



Are You Prepared for the 2nd Annual #BookDirect Day on Feb. 6, 2019?

Travel forecasters are predicting 2019 to be a great year for the travel industry. While big cities are still on the list of popular destinations, there has been a shift in interest, most notably to smaller towns that are somewhat off the beaten path. More travelers are being lured to the less-known and less-traveled, which can be a big plus for many Inns and B&Bs.

However, as millions of people start planning their trips for this year, they're also being lured to third-party sites to book their accommodations. As we've all seen, that means less control and higher fees... but there's hope!

Mark your calendars for **February 6, 2019** – the 2nd Annual **#BookDirect** Guest Education Day. Scheduled to repeat the first Wednesday in February each year, #BookDirect was created to educate and encourage both innkeepers and travelers about the benefits of booking directly with the property and NOT with third-party sites, like Trip Advisor or Expedia, who add hundreds of dollars in fees and often times don't accurately represent the property.

So, join forces with a multitude of innkeepers, hospitality professionals, and vacation rental managers for *one* day to send *one* message to travelers: **Book Direct**. More importantly, educate your past and future guests why booking direct benefits *them*.

Guest Benefits for Booking Direct

- Reduces the cost of third-party fees
- Offers more perks and guest amenities
- Provides access to specials and packages
- Gives access to lower rates
- Provides clearer expectations and accurate information
- Allows for direct communication with the innkeeper to personalize and optimize their stay

What Can You Do?

- **Send an email campaign** to past and future guests explaining the value of booking direct and booking smart.
- **Create special deals and promo codes** for returning guests, which they can only obtain when they book direct.
- **Share information via social media** (Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, etc.) using the hashtag **#BookDirect** to bring attention to the advantages of working directly with innkeepers and hoteliers instead of third-party sites.
- **Offer a BookDirect Special** for the week of Feb. 6 or perhaps the entire month when a traveler books direct from your site.
- **Use BookDirect imagery** to notify guests that they are on *your* site.

- **Manage your inventory** properly on the OTAs.
- **Ask for guest reviews** that include language from the guest describing how they enjoyed their stay because they booked direct.
- **Include language in Review Management Responses** that speaks to why booking direct is BEST!
- **Wear a BookDirect button** at breakfast, ask questions, and teach your guests all about why booking direct is BEST!
- **Work with local media outlets** (newspapers, TV and radio stations) to educate travelers about the best ways to book a vacation rental.
- **Encourage local travel and networking organizations** (i.e. CVBs, chambers, state tourism organizations) to join in promoting their direct connections to lodging providers.

Last year, the first [#BookDirect](#) Guest Education Day reached an estimated 3.5 million travelers with direct email campaigns and had a social reach of over 24 million consumers. Let's work together to exceed those numbers this year!

Get Involved – visit our industries [website](http://www.bookdirect.education) (www.bookdirect.education), where members of our industry can go to find information on this initiative. We need your help - there is a [Volunteer form](#) as a part of the website, where you can sign up to participate.
