SMOOBU

The 15-Minute Short-Term Rental Revenue Audit

Are You Leaving Money on the Table?

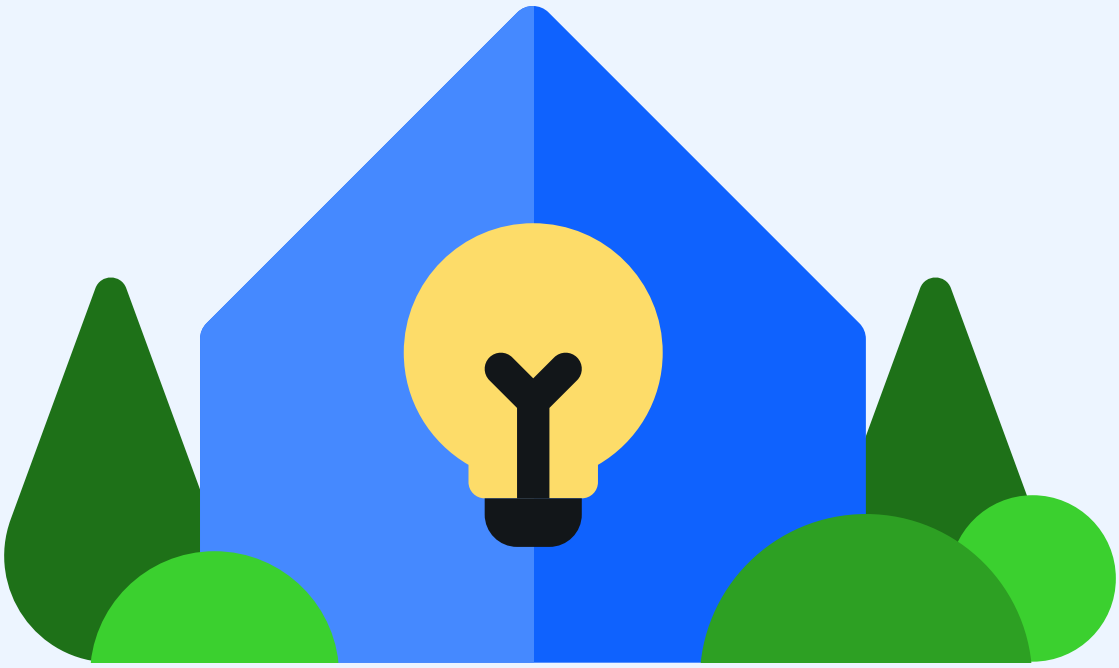


Table of Contents

Introduction: The €100 Question 02

Part 1: The Revenue Management Reality Check 03

- What Sets the Value of a Night 03
- The Manual Bottleneck 03
- The Math of Revenue Leaks 03

Part 2: The Four-Part Revenue Self-Audit 05

- Audit Area 1: The Right Starting Price 05
- Audit Area 2: Following Demand 05
- Audit Area 3: Reacting to Bookings 05
- Audit Area 4: Staying in Control 06

Part 3: The Revenue Leak Scorecard 07

- Your Revenue Leak Score 07

Part 4: Plugging the Leaks 08

- Set Your Limits in a Few Minutes 08
- Your Audit, Mapped to the Settings 09
- You Stay in Control 10

Conclusion: Smart Pricing Without the Spreadsheets 11

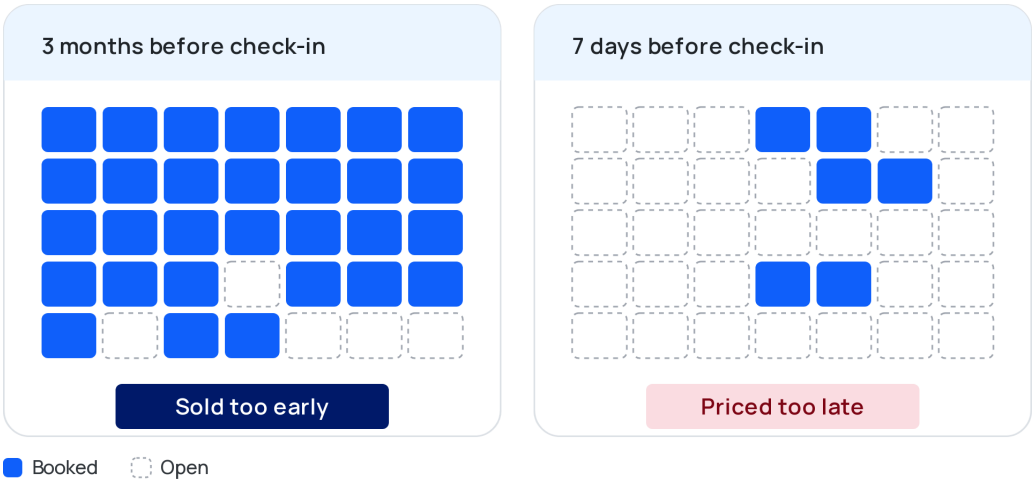
Introduction: The €100 Question

How do you know if €100 is the right price for your property tonight?

If you manage your own short-term rental, your prices probably come from habit, instinct and a look at a few similar listings nearby. Maybe you add a weekend premium and drop the rate a little in the off-season.

That used to be enough. Today you compete with property managers and hosts whose prices move every day with market data. Static prices still bring bookings, which is exactly why their cost is easy to miss. It usually hides in two places:

- **The Early Sell-Out Trap:** your calendar fills months ahead and it feels like success. In revenue management, being fully booked 90 days out means your price was too low. Guests locked in your best dates before demand peaked.
- **The Stagnant Calendar:** demand softens, your price stays the same and nearby hosts lower theirs. Your nights stay empty and earn nothing.



This audit is a diagnostic tool. You don't need to become a revenue manager, but you do need to know where your pricing leaks money.

Your 15 Minutes

- **Five Minutes, Part 1:** see what really sets the value of a night, and what two common leaks cost in euros.
- **Five Minutes, Part 2:** check your pricing against the four rules of revenue management.
- **Five Minutes, Part 3:** score yourself on the 10-point Revenue Leak Scorecard.
- **Then, Part 4:** see how to put the rules on autopilot while you keep control.

Pricing is the biggest lever you have on your property's profit. Let's measure how well yours is working.

Part 1: The Revenue Management Reality Check

A Tuesday in November and a Saturday in July obviously need different prices. But seasons and weekends are only the start. The real value of a night depends on many signals at once.

What Sets the Value of a Night

The Market	Your Competition	Your Property
Seasonality: demand across the year in your region	**Competitor prices:** what similar listings charge today	**Booking pace:** how fast your dates fill compared with the market
Day of the week: leisure weekends vs. weekday stays	**Remaining supply:** how many similar properties are still free	**Lead time:** how far ahead guests book these dates
Events: festivals, trade fairs, concerts, even good weather	**Your real competitive set:** listings with similar size and amenities, not just the closest ones	**History and length of stay:** last year's results, short gaps and long stays

"Competitive set" means the listings a guest would actually compare with yours. When their supply runs low for a date, your pricing power goes up.

The Manual Bottleneck

If you price by hand, you probably use two or three of these signals: the season, the day of the week and a few holidays. That is not a knowledge problem. It is a time problem.

Your calendar has 365 nights. Pricing each one well means checking it against all of the signals above, and doing it again whenever the market moves. Updating once a week, or once a month, means pricing on old information.

That gap between what the market is doing and what your calendar says is where revenue leaks start. Here is what two of them cost.

The Math of Revenue Leaks

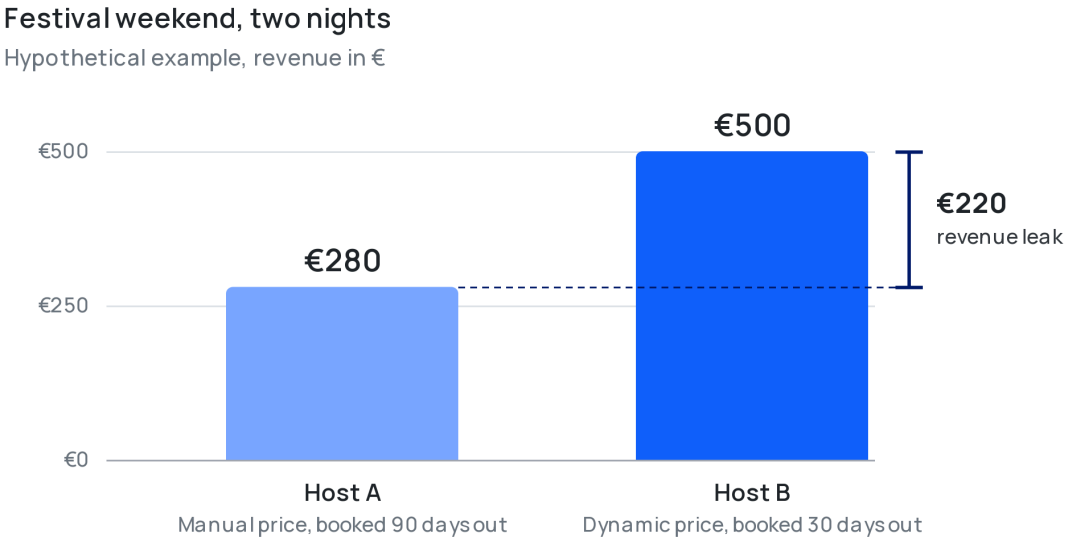
The two scenarios below are hypothetical, with round numbers, but both situations happen to hosts every season. Host A prices by hand. Host B uses dynamic pricing.

Scenario 1: The Festival Weekend

A large music festival is announced for an October weekend, four months ahead. Demand for stays in your area jumps.

- **Host A:** keeps the usual €120 base price plus a €20 weekend premium, so €140 a night. A guest books Friday and Saturday 90 days ahead. Total: **€280**.
- **Host B:** the price rises as demand and competitor prices rise, to €250 a night. The dates are still free at 90 days. A guest books 30 days ahead, when most nearby listings are gone. Total: **€500**.

The leak: €220 on one weekend. Host A earned 44% less than the weekend was worth, because an early booking felt safer than waiting for the right price.



Scenario 2: The Orphan Night

It is mid-November. A four-night stay ends on Tuesday and the next guest arrives on Thursday. That leaves Wednesday free: an "orphan night", a gap too short for most stays.

- **Host A:** leaves the €120 price in place. Few travelers look for a single Wednesday night in November at that price. The night stays empty. Total: **€0**.
- **Host B:** a week before the date, the price drops toward the host's minimum of €85. A last-minute traveler books it. Total: **€85**.

The leak: €85. Small on its own, but orphan nights come back every month.

> **Calculate Your Own Leak:** orphan nights per month × your minimum price × 12. Three nights a month at €85 comes to €3,060 a year, if each of those nights would have booked at your minimum.

The difference between manual and dynamic pricing shows up on single bookings, not just in theory. Next, let's find where it shows up in your calendar.

Part 2: The Four-Part Revenue Self-Audit

You don't need to track every signal from Part 1 to judge your pricing. Four rules cover most of it: start from the right price, follow demand, react to bookings and protect yourself with limits. Check each one honestly.

Audit Area 1: The Right Starting Price

The Concept: every property has a base value before seasons or events. All other price changes move up or down from it.

The Reality: many hosts set their base price from the inside out: mortgage, cleaning costs, the profit they want. Guests don't see your costs. They compare your listing with similar ones. If your starting price is out of line with the market, every adjustment after it is off too. Your costs belong in your minimum price, not your base price.

The Audit Question: is your base price set by what you need to earn, or by what comparable listings in your market charge?

Audit Area 2: Following Demand

The Concept: charge more when demand is high, and be competitive when it drops.

The Reality: manual pricing usually means a summer rate, a winter rate and a weekend markup. Demand doesn't move in monthly blocks. It jumps for a trade fair, a concert or a sunny long weekend. Prices that only change by season miss those peaks.

The Audit Question: do your prices move with local events and short demand peaks, or stay the same across whole seasons?

Audit Area 3: Reacting to Bookings

The Concept: your price should respond to how fast you are booking (your pace) compared with how much time is left before the date (the lead time).

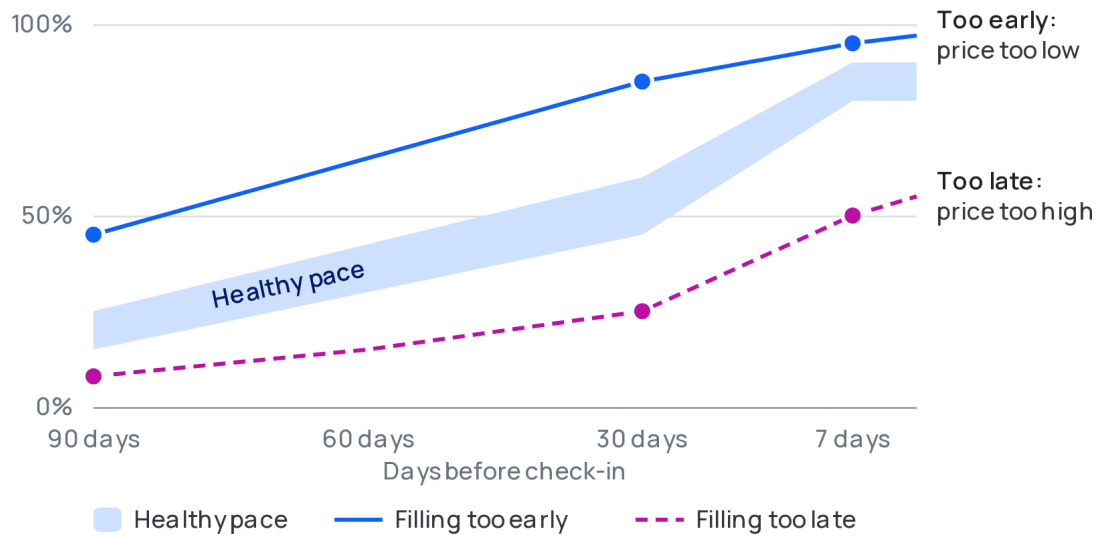
The Reality: this is the most common blind spot. Lots of open nights in the next two weeks mean your price is too high for current demand. Being 80% booked three months before peak season means guests would have paid more.

A rough booking curve helps you read your own calendar. The numbers below are a rule of thumb, not a standard: city properties book later than beach houses, and every market has its own rhythm. Compare them with your own results for the same dates last year.

Before check-in	Healthy pace	Warning sign
90 days	Roughly 15% to 25% booked	Over 40% booked: your price is likely too low
30 days	Roughly 45% to 60% booked	Under 30% booked: your price is likely too high
7 days	Roughly 80% to 90% booked	Many open nights: lower the price to fill them

How full should your calendar be?

Share of nights booked before check-in. Rule of thumb, varies by market.



The Audit Question: do you raise prices when you fill faster than expected, and lower them as open dates get close?

Audit Area 4: Staying in Control

The Concept: flexible pricing needs fixed limits that match your costs and your comfort level.

The Reality: good revenue management is neither endless discounting nor unlimited price rises. It works inside two kinds of limits: a minimum price you never go below, set from your costs, and minimum-stay rules that change with lead time, so one-night bookings don't break up a profitable weekend months ahead.

The Audit Question: do you have a firm minimum price and minimum-stay rules that change with lead time?

A "no" to any of these questions points to a leak. The scorecard turns your answers into a score.

Part 3: The Revenue Leak Scorecard

These 10 questions cover the basics of revenue per available night. Answer each one with a simple Yes or No. Be honest: nobody else sees your score.

#	Question	Yes	No
Starting Price and Market Position			
1	Is your base price set from what comparable listings charge, not only from your own costs?	☐	☐
2	Do you review that base price at least once a quarter?	☐	☐
Demand and Seasonality			
3	Do your prices go up when a local event or holiday raises demand in your area?	☐	☐
4	Do weekday and weekend prices follow actual demand, rather than one fixed weekend markup?	☐	☐
5	Do you check and update prices for the next 90 days at least once a week?	☐	☐
Booking Pace and Lead Time			
6	If you are 80% booked three months ahead, do you raise the price for the remaining dates?	☐	☐
7	Do open dates in the next 14 days get more competitive prices as they approach?	☐	☐
8	Do you price orphan nights (one- or two-night gaps between bookings) so they get booked?	☐	☐
Limits and Control			
9	Do your minimum stays change with lead time, for example three nights for dates months away and one night for last-minute gaps?	☐	☐
10	Do all of these rules keep running across your full 365-day calendar without taking hours of your week?	☐	☐
My score (number of Yes answers)		_____ / 10	

Your Revenue Leak Score

Count your Yes answers.

- **8 to 10, Optimized:** your pricing follows the market. Any leaks are small.
- **5 to 7, Moderate Leaks:** you know the rules, but doing them by hand holds you back. You are likely underpricing peak dates and missing last-minute bookings in quiet months.
- **0 to 4, Severe Leaks:** your prices and real demand are out of sync. This is where the biggest gains are.

Part 4: Plugging the Leaks

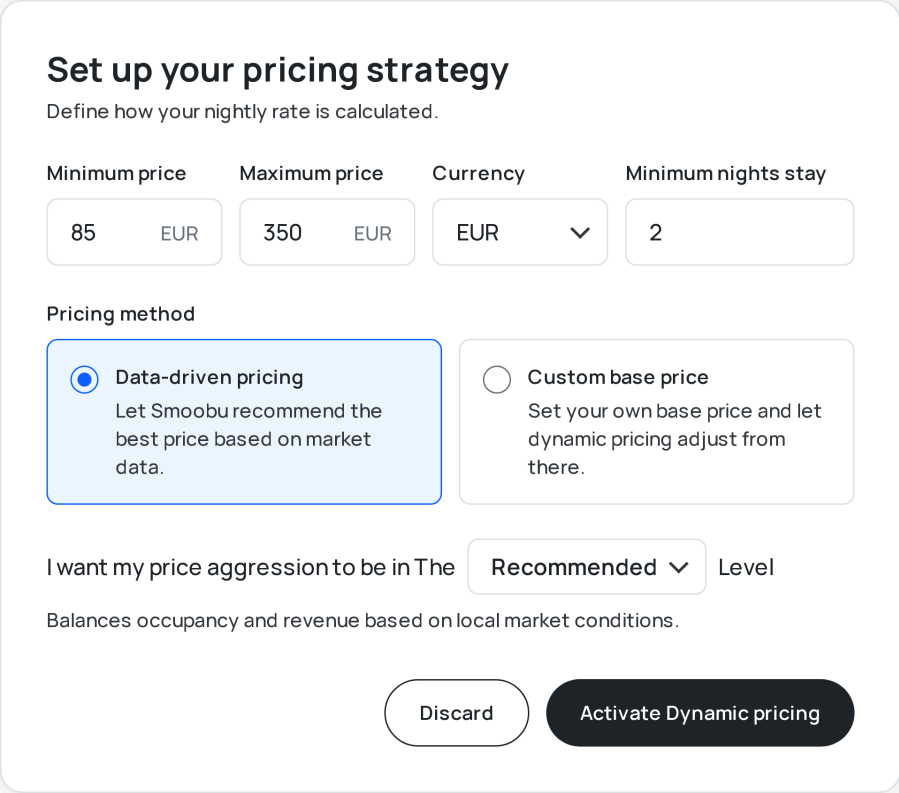
If your score showed leaks, the answer is not more evenings with spreadsheets. It is letting software apply the rules you just checked, inside limits you set.

Smoobu Dynamic Pricing works that way. You decide the strategy and the limits; it updates your nightly prices from market data and sends them to your Smoobu calendar. Here is what the setup looks like.

Set Your Limits in a Few Minutes

When you activate a property, you set up your pricing strategy in one window.

- **Minimum price:** the lowest price you would accept, set from your costs. Dynamic Pricing never goes below it. The app's own tip: set it to the lowest price you'd accept, not your usual price.
- **Maximum price:** the ceiling for peak dates like the festival weekend, so prices stay in a range you are comfortable with.
- **Pricing method:** choose **Data-driven pricing** to let Smoobu recommend your base price from market data, or **Custom base price** to set your own starting point.
- **Price aggression:** Conservative, Recommended or Aggressive, depending on how far you want prices to move.
- **Minimum nights stay:** your default minimum stay, which you can fine-tune later.

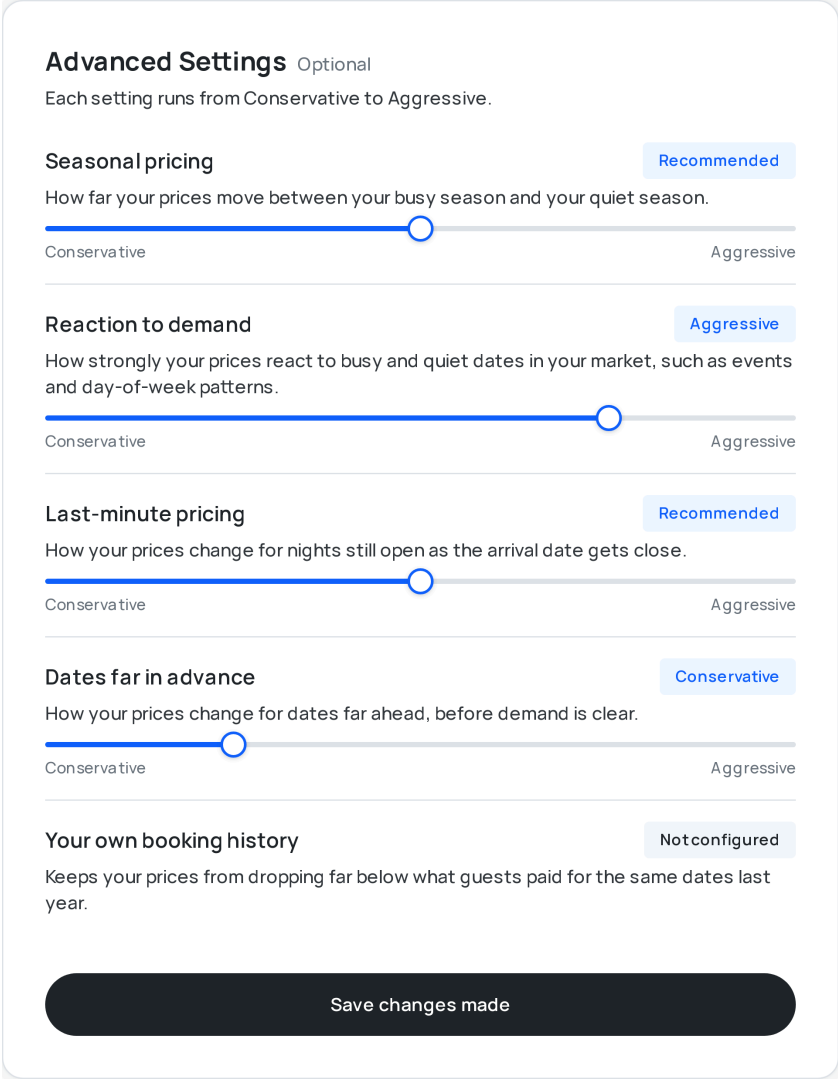


Your limits, set once. Dynamic Pricing works inside them.

Your Audit, Mapped to the Settings

The optional Advanced Settings each cover a part of the audit, and each one runs from Conservative to Aggressive.

Audit area	Setting in Smoobu Dynamic Pricing
1. The right starting price	Data-driven pricing or Custom base price
2. Following demand	Seasonal pricing and Reaction to demand
3. Reacting to bookings	Last-minute pricing and Dates far in advance
4. Staying in control	Minimum price, Maximum price, minimum stays and Your own booking history



You Stay in Control

Q: Can Dynamic Pricing sell a night below what I can afford?

A: No. Your minimum price is a floor. If nearby listings drop to €50 and your minimum is €85, your price stays at €85.

Q: What if I want a special price for a returning guest or a friend?

A: Edit that night's price in your Smoobu calendar. Your price wins for that date, and you can switch it back to the dynamic price at any time.

Q: Can I stop if it's not for me?

A: Yes. Deactivate Dynamic Pricing for a property and your calendar goes back to your manual rates.

Conclusion: Smart Pricing Without the Spreadsheets

Revenue management is complex. Using it doesn't have to be.

Starting price, demand, booking pace and limits: you now know the four rules and where your own pricing leaks. Applying them to every night of the year by hand is what takes the time.

- **You stay in control:** you set the minimum, the maximum and how far prices may move.
- **Smoobu does the repetitive work:** Dynamic Pricing follows the market and updates your nightly prices within your limits.

Already on a paid Smoobu plan? Open **Configuration** › **Dynamic Pricing** to start your free trial: 30 days on Pro, 60 days on Pro Plus. After that, each active property costs €12.99 a month, and the price per property drops from your fourth property onward. New to Smoobu? Start with the free 14-day Smoobu trial on the next page.

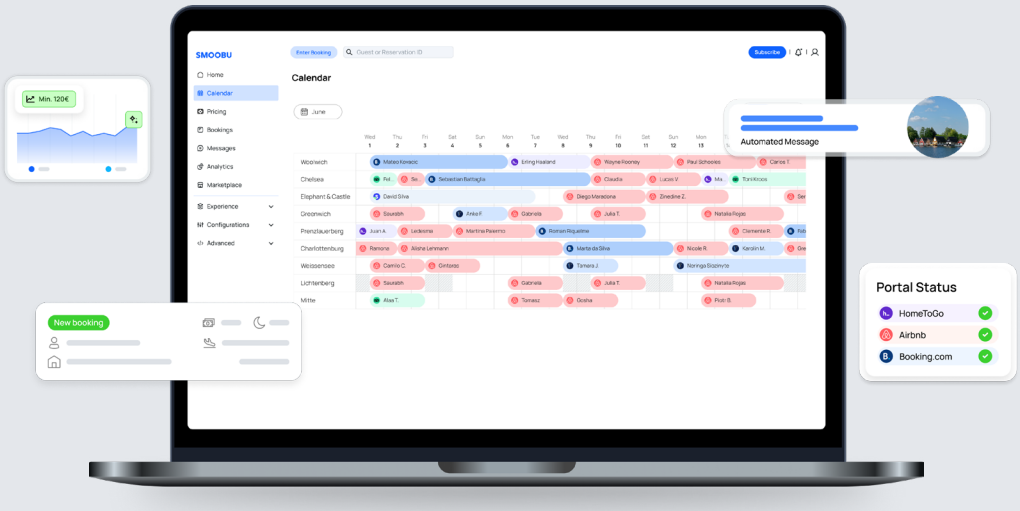
Next in This Series

This audit is the first of three short Smoobu guides on earning more from your vacation rental. Look out for the next one in your inbox.

Stop trading your best dates for early bookings, and stop letting open nights expire at last month's price.

Simplify your vacation rental management with Smoobu

- Prices that follow demand
- Your minimum and maximum, always respected
- Override any night in your calendar
- One calendar for all your channels



Bring **The 15-Minute Short-Term Rental Revenue Audit** to Life

Put what you have learned into practice with Smoobu.
Visit **smoobu.com** to start your **free 14-day trial today** and get the hands-on support you need to become a great host.

A Spot for Your Notes

Smoobu GmbH, Pappelallee 78/79, 10437 Berlin, Deutschland

E-Mail: service@smoobu.com

Managing directors: Jannik Abraham, Jürgen Zoilo von Beyme Cortés

Register number: HRB 160562 B, Register court: Berlin-Charlottenburg

VAT ID: DE296217888

SMOOBU