

Holiday Home Booking

Quick Start Guide

Everything you need to get your first property listed
and your first booking created — in under 30 minutes.

Covers FREE and PREMIUM versions

Premium-only features are marked with ★

Before You Start

This guide walks you through the essential setup to get Holiday Home Booking working on your WordPress site. Follow the steps in order — each one builds on the last.

What You Need

- A WordPress website (self-hosted, not WordPress.com free tier)
- Admin access to your WordPress dashboard
- The Holiday Home Booking plugin installed and activated
- ★ *For online payments: WooCommerce installed and configured*

FREE vs PREMIUM

The FREE version lets you manage up to 3 properties, create manual bookings, and manage customers. PREMIUM unlocks unlimited properties, online bookings via WooCommerce, payment schedules, seasonal pricing, iCal sync, customer portal, and more. Features marked ★ require PREMIUM.

Step 1: Add Your First Property

Your property is the core of everything — bookings, pricing, and availability all hang off it.

How to do it

1. In your WordPress admin, go to **Holiday Bookings** → **Properties**
2. Click **Add New Property**
3. Fill in the essentials: property name, short description, address
4. Set **Sleeps Min** and **Sleeps Max** (guest capacity — bookings can't exceed this)
5. Set bedrooms and bathrooms count
6. Click **Save Property**

Optional but recommended

- **Images tab** — add a featured image and gallery photos
- **Location tab** — set map coordinates for your property listing
- **Facilities tab** — tick the amenities checklist (WiFi, parking, etc.)
- **House Rules tab** — set check-in/out times, pet policy, noise rules

FREE VERSION NOTE

The free version supports up to 3 properties and 3 images per property. Upgrade to Premium for unlimited properties and images.

Step 2: Set Up Pricing

Every property needs at least a base nightly rate. Without pricing, the booking system can't calculate costs.

Set a base nightly rate

1. Go to **Properties** and click **Edit** on your property
2. Click the **Pricing** tab

3. Enter your **Base Nightly Rate** (e.g. £120)
4. Save

That's all you need for the basics. The plan engine uses this rate for every night unless you add more advanced pricing.

★ Advanced pricing (Premium)

Premium users can layer on more sophisticated pricing. None of this is required to get started — come back to it later.

- **Seasons** (Pricing → Seasons) — set peak, off-peak, and shoulder rates with date ranges
- **Pricing Rules** (Pricing → Pricing Rules) — minimum night stays, weekly/monthly discounts, last-minute deals
- **Fees & Extras** (Pricing → Fees & Extras) — cleaning fee, pet fee, linen charges
- **Per-property overrides** — override global pricing rules on individual properties

Step 3: Configure Currency & Payment Settings

Set your currency

1. Go to **Holiday Bookings** → **Settings**
2. Find the **Currency** section
3. Set your currency code (e.g. GBP, EUR, USD) and symbol position
4. Save

★ Payment schedules (Premium)

If you take deposits and balance payments, configure these now:

- **Deposit Percentage** — e.g. 25% or 50% due at booking
- **Instalment Count** — how many payments the balance is split into
- **Collapse Threshold** — if the booking is within X days, full payment is taken upfront instead

The plan engine handles all the maths. When a booking is created, it automatically generates the payment schedule with due dates.

Step 4: Set Up Email Branding

Every email HHB sends — confirmations, reminders, payment receipts — uses your branded HTML template. Set this up so emails look professional from day one.

1. Go to **Settings** → **Email Templates** tab
2. Upload your **company logo**
3. Set your **brand colours** (header background, button colour)
4. Enter your **company name and contact details**
5. Save

SMTP RECOMMENDED

WordPress's default mail function is unreliable — emails often end up in spam or don't send at all. Configure SMTP in Settings → General to use a proper email service. We recommend a transactional provider like Brevo (free tier), Mailgun, or your hosting provider's SMTP.

Step 5: Create Your First Booking

This is where it all comes together. The booking calendar is your central tool for creating bookings and managing availability.

How to do it

1. Go to **Holiday Bookings** → **Bookings** → **Add Booking** tab
2. Select your property from the dropdown
3. Click the **check-in date** on the calendar
4. Click the **check-out date** — the booking modal opens automatically
5. The modal shows the **price breakdown** calculated by the plan engine
6. Enter the **number of guests**
7. Select an existing customer or type a name to **create a new one inline**
8. Add optional internal notes
9. Click **Create Booking**

Done. The dates are blocked, the booking appears in your Bookings list, and a confirmation email is sent to the guest automatically.

NIGHTLY BOOKING MODEL

HHB uses a nightly model: check-in date is the first night stayed, check-out date is when the guest leaves. A booking from 1st–05th Jan = 4 nights (guest departs morning of 5th).

Step 6: Block Dates for Personal Use or Maintenance

Need to block off dates for your own stay, cleaning, or repairs? Use the same calendar.

1. On the **Add Booking** calendar, select a single property
2. Click the start date, then the end date
3. In the modal, choose **Block Dates** instead of Create Booking
4. Select a reason: *Maintenance, Owner Use, Seasonal Closure, Holiday, Other*
5. Add an optional note (e.g. “Deep clean after group booking”)
6. Click **Block Dates**

Blocked dates appear on the calendar immediately and prevent double-bookings.

Step 7: View & Manage Your Bookings

Everything you’ve created is accessible from the Bookings tab.

The Bookings list

- Go to **Holiday Bookings** → **Bookings**
- Filter by property or status (Confirmed, Pending, Cancelled, Completed)
- Click any **Booking ID** to view full details
- From the detail page: edit, cancel, or send emails

Calendar tooltips

On the Add Booking calendar, hover over any booked date to see a tooltip with guest name, dates, status, and total price. Click the booking to jump to the detail page.

The Dashboard

Your Dashboard shows upcoming check-ins (next 7 days) and recent bookings at a glance. Check this daily.

That's It — You're Up and Running

With a property, pricing, and your first booking created, you have a working booking system. Everything from here is optional and can be set up as and when you need it.

★ When You're Ready for More (Premium)

Accept online bookings

Install WooCommerce, and HHB handles the rest. Guests book through your website, pay online, and the booking + payment schedule is created automatically. Set up your preferred payment gateway (Stripe, PayPal, etc.) in WooCommerce settings.

Embed on your website

Add these shortcodes to any WordPress page:

[hhb_booking_form]

Full booking form — guests search availability, pick dates, and book online

[hhb_availability_calendar property_id="1"]

Public availability calendar for a specific property

[hhb_property_page property_id="1"]

Full property page with images, facilities, pricing, and booking

[hhb_properties_list]

Grid listing of all your properties

[hhb_customer_dashboard]

Customer portal — guests view bookings, make payments, download invoices

See the full shortcode reference at [Holiday Bookings → Shortcodes](#) in your admin.

Seasonal pricing & rules

Set different rates for peak season, school holidays, Christmas, etc. Create minimum night stays and discount rules. All under Pricing in the sidebar.

Sync with Airbnb & Booking.com

Import and export availability via iCal feeds. External bookings appear as blocks on your calendar automatically. Set up under Settings → iCal Sync.

Customer self-service portal

Give guests a login to view their bookings, see payment schedules, make payments, and download invoices. Uses the [hhb_customer_dashboard] shortcode.

Getting Help

1. Every admin page has an **Instructions** tab with page-specific help
2. Full documentation: **Holiday Bookings** → **Tools** → **Documentation**
3. Premium support: submit a ticket through your account dashboard
4. Free support: WordPress.org plugin support forums