

GOOGLE ENABLES TRAVELERS TO RENT APARTMENTS



Google now allows to book or rent apartments and other types of properties around the world.

Will Google become the final platform where travelers can book all the services of a trip? Without a doubt, that is the tech giant's goal, as evidenced by the fast expansion of the Google Hotels features, which **now give a new blow by adding the option of booking alternative accommodations.**

In this sense, the technology incorporates the option of booking accommodation, from houses and apartments to the classic hotels, with the goal, as explained by the company's spokeswoman Jennifer Rodstrom, "to provide the best possible search experience for users looking for a place to stay".

At the moment, the search function of this type of accommodation (only available through mobile devices) offers to rent apartments, cabins or villas. This way, using an environment similar to other hotel search engines, the platform will offer a cabin on a lake as well as a beach house, depending on the filter chosen.

For this new initiative, Google has partnered with several booking sites, among which are Expedia, Homeaway, Hotels.com, Tripadvisor, Redawning, and VRBO, and it already offers accommodations in several destinations across the globe.

Just like that, a user traveling to Amsterdam, for example, can choose from more than 1,700 properties listed on Hotels.com, VRBO and Expedia, filtering by characteristics, availability of beds, and price.

In a new entry of the Google Hotels blog, Pratip Banerji, product manager for the travel area of the company, explained that you can filter searches by price and service, and also look for photos, read comments and reviews left by other users, and see rates and availability of properties.

At the moment, Airbnb is the most prominent no-show of the project, which could be due to the fact that this platform does allow individual room rentals, something that doesn't flow with the concept that Google introduces - rental of entire houses -, or the dispute between both companies in relation to the advertisement.

The vacation rental offer is not completely new for Google, but it has never done it in a widespread format before. In this sense, a test project was carried out in 2017, but it only offered a very limited number of properties in very specific markets.

This way, Alphabet, Google's parent company, takes a step further by developing a unique platform for booking trips, introduced shortly after the update of the hotel search function at the start of March, which includes the possibility of making comparisons, improving searches, and allows making reservations without leaving the website.

The new feature pushes Google's goal forward by making bookings of complete holidays easier, in just a few clicks, and without leaving their website.

With this new proposal, “we hope to help travelers make decisions quickly and effortlessly, and with more choices of where to stay,” so that their “perfect holiday is just a few clicks away”, Banerji said.

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