

Hosting responsibly takes on new meaning for Cape Town Airbnb hosts

While Day Zero may be avoided altogether this year, Cape Town's Airbnb hosts are going to great lengths to save water and educate their guests about the water restrictions in place. They are now looking ahead to collectively rethink how to best host in a city where "hosting responsibly" has taken on new meaning and where water shortages will become the "new normal".

With the World Water Day on 22 March, the Cape Town Home Sharing Club asked hosts across the city to meet again to discuss creative ideas and best practices for water saving and more than 100 hosts showed up. The main theme was encouraging guests to live like a local, both prior to their arrival but also during their stay. With hosts and guests empowered to save water, the Airbnb community plays an important role in fighting the drought:

Cold showers, fast showers



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Nathan, host in Camps Bay: "In order to use as little water as possible, I take cold showers so I shower faster. I encourage all my guests to have cold showers, too, to help save water. I want to set a good example and give my guests the opportunity to create an understanding of water scarcity while they are staying at my home."

Low-flow water saving showerhead



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Herald, host in Helen Selle: “We have managed to reduce our water use to 87 litres for three people per day in our household, which is significantly lower than the 150 litres per day the city recommends for a household of three. The low-flow water saving showerhead that Airbnb has provided us with helped us with reducing our water usage. When my guests arrive, I show them the water saving device and explain how to use it to help them save water.”

Spring water



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Judy and James, hosts in Cape Town: “Together with our guests, we collect our drinking water from the spring. This helps our guests understand how important it is to save water and encourages them to be mindful of their water usage while they are staying with us in our home in Cape Town.”

Creating a sense of accountability



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Caitlin, host in Tamboerskloof and co-host in Greenpoint: “I message all my guests before their arrival to inform them about best ways to save water. I think it is very important to educate my guests on water saving to create a sense of accountability. One thing I ask them to do is collect the water when taking a shower in the buckets I provide and use that water to flush the toilet. It’s a simple way of saving water that makes a big difference in fighting the drought.”

A lot of information about the water crisis



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Lameez, host in Thornton: “I provide all my guests with a lot of information about the water crisis before they arrive, so they understand that they are responsible for their water usage. I want them to understand why it is so important to follow my strict guidelines about saving water when they stay at my home, for example not flushing the toilet every time. I also braided my hair, so I only have to wash it every second week.”

Sharing is caring

Tracey, host in Cape Town: “The water crisis has brought the community closer together - not only my guests and me, but also my neighbourhood. I have been giving my well point water to the retirement home across the road, as their water is often cut off. To reduce the amount of washing laundry, I am asking my returning guests to bring their own towels, and I have made my home available for booking with a minimum of five nights.”

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