number to contact should there be an emergency.

This handout was prepared for Mt. Morris-area residents who might consider becoming an Airbnb host. Information was gathered from the Airbnb.com web site and an area host who attended our information meeting. Since Airbnb procedures may change before you read this document, we recommend that you confirm any information, using the contact locations listed at the top of this handout. Likewise, you should check with your local city, county and state regulators for short-term rentals and comply with all requirements.

Questions about Encore! Mt. Morris may be directed to us through our web site: EncoreMtMorris.com Click the Let's Talk menu at the top. You may also call the Village Hall in Mt. Morris, IL, 105 W Lincoln, Mt. Morris IL 61054 , 815-734-6425 to leave a message and someone from Encore will return your call.