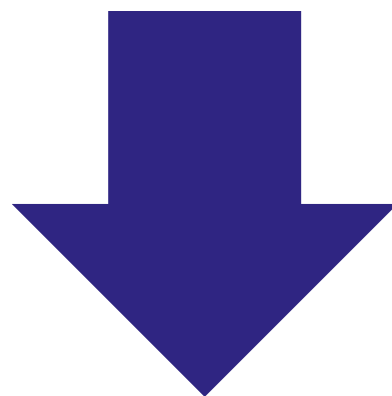


visit
POZnań*

**HOW TO AVOID
SCAMS WHEN
BOOKING
ACCOMMODATION
ONLINE FOR BIG
EVENTS?**



Events such as Pırkon are a scammer's catch. With large events, accommodation in the city sells out quickly. Attendees often act in haste, fearing they will miss an opportunity. They are also more willing to take risks thinking that 'everything will be fine', and people from out of town have limited opportunities to check properties in person.

We have therefore put together a guide with practical tips to help you avoid trouble and ensure a peaceful stay, as well as hints on what to do when you have been scammed.



How do you recognise a trustworthy offer?

We recommend booking through recognised portals such as Booking.com, Airbnb or using booking systems on official hotel websites.

- **Check out feedback from other users:** Always read guest reviews. Pay attention to their number and details - short, overly general reviews can be false. Note which caveats and comments are repeated in the reviews.
- **Verify photos:** Images should be professional yet realistic. If they look like stock photos or are over-retouched, this may be suspect.
- **Check the exact location:** Make sure the address listed on the listing exists. You can use Google Maps to check that the building looks residential. Also check that the address given in the listing is actually the location of your accommodation - sometimes a key pick-up location may be given and the property itself is elsewhere.
- **Owner profile:** On Airbnb, see if the host has a verified profile and has offered other properties before. Avoid listings from new users without reviews.

What to look out for when paying online?

- **Use the portal's payment system:** Never agree to a transfer outside the official platform, even if the host offers a discount.
- **Verify payment methods:** Legitimate platforms have secure payment systems (e.g. SSL). Make sure the website URL starts with 'https://'.
- **Check the cancellation policy:** Pay attention to the refund policy in case of issues.
- **Do not share payment card details outside the platform:** If someone asks you to send a photo of your card or personal details, it is probably a scam.

Suspicious elements in the listings:

- **Underpricing:** If the price seems extremely attractive compared to other offers in the area, consider whether it is a scam or the property is in very poor condition.
- **Overly general description:** Lack of details on location, facilities or conditions of stay is a red flag.
- **No interior pictures available:** If the photos are limited or only show an exterior view, the offer may be suspect.
- **Time pressure:** Offers requiring an immediate decision are often designed to make you act rashly.

What if your booking has been cancelled at the last minute?

Such situations can happen especially with accommodation and rentals from private individuals and much less frequently with hotels. If your host has cancelled your booking at the last minute, you can take the following steps to assert your rights and find a solution.



Contacting the booking platform

Both Airbnb and Booking.com, have procedures in place for such situations:

Airbnb:

Airbnb usually offers an alternative booking or a refund if the host cancels.

- **Contact via application or website:** Log in to your account Go to 'Help' Contact customer service.
- **By phone:** Airbnb has local phone numbers in many countries:

Poland: +48 221 23 19 61

Global number (English): +1 855 424 7262.

- **Chat:** Available in app.

How can this be done?

1. Log in to your account.
2. Go to Help Select the relevant booking.
3. Fill in the complaint form, describing the situation in detail: date of booking and booking number.
4. Host information and details of the problem (cancellation, no alternative).
5. Compensation requested (e.g. full refund, covering additional costs).
6. Include evidence: screenshots, payment receipts, correspondence with the host.

Booking.com:

Booking.com offers assistance in finding alternative accommodation and sometimes covers additional costs.

- **Contact via application:** Log in [Your bookings](#) [Contact support](#).

- **By phone:**

Poland: +48 22 307 94 54

International: Log in to get the number for your region.

How can this be done?

1. Log in to your account.
2. Go to [Your bookings](#) [Select a booking](#).
3. Click [Report a problem](#) or contact support via chat or phone.
4. In the email or form, describe the details: booking number, description of the situation and loss (e.g. extra transport costs, other accommodation), compensation requested.

Police: report the matter to your local police station, especially especially if you have lost money.

Where else to report?

Consumer protection institutions:

European Consumer Centre (ECC)

If the problem is with a foreign host:

- Website: www.konsument.gov.pl
- E-mail: info@konsument.gov.pl
- Telephone: +48 22 55 60 118
- Apply through: ECC form. Prepare: contact details, booking details and problem, copies of documents (confirmations, correspondence).

UOKiK (Office of Competition and Consumer Protection)

In case of a dispute with a company operating in Poland:

- Website: www.uokik.gov.pl
- Contact: +48 22 55 60 800
- Attach details of the case and documents proving that the platform has not solved the problem

Alternatives:

- Credit card: If the payment was made by credit card, contact your bank to consider chargeback.
- Travel insurance: Check that your policy covers cancellation costs.

Summary

Using official booking platforms, verifying offers and using common sense is the key to booking safely. Don't be fooled by suspiciously low prices or time pressure. Take care of your financial security by using secure payment methods (e.g. BLIK) and keeping your booking documents. Remember that for both chain and individual hotels, you can book through the booking systems of these establishments.

It is better to take the extra time to check your accommodation thoroughly than to lose money later and be left without a roof over your head.

