



Ajuntament de Pau

Guide to improving the customer experience of tourist establishments.

Turn every stay into an unforgettable experience.

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1 · Welcome and Philosophy

Dear owner,

From the City Council of Pau we are pleased to make available to you this guide specially designed for the owners of rural tourism homes, the true ambassadors of our municipality.

Your task goes far beyond offering accommodation: as true ambassadors of Peace, you are the guardians of the warmth, tranquility and authenticity that characterize the Empordà.

This guide is not intended to be an imposition, but rather a tool to improve and support your work.

The current tourism market is very demanding, so we must try to improve the customer experience every day. Travelers are no longer looking for just four walls and a bed; they are looking for sensory experiences, authentic connections and sincere hospitality.

The difference between an ordinary stay and a memorable one is often found in the details and ability to anticipate needs — both in the treatment you offer and in the state of conservation and comfort of the home itself.

"In rural tourism, we don't sell beds; we sell memories, connection with the territory and tranquility."

With this guide, we want to help you perfect each point of contact with your customer, from the first booking message to the last goodbye, and at the same time guide you in the progressive improvement of the house itself, thus guaranteeing their satisfaction and the reputation of the establishment.

With the end of the summer season, we invite you to consult this guide to prepare improvements in time for the next season.

If you have any questions or want to delve deeper into any specific aspect of the advice contained in this guide, you can write to hola@pau.cat and we will help you.

2 · The Previous Phase: Conquer before Receiving

The customer journey begins long before they open your door. Clear, proactive communication and detailed eliminates friction, conveys trust and sets high expectations.

2.1 Welcome message

Reaching out immediately (within 24 hours) to thank them for their booking is essential. Use their first name to establish warmth. This message isn't just logistical: it's emotional.

- Personalize the first message with some reference to the date of the stay or the reason for the visit. reserve, if you know him.
- Confirm your expected arrival time so we can prepare the house accurately.

2.2 The digital access guide and GPS

In rural areas, GPS can fail or lead you down difficult paths. Send a digital guide (mobile/PDF) 48 to 72 hours before arrival, very visual.

- The exact location for Google Maps / Apple Maps.
- Photographs of key intersections or poorly visible detours.
- Clear explanation of parking (where, how and restrictions).
- A warning about the mobile coverage of the area (where the signal is lost), to prevent the customer from I feel lost without being able to call.

2.3 The expectation filter

Ask about it naturally before arrival. Some examples:

- “Are you coming to celebrate an event?”
- “Do you need the fireplace ready?” (depending on the season)
- “Are there small children or pets?” (to adapt spaces and safety) • “Is this your first time coming to Alt Empordà?” (to gauge how many local recommendations offer)

2.4 Automation and digital tools

Without losing touch, some simple tools save you time and reduce errors:

- Scheduled automatic messages (thank you, access guide, check-in reminder) via from the booking manager or messaging applications.
- A single digital document (Google Doc, PDF, blog or simple web page) with all the information about the house, updateable at any time in Catalan, Spanish, French and at least English.
- QR codes on the door or kitchen table that link to the digital manual, Wi-Fi, and contacts emergency.
- A shared calendar with the person who does the cleaning and maintenance to avoid overlaps with the entries.

2.5 Personalization according to customer profile

Not all stays are looking for the same thing. Adapting small details to the profile of the person arriving multiplies the perception of quality without a significant added cost:

- **Couples and romantic getaways:** soft lighting, a few candles and information on charming restaurants for special dinners.
- **Families with children:** safety equipment (corner protectors, stair railings if necessary) and nearby outdoor activities.
- **Groups of friends:** information about outdoor spaces to share, board games and recommendations of areas for a group meal.
- **Telecommuters and long stays:** confirm the quality of your Wi-Fi connection and indicate a Well-lit and quiet space in the house to work.

Pre-arrival checklist

Ÿ Thank you message sent (less than 24 hours) Ÿ Visual
access guide sent (48 hours in advance) Ÿ
Fireplace / heating / air conditioning programmed Ÿ Local
welcome detail prepared Ÿ Wi-Fi key visible
and accessible
Ÿ Question about expectations and special needs sent Ÿ Details adapted
to the group profile (couple, family, friends, teleworking)

3 · The Arrival: The Moment of Truth

The first ten minutes inside the house determine between 70% and 80% of the overall assessment.

The customer arrives tired from the road; your space must offer them a “respite”.

3.1 Climatic and sensory comfort

Never receive a client in a cold or dark house.

The space must be “alive” when the customer enters.

- Winter: heating turned on in advance (21 °C) or fireplace loaded and ready to light.
- Summer: ventilated house, with air conditioning (27 °C) or fans activated for a mild temperature.
- Scent: natural and subtle aroma (lavender, rosemary, clean wood) that eliminates the smell of a “closed house”.

3.2 The welcome detail “Km 0”

Don't use generic details. Use products from the Pau or Alt Empordà region to mark the difference: olive oil from Pau, wine from Alt Empordà or beekeeper's honey from a nearby village.

3.3 Agile check-in

If the reception is in person, reduce bureaucracy to a minimum and prioritize the client's rest.

If it is digital, a welcome QR code on the table is essential.

3.4 Accessibility and special needs

More and more travelers value knowing, before arriving, if the house adapts to their needs:

- Clearly indicate on the house listing if there are steps, uneven surfaces or narrow doorways.
- Prepare a crib, high chair or plug protectors if you have confirmed that there are small children.
- For elderly or disabled guests, provide extra towels within reach and information about the distance to the town center.
- If you accept pets, leave a water bowl and a blanket or bed ready for the animal.

3.5 The first external impression

Before the customer opens the door, an opinion of the house is already being formed. The exterior is so important like the interior:

- Clean driveway and entrance, without weeds or remnants of pruning or maintenance tools in the area view.
- Mailbox, house number and door well identified and in good condition.
- Exterior lighting on if arrival may be at night, especially in areas without nearby public lighting.
- Parking area clearly demarcated and free of obstacles.

4 · During the Stay: Invisible Hospitality

In rural tourism, the perfect host must be perceived as “invisible”, but being “always present” available”. The client values their privacy above all else.

4.1 The rule of invisible presence

This balance is key. In the middle of the afternoon of the first day, send a single message:

“Good morning [Name], we hope you had a great rest. Anything you need (for the house or plans for the area), we are just a message away.”

If the house has a fireplace, this is a good time to remind them where the extra firewood is, without interfering in person.

4.2 The local ambassador

You are the destination expert. Recommend what doesn't appear on Google Maps. Create a visual dossier in Catalan, Spanish, French and English at a minimum with information on:

- The bakery in the town or a nearby town with the best farmer's bread.
- The small family restaurant without a sign where you can eat good Empordà rice.
- The least known local path or spot to watch the sunset over the Plain of Peace.

4.3 Preventive maintenance management

Perform a thorough check before each entry. The customer should never detect a light bulb sink or a dripping faucet.

Better used and clean than new and dirty.

4.4 Families and pets

- Prepare a small corner of games or books for children, especially on rainy days.
- Inform about nearby swimming or water areas and their safety regulations.
- Provide a map with routes suitable for walking with dogs and indicate if there are areas with livestock or crops where it must be tied.

4.5 Sustainability and responsible tourism

Rural tourism that is consistent with the territory of Pau also takes care of its environment:

- Facilitate waste separation with clearly identified bins and information about the points collection of the municipality in several languages.
- Prioritize cleaning products and amenities with low environmental impact.
- Encourage guests to save water and energy with positive, non-punitive messages (for example, informing guests about the origin of well water during times of drought).
- Recommend local commerce and restaurants to share the economic benefit among the fabric local.

4.6 Itineraries and proposals according to the length of stay

A single dossier for everyone falls short for long stays. Adapt the proposals according to the days the client has available:

- **1-2 night stays:** prioritize a single essential (a short route, a restaurant, a viewpoint) so as not to overwhelm them with options.
- **3-4 night stays:** offer a plan per day, combining beach or mountain, town and gastronomy, without overloading any day.
- **Stays of a week or more:** include a recommended “do nothing” day and suggestions staggered so that they discover the area little by little, avoiding repeating similar experiences.

5 · Incident Management: From Problem to Opportunity

In rural areas, just like in the city, breakdowns are present (power outages, boiler, Wi-Fi failures). The operational difference between a one-star rating and a five-star rating is often in how you react to it and not so much in the breakdown itself.

5.1 Immediate response protocol

1. Active listening and empathy: never justify with phrases like “this happens often here”.
Appreciate the warning and take the trouble.
2. Scheduled maintenance (90 minutes): have agreed direct telephone numbers for electricians, plumbers and boiler technician from the Pau or Figueres area for emergencies.
3. Generous compensation: if the incident has affected comfort (for example, cold water for a few hours), compensate ex officio with extra free firewood, a basket of Pau products as an apology, or a free late check-out.

5.2 Managing negative reviews

Despite good protocol, sometimes an unfavorable assessment is received.

How to respond to it marks as much or more than the original incident:

- Always respond, within a short period of time (24-48 hours), in a calm tone and without becoming defensive.
- Acknowledge what is valid about the comment before explaining the context or the solution applied.
- Avoid discussing in public; if further discussion is needed, offer direct contact by email or phone.
- Use public response as an opportunity to show future guests how you resolve issues efficiently, politely, and respectfully.

5.3 Scheduled preventive maintenance

The best incident is the one that never happens. Establish a routine of periodic reviews, not just before each entry:

- Monthly review of appliances, boiler, air conditioning and heating systems outside high season.
- Quarterly testing of smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, with a written record of the date and time result.
- Annual inspection of roof, gutters and drains before the autumn rainy season.
- Maintenance of the well, septic tank or sewage treatment plant according to the recommended schedule the installer.

6 · The Farewell: Loyalty and Online Reputation

The end of your stay should be as welcoming as the welcome. A complicated check-out can make ruined the whole memory of a great week.

6.1 "Late check-out" as added value

If you don't have a ticket on the same day, offer it voluntarily. It's one of the most appreciated operational gestures. online:

"[Name], since we don't have an entrance today, you can stay until 4:00 p.m. to take advantage of Sunday in peace. Have a nice trip back!"

6.2 Elegant review request

Send a warm message 3-4 hours after leaving, when they are home:

"We hope your return trip went well. It was a pleasure to welcome you. If you enjoyed your stay, it would be very helpful if you could share your experience on [link to Google / EscapadaRural]. It really helps us to continue improving."

Interesting fact

Reviews with local photos (of an oil, a restaurant or a landscape in the area) generate 78% more interaction and trust among new customers.

6.3 Loyalty program

- Offer a small discount or exclusive detail to guests who repeat stays at your home.
- Maintain a contact list (with their consent) to inform them of news or Quiet seasons with good prices.
- Invite former guests to follow the house and municipality's social media to maintain the bond with Pau off-season.

6.4 Analysis and continuous improvement

Each completed stay is a source of information for the next:

- Write down, case by case, the questions that guests repeat: they often indicate information that missing from the welcome dossier.
- Review the ratings received quarterly, looking for patterns (recurring complaints about noise, temperature, cleanliness...) to prioritize improvements.
- Compare occupancy and average valuation by season to detect if prices need to be adjusted, services or communication in some period.

7 · Experience Elevation Strategy

Do you want to improve profitability? Create packages that take advantage of Pau's privileged location, among vineyards and olive groves, and the routes through the Aiguamolls and the Cap de Creus Natural Park.

Package name	Key operation (owner)	Customer experience
Peace Oil	Leave a basket with oil, country bread, local tomatoes and an oil tasting guide (Km 0).	Private tasting by the fireplace upon arrival.
Vineyard Route	Marked route map and bottle of local wine.	Walk through vineyards with picnic included.
Calm Empordà	Set of local aromas (candles, diffuser) and late check-out.	Weekend of sensory disconnection.
Peace in the Family	Children's activity guide, board games and Km 0 snack basket.	Quiet weekend for families with children.
Pedal the Empordà	Arranged bicycle rental and map of cycling routes.	Active discovery of the Empordà plain by bicycle.
Starry Night	Blankets, local astronomy guide and free viewpoint recommendation light pollution.	Evening contemplation of the Alt Empordà sky.
Wetlands and Cape Crosses	Combined map of routes in the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà and the Cap de Creus Natural Park, with timetables and observation points.	Nature and landscape day between two emblematic natural spaces.

Application advice

Present these packages as added options at the time of booking or as a surprise included in stays of three nights or more. There is no need to increase the base price of the house: often the perceived value of the detail far exceeds its actual cost.

8 · Home Improvement: Spaces, Equipment and Comfort

The customer experience does not depend only on the treatment received: the quality, condition and design of the home are the basis. This section includes practical advice for gradually improving the home, without the need for major immediate renovations.

• Recommendation: air conditioning installation (AACC)

As an almost mandatory recommendation, rural tourism homes should have an air conditioning system (hot/cold air conditioning - AACC) installed in the main rooms: living room and/or bedrooms.

It is no longer considered an extra, but a basic requirement for comfort in the face of high summer temperatures in the Empordà and the current demands of guests. Prioritize silent systems (split type, one device per room) and, if possible, with a cooling and heating function to also cover the winter, especially low consumption ones.

An extra cost of €200-300 when purchasing an efficient appliance can mean energy savings of up to €1,000 per year in electricity consumption, depending on the technology used by various manufacturers. Consult your trusted installer. Homeowners who do not yet have one should incorporate it into their investment planning as soon as possible.

8.1 Distribution and common spaces

A well-designed space feels larger and more comfortable, even if the square footage is not change:

- Give visual and spatial priority to the dining room and living room: these are the places where the family or group spend more time together.
- Avoid overloading with furniture or decoration: the fewer elements, the more sense of calm and of order.
- Create, if space allows, a quiet reading or work corner, separate from the main area of passage.
- Ensure good internal signage (rooms, bathrooms, exit) especially in houses large or multi-plant.

8.2 Rooms: quality rest

The bed is, by far, the element that most influences the final assessment of a stay:

- Aging and renewing mattresses and pillows periodically; offering pillows of different firmness when possible. Very important to invest in quality mattresses.
- Quality bed linen, white or in neutral tones, that conveys a feeling of immediate cleanliness.
- Blackout curtains or blinds to ensure real rest, especially in summer with long days.
- Accessible power sockets on both sides of the bed, and an individual reading lamp per head.
- Enough closet or drawer space for guests to unpack their luggage, even during stays short.
- Install ceiling fans in the main rooms.

- Install mosquito nets on all the windows and exterior doors of the house, especially in the rooms and on access to the outside (kitchen, terrace): they greatly improve nighttime rest in the summer and prevent the presence of insects, which are very common in rural areas, without the need to keep the openings closed.

8.3 Bathrooms: comfort and functionality

- Good pressure and stable temperature of hot water; this is one of the most common complaints in old rural houses. Toilets and lids in good condition, without damage or stains, change them periodically.
- Bright lighting around the mirror, 30 cm maximum from the mirror wall, not just on the ceiling.
- Additional towel rack or bar, and a place to leave your personal hygiene kit the scope.
- Effective ventilation (window or extractor) to avoid humidity and bad odors, a critical point in old stone houses.

8.4 Kitchen: fully equipped

Many rural tourism guests value being able to cook in peace, especially with local products:

- Complete kitchenware in good condition: "a frying pan and two pots" is not enough.
- Sharp knives, sufficient cutting board and basic utensils (can opener, corkscrew, grater).
- Essential appliances in good working order: refrigerator, oven or microwave, toaster and coffee maker
- A small pantry with oil, salt, basic spices, instant cocoa, milk, complimentary coffee or tea for the first night, when they haven't been able to go shopping yet.

8.5 Outdoor spaces: terrace, garden, swimming pool and vegetable garden

In Pau, the exterior is often the big difference compared to urban accommodation:

- Comfortable outdoor furniture in the shade (parasol, pergola or trees) for the hottest hours.
- Install a pergola or other fixed shade element in the outdoor dining area, with minimum dimensions that allow a table and four chairs to be comfortably placed, plus the space around it so that guests can move around without bumping into it (we recommend at least 5 × 5 m of usable space).
- Barbecue or outdoor cooking space, with clear instructions for use and safety.
- If there is a swimming pool, maintain it with correct water treatment and visible information on depth and rules of use. Install synthetic textile safety fences to prevent unwanted access by children.
- A small vegetable garden or herb garden (rosemary, thyme, basil) that guests can use: it strengthens the connection with the territory at a very low cost.
- Warm outdoor lighting for summer nights, without excessively polluting the night sky area.

8.6 Technology and home automation at the service of comfort

Technology should make your stay easier, never complicate it:

- Stable Wi-Fi connection with good coverage in all rooms, including outside if possible possible.
- Smart locks or key safes, useful for self-check-in without losing personal treatment at first contact.
- Smart thermostats that allow you to program the temperature before arrival from the mobile.
- Television with access to content platforms, well signposted with simple instructions for to people unfamiliar with technology.

8.7 Energy efficiency and construction sustainability

Investing in sustainability improves the experience (less noise, more stable temperature) and reduces medium-term costs:

- Consider window and roof insulation: it reduces outside noise and stabilizes the temperature indoors, both in winter and summer.
- Consider installing solar panels or aerothermal systems if you don't already have them, especially for domestic hot water.
- Gradually replace lighting with low-energy, warm-light LED technology.
- Install water-saving aerators on taps and showers, imperceptible to the customer but with real impact on consumption.

8.8 Architectural identity and interior design

A rural tourism home in Pau should feel different from a city apartment or a hotel standard:

- Maintain and enhance the original architectural elements (exposed stone, wooden beams, arches) whenever possible.
- Choose furniture and textiles made from natural materials (wood, linen, cotton, plant fibers) that are consistent with the rural environment.
- Incorporate small, local decorative elements: ceramics, oil or wine from the area displayed as as decoration, not just as a welcome detail.
- Avoid overly impersonal or “generic hotel” decoration: photographs of the town or landscape of Pau provide more warmth than decorative sheets unrelated to the place.
- Avoid impersonal decorative vinyls with writings like “love” or “philosophical phrases” that do not they touch.

8.9 Security, accessibility and regulatory compliance

Before aesthetics, some aspects are essential by law and out of responsibility to the your guests:

- Operational smoke detectors on all floors and accessible and signposted fire extinguisher.
- Basic first aid kit, visible and properly stocked.
- Railings and adequate protection on stairs, raised terraces or swimming pools, especially if Families with children are accepted.
- Periodic verification that the property complies with current tourist and safety regulations applicable in Catalonia for rural tourism establishments.

Investment priorities

You don't have to do everything at once. This table helps you plan your improvements based on their impact and the reasonable time to address them:

Deadline	Recommended improvements	Expected impact
Top priority	Installation of a hot/cold air conditioning system (AACC) in the living room and all bedrooms.	Basic requirement / non-deferrable
Short term (0-3 months)	New bedding and towels, reading lighting, basic pantry, smoke detector check, painting, tidying up and cleaning the exterior.	High/low cost
Medium term (3-12 months)	Mattresses, blackout curtains, complete kitchenware, outdoor furniture, barbecue, paint, herb garden, smart locks.	High/medium cost
Long term (1-3 years)	Window and roof insulation, solar panels or atherothermal systems, bathroom renovation, kitchen renovation, swimming pool or extension of outdoor spaces.	Very high / high cost

9 · Final Quality Control Checklist (Service)

This table is an operational summary of compliance that should be reviewed before each check-in.

Operational area	Compliance (Yes/No)	Quality observations
Pre-arrival	ÿ / ÿ	GPS sent, programmed temperature (21°C in winter and 27°C in summer).
Sensory welcome	ÿ / ÿ	Detail Km 0 prepared, natural aroma, warm lights on. Avoid strong or toilet air fresheners.
Hygiene and cleaning	ÿ / ÿ	Impeccable bedding, folded towels, no musty smell, trash bags available.
Kitchen and basics	ÿ / ÿ	Complimentary oil, salt, coffee and tea, a bottle of water, soap and/or dishwasher tablets.
Information file	ÿ / ÿ	Visible Wi-Fi key, emergency numbers and local ambassador guide.
Air conditioning / fireplace	ÿ / ÿ	Heating or AA tested, extra firewood reserves full. Fireplace safety tips written in multiple languages and in visible places.
Accessibility and special needs	ÿ / ÿ	Adaptations confirmed according to the previous customer service expectations filter.
Sustainability	ÿ / ÿ	Waste separation available, low environmental impact amenities.
Agile check-out	ÿ / ÿ	Flexible departure confirmed if possible, message sent 3 hours later.

10 · Housing Investment Checklist

We recommend reviewing this table once a year, outside of peak season, to plan improvements of the house calmly and without haste.

Housing area	Reviewed (Yes/No)	Points to check
Air conditioning (AACC) — Priority	ÿ / ÿ	Hot/cold air conditioning system installed in the room living room and all bedrooms.
Common spaces	ÿ / ÿ	Clear distribution, furniture in good condition, signage sufficient internal.
Rooms	ÿ / ÿ	Mattresses and pillows in good condition, blackout, sockets accessible, sufficient wardrobe, mosquito nets on the windows.
Bathrooms	ÿ / ÿ	Stable hot water, mirror lighting, ventilation no humidity, toilet seats in very good condition.
Kitchen	ÿ / ÿ	Full set of batteries, sharp knives, cutlery, appliances working properly.
Exteriors	ÿ / ÿ	Shaded furniture, pergola for table and 4 chairs, safe barbecue, well-maintained swimming pool and garden, night lighting.
Technology	ÿ / ÿ	Stable Wi-Fi in all rooms, lock or safe operational safety, thermostat checked.
Energy efficiency	ÿ / ÿ	Insulation, LED lighting, energy-saving aerators of water installed.
Identity and design	ÿ / ÿ	Original elements in value, decoration consistent with Pau's rural style.
Safety and regulations	ÿ / ÿ	Smoke detectors, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and railings checked; valid tourist license.

11 · Summary in 13 Key Points

1. Respond to all booking requests in less than 24 hours.
2. Provide the digital access guide between 48 and 72 hours in advance.
3. Take an interest in the specific preferences and needs of your guests.
4. Ensure a warm welcome with a well-ventilated home at an appropriate temperature and free from musty odors or intense artificial fragrances.
5. Permanently offer a courtesy detail with local products from Km 0.
6. Be accessible and attentive at all times, always respecting privacy during the visit.
7. Recommend authentic local routes and proposals, adapted to the length of the stay.
8. Handle any setbacks by practicing active listening up front and offering compensation appropriate later.
9. Offer the possibility of a late check-out when availability allows and kindly request the review.
10. Promote environmental protection: support for local commerce and sustainability are pillars fundamentals of experience.
11. Invest in your home in a consistent and planned manner: rest, kitchen and exteriors are the areas with the greatest impact on valuation.
12. Periodically review safety, regulations and energy efficiency: they protect guests and they reduce costs in the long term.
13. Install air conditioning (AACC) in all main rooms: this is an almost mandatory recommendation, not an optional extra with the temperatures recorded this past summer.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND TIME

The City Council of Pau thanks you for your dedication to making our municipality a destination of excellence.

Pau City Council · Tourism and Business

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Ajuntament de Pau

With the advice of:

Parafernalía
CONSULTORIA D'EXPERIÈNCIA DE CLIENT