

Airbnb highlights new accessibility filters and features for guests with disabilities worldwide

21 new accessibility features and filters help guests with disabilities to find homes which fit their needs

Airbnb today highlighted the release of 21 new accessibility filters across the platform that make it easier for guests with disabilities to find accessible travel accommodation worldwide. The new filters allow Airbnb guests to search for listings with specific features, including step-free entry to rooms, entryways that are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and more. Previously, guests on Airbnb were only able to search for “wheelchair accessible” listings, which did not always meet travelers’ individual needs.

Today’s announcement comes as Srin Madipalli, Accessibility Product and Program Manager at Airbnb, continues his work to meet with Airbnb hosts and guests to ensure Airbnb meets their accessibility needs. Last week, after meeting with hosts and guests in Korea, Madipalli joined the Paralympic Torch Relay.

“As a person with disabilities and passionate traveler, I am hugely excited by the changes we’re making at Airbnb. With these new filters, we are making it easier for everyone to share their adapted homes with travelers with disabilities around the world. Our mission is to enable anyone to belong anywhere, regardless of disability,” said Madipalli.

The introduction of the new filters is one in a series of steps Airbnb is taking to ensure its community is accessible for everyone. In 2017, Airbnb started collaborating with the California Council of the Blind, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers and National Council on Independent Living to develop the accessibility filters, and to improve and clarify its accessibility policies. In late 2017, Airbnb also acquired Accomable, the London-based accessible travel startup founded in 2015 by Srin Madipalli and Martyn Sibley – two friends with Spinal Muscular Atrophy in the UK. Accomable linked travelers with disabilities with listings that met their needs.

Going forward, Airbnb will be working closely with its community of hosts and guests to ensure the new filters offer information which is as useful and accurate as possible, with the aim to improve and expand the filters to ensure they support as many travelers as possible.

“The introduction of the new accessibility features and filters to all hosts and guests is just the first stage in our journey to improve accessibility at Airbnb,” added Madipalli. “We encourage everyone to use them and send through their feedback.”

Organizations from around the world outlined their support of the new accessibility filters and Airbnb’s commitment to improving accessibility across the platform:

Kelly Buckland, Executive Director, NCIL (USA)

"The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) has been working with Airbnb on developing these filters to give input directly from people with disabilities. We are very pleased to see this work progressing and look forward to continuing our work together with Airbnb to further improve the services to travelers with disabilities"

Vanita Gupta, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

"We applaud any business that makes its products available to more people, and we welcome Airbnb's announcement. Travel accommodations should be accessible for people with disabilities, and efforts like these help remove unnecessary barriers. We look forward to seeing this new policy put into action."

Judy Wilkinson, President of the California Council of the Blind

"The California Council of the Blind applauds Airbnb for working with us and CFILC on clarifying issues of accessibility for people with physical disabilities as well as with service animals. We especially want to acknowledge Airbnb's eagerness to cooperate in resolving these issues."

Brittany Déjean, Founder and CEO at AbleThrive (USA)

"At AbleThrive, we believe in living life to the fullest and ensuring people with disabilities and their families have the tools they need to thrive. Travel is a passion for many in our community, yet many face frustrating challenges planning a trip. We are thrilled that Airbnb has gone beyond the standard 'wheelchair accessible' filter to include more than 20 new filters that more accurately convey the accessibility of the listing. It's about time that travelers with disabilities can make informed decisions based on their unique accessibility needs, whether they need a roll in shower or just step free access. This is a great first step to making travel more inclusive for all and it's refreshing to see this attention on accessibility in the mainstream."

Federazione Italiana Superamento dell'Handicap (FISH), President Vincenzo Falabella

"At FISH, we passionately believe in the right for anyone with a disability to be able to enjoy travel. We are working closely with Airbnb to design, promote and develop joint initiatives on accessibility across Italy. We see Airbnb's 21 new accessibility filters as an important first step to enable people with disabilities to find travel accommodation which suits their needs and to offer travellers greater choice. It's important for all companies to start reassessing how they work with people with disabilities. By making these changes, Airbnb is not only making its platform more accessible but it's also raising awareness around disability and helping to bring about greater inclusion in society."

Manuel Patrouillard, Managing Director, Humanity & Inclusion | Handicap International.

“Handicap International is very proud to be working with Airbnb on inclusion. We are providing our expertise in accessibility and raising awareness of the importance of welcoming people with all types of disabilities. This partnership is now bearing fruit, since the Airbnb platform now offers numerous filters to enable people to find homes which fit their needs. The new filters also put the spotlight on inclusion in travel - something which is a major issue for disabled people worldwide. It can be extremely difficult for people with disabilities to travel, so this is a great foundation to build upon, so that holidays can be accessible to all”.

CEO, Chris Simmonds, Revitalise.org (UK)

“Revitalise wholeheartedly welcomes the move from Airbnb to launch a new range of accessible search filters. As the largest provider of respite holidays for disabled people in the UK, we know the impact a holiday has on our guests. Too many disabled people go without a holiday because they simply can’t find anywhere that can provide what they need. Holidays are vitally important to everyone, to our relationships with those close to us, to our lust for life, and to our ability to cope with our daily challenges. It is heartwarming to see a huge international holiday brand like Airbnb grappling with how to make them more accessible for disabled people”.

Airbnb’s new Accessibility features and filters allow guests to search for listings with some or all of the following features:

Entering the home

- Step-free access
- Wide doorway
- Well lit path to entrance
- Flat path to front door

Getting around

- Wide hallways *Hallways at least 36" (90cm) wide.*
- Elevators *If needed, contact hosts about the width.*

Bedroom

- Step-free access
- Wide doorway
- Accessible-height bed
- Wide clearance to bed

Bathroom

- Step-free access
- Wide doorway
- Roll-in shower with chair
- Bathtub with shower chair

- Accessible-height toilet
- Wide clearance to shower, toilet
- Fixed grab bars for shower, toilet
- Handheld shower head

Common areas

- Step-free access
- Wide entryway

Parking

- Disabled parking spot *There is a city-approved parking spot or a parking space at least 8ft (2.4m) wide.*

About Airbnb

Founded in 2008, Airbnb is a global travel community that offers magical end-to-end trips, including where you stay, what you do and the people you meet. Airbnb uniquely leverages technology to economically empower millions of people around the world to unlock and monetize their spaces, passions and talents to become hospitality entrepreneurs. Airbnb's accommodation marketplace offers access to millions of places to stay in more than 191 countries, from apartments and villas to castles, treehouses and B&Bs. With Experiences, people can see a different side to a destination through unique, handcrafted activities run by locals, while a partnership with Resy provides access to the best local restaurants in selected countries. All of this is brought together in one easy-to-use and beautifully designed website and app.