

Complete API and Data Source Guide for Building a Global Solo Travel Platform

Building topsolotravel.com requires integrating 50+ data sources across venue discovery, accommodations, safety intelligence, transportation, and user-generated content. The optimal technology stack combines free government safety APIs with commercial venue data providers like Foursquare (\$1,000-\$15,000/month at scale), booking integration through affiliate programs (Booking.com at 4-5% commission, Hostelworld at 5-7%), and experience marketplaces like Viator (8% commission). Solo traveler-specific features—particularly LGBTQ+ and women's safety data—are best served by GeoSure's neighborhood-level API, the only commercial provider with dedicated safety scores for these demographics.

The most significant constraints involve data caching: Google Places prohibits permanent storage of venue details, [Google](#) TripAdvisor limits reviews to 5 per location, and Airbnb's API remains essentially closed to new partners. However, OpenStreetMap offers unlimited local caching under the ODbL license, [Ncsc](#) and affiliate programs from major booking platforms provide free data access in exchange for booking commissions. Total API costs for a platform serving 500,000 monthly users range from \$5,000-\$15,000/month, though strategic use of free tiers and affiliate models can reduce initial costs to under \$1,000/month during the startup phase.

Venue and POI data forms the foundation

The venue discovery layer requires balancing data quality, geographic coverage, caching permissions, and cost. **Google Places API** delivers the richest POI data globally—200+ million places with reviews, photos, operating hours, and real-time updates—but pricing escalates quickly at \$2.83-\$7 per thousand calls depending on data requested. More critically, Google prohibits permanent data storage and requires displaying Places data exclusively on Google Maps, blocking use with alternative mapping solutions [Google](#) like Mapbox or Leaflet.

Foursquare Places API emerges as the strongest primary choice for a travel platform. With 100+ million POIs globally, [FitGap](#) 500+ hierarchical categories, and user-generated tips particularly valuable for solo travelers ("great for solo dining at the bar"), Foursquare offers competitive volume pricing (\$15 per thousand calls dropping to \$1.25 at scale above 5 million monthly requests). The terms permit more flexible data usage than Google, and the tip content provides authentic traveler insights that paid review platforms cannot replicate.

TripAdvisor Content API remains essential for credibility despite access restrictions. Partnership approval requires submitting a working travel site and undergoing compliance review, [Elfsight](#) but the reward is access to over 1 billion reviews in 29 languages across 7.5+ million locations. The free tier provides 5,000 API calls monthly, sufficient for early development. [Readme](#) Display limitations—maximum 5 reviews and 5 photos per location with mandatory TripAdvisor branding—constrain design flexibility but the trust signal justifies the constraints. [Readme](#)

For cost-effective baseline data, **OpenStreetMap** provides unlimited free access to POI data worldwide under the ODbL license. Data quality varies significantly by region—excellent in Germany, Netherlands, and Japan;

moderate in the US; sparse in developing regions—but OSM uniquely permits local caching for offline-first features critical to international travelers. Extract restaurants, bars, and hotels using Overpass API queries, supplementing with commercial sources for reviews and photos.

| Provider | Monthly Cost (500K users) | Can Cache Locally | Review Data | Best Use Case |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Google Places | \$2,500-5,000 | No (30-day limit) | Yes | Real-time enrichment |
| Foursquare | \$1,500-3,000 | Check terms | Tips only | Primary POI database |
| TripAdvisor | Contact sales | No | Yes (5 max) | Trust/credibility signal |
| Yelp Fusion | \$3,000-8,000 | 24 hours only | Yes | US restaurants only |
| OpenStreetMap | \$0-500 (hosting) | Yes | No | Offline/baseline data |

Accommodation booking requires affiliate partnerships

Hotel and accommodation data access operates through affiliate programs rather than open APIs.

Booking.com's Affiliate Partner Program provides the widest inventory—28+ million properties globally—with no minimum traffic requirements for approval. Affiliates earn 4-5.5% commission on completed bookings with 30-day cookie attribution. (Reacheffect) The Demand API (for approved Type 2 partners) returns property details, room availability, and pricing including Genius member rates. However, new connectivity partner applications are currently paused pending terms updates.

Hostelworld represents the essential integration for solo budget travelers, offering API access to 36,000+ hostels across 180 countries. Commission rates of 5-7% (up to 22% via Partnerize network) and no minimum traffic requirements make this accessible for new platforms. The platform's focus on backpackers and long-term travelers aligns directly with solo travel demographics, and hostel-specific data like dorm bed pricing and social atmosphere ratings provides unique value.

Expedia Partner Solutions (EPS) Rapid API offers 700,000+ properties with full booking capability but requires partnership application, sandbox certification, and PCI compliance for property collect bookings. Integration takes 2-4 weeks minimum. The enterprise-tier access to negotiated rates and expanded inventory justifies the longer setup process for platforms seeking comprehensive hotel coverage beyond what affiliate programs offer.

Airbnb data access is effectively unavailable for new platforms. The public API, released in 2017, operates on an invitation-only basis with applications currently paused. Airbnb proactively contacts potential partners rather than accepting applications. The only workarounds—iCal synchronization for calendar data or integration through approved Property Management Software partners like Guesty or Lodgify—provide limited functionality unsuitable for a comprehensive travel platform.

For Asian markets specifically, **Agoda** provides superior coverage as the regional leader, owned by Booking Holdings. Progressive commission rates from 4% (under 50 bookings) to 7% (top performers) and comprehensive API access make Agoda essential for Southeast Asia, China, and India coverage. The notably short 1-day cookie duration requires optimizing the booking funnel to convert users quickly.

Restaurant data presents fragmented access challenges

Restaurant and dining data proves the most fragmented category, with no single source providing comprehensive global coverage. **Google Places API** offers the broadest restaurant data—200+ million businesses with hours, photos, price levels, and reviews—[\(Google\)](#) but the 5-review limit per venue and no-caching restrictions constrain content richness. Use Google for real-time lookups and basic metadata rather than building a cached restaurant database.

OpenTable provides reservation data for 60,000+ restaurants across 80+ countries through a partnership-based API. After approval (3-4 week process via [dev.opentable.com](#)), affiliates access restaurant availability, reviews, and booking integration. Coverage concentrates in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia; European coverage is thinner. For solo travelers, OpenTable's party-size-1 searches and some bar seating availability data support the use case.

TheFork (owned by TripAdvisor) serves European markets with 55,000+ partner restaurants across France, Italy, Spain, UK, and Germany. Full API access requires the Enterprise subscription tier. The B2B API provides real-time availability, booking management, preset menus, and customer insights including dietary restrictions — [\(thefork\)](#) [\(Thefork\)](#) valuable for personalizing solo dining experiences. Integration with TripAdvisor and Michelin Guide listings (2,500+ restaurants) adds credibility.

Zomato's public API effectively died in April 2020 when they limited free access to 1,000 calls daily. [\(Zomato\)](#) For India and Middle East markets—Zomato's strongest coverage—enterprise partnerships remain the only viable option. Alternative approaches include the POS Integration API (for restaurant partners) or directing users to Zomato's platform rather than attempting data aggregation.

Menu data presents particular challenges. **SinglePlatform** (TripAdvisor) offers the cleanest licensed menu content through B2B agreements, syndicating to Google, Yelp, and Facebook. [\(Trabon\)](#) Delivery platform APIs (DoorDash, Grubhub, UberEats) provide menu data but restrict access to delivery ecosystem partners—not third-party travel platforms.

Experience and activity APIs offer strong affiliate economics

Tour and experience booking APIs provide the most straightforward affiliate economics with minimal access barriers. **Viator (TripAdvisor)** leads with 300,000+ experiences across 2,500+ destinations, offering immediate basic API access upon signup with no prequalifications. [\(viator\)](#) The fixed 8% commission on completed

bookings, 30-day cookie window, [Viator](#) and comprehensive real-time availability make Viator the default primary integration. [Creator Hero](#) Three checkout options—redirect to viator.com, embedded iframe, or custom checkout—accommodate different implementation approaches. [viator](#)

GetYourGuide requires 100,000+ monthly visits for Basic API access and 1 million+ visits plus 300+ monthly bookings for Full API access—[Getyourguide](#) barriers that exclude early-stage platforms. However, the affiliate commission structure mirrors Viator at approximately 8%, and strong European coverage (Germany, Spain, France, Italy as primary markets) complements Viator's global focus. [The Traveler](#) Work toward traffic thresholds using Viator initially, then add GetYourGuide as the platform scales.

Klook dominates Asian experience bookings with 100,000+ activities across Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. The 2-5% commission rate [GetLasso](#) is lower than competitors, but Asian market depth makes Klook essential for the region. API access requires partnership application (not self-serve); affiliate integration through Travelpayouts provides an alternative path with 50,000 MAU requirement.

Experience metadata across all platforms includes duration, group size, languages, accessibility information, and cancellation policies—enabling filtering for small-group tours, solo-friendly activities, and last-minute bookable experiences particularly relevant to independent travelers.

Safety data requires combining free government sources with commercial intelligence

Travel safety intelligence requires layering free government advisories with commercial providers offering granular neighborhood-level data. **US State Department advisories** are freely accessible via REST API (cadataapi.state.gov/api/TravelAdvisories) returning JSON with country-level 1-4 risk ratings, no authentication required, public domain for commercial use. Similarly, **UK FCDO travel advice** provides JSON API access under the Open Government Licence v3.0, permitting commercial use with attribution.

These government sources provide essential baseline country-level safety information but lack the granularity solo travelers need. **GeoSure** fills this gap as the only commercial API offering neighborhood-level safety scores across 65,000+ cities with dedicated **Women's Safety** and **LGBTQ+ Safety** categories alongside Physical Harm, Theft, Health and Medical, and Political Freedoms. [geosure](#) [LinkedIn](#) The proprietary scoring draws from CDC, World Bank, UN, Interpol, and crowdsourced reports. [GeoSure](#) Subscription pricing with a 7-day free trial; enterprise tiers extend coverage to 400,000+ locations.

LGBTQ+ safety data from free sources carries commercial restrictions. **Equaldex** provides excellent data on legal rights across 193+ countries with API access, but the license **explicitly prohibits commercial use**.

[Equaldex](#) The **Spartacus Gay Travel Index** publishes annual PDF rankings of 216 countries but lacks API access and unclear commercial licensing. **ILGA World Database** offers the most comprehensive legal data ([ILGA World](#)) (4,300+ sources, 100+ topics) but provides web-only access without API. For commercial platforms, GeoSure's integrated LGBTQ+ Safety score remains the only licensed option.

Female solo travel safety presents similar constraints. The **Georgetown Women, Peace and Security Index** ranks 177 countries biennially across 13 indicators including "perceptions of community safety" and "intimate

partner violence"—relevant metrics but published as downloadable reports rather than API. Again, GeoSure's Women's Safety score provides the only API-accessible commercial option for this critical solo travel demographic.

International SOS and **Sitata** offer enterprise-grade travel risk APIs but focus on corporate duty-of-care use cases rather than consumer travel platforms. Pricing requires direct negotiation with no public rate cards.

Flight and transportation APIs vary dramatically in accessibility

Flight booking integration ranges from immediate self-serve access to multi-month enterprise negotiations.

Duffel represents the modern entry point—[Guru TechnoLabs](#) \$3 per order plus 1% of order value for managed content—with instant sandbox access, [GitHub](#) no IATA accreditation required (Duffel handles ticketing authority), [SaaSworthy](#) and 300+ airlines [RapidAPI](#) including low-cost carriers. [duffel](#) The modern REST API, comprehensive documentation, and pre-built UI components [RapidAPI](#) enable integration within days to weeks.

Amadeus for Developers offers the most generous free tier—unlimited test environment access with subset of real data, then pay-as-you-go in production. Self-Service APIs (30+ available) cover flight search, pricing, and booking for 400+ airlines, though notable gaps include American Airlines, Delta, British Airways, and most low-cost carriers. [AltexSoft](#) Booking requires consolidator partnership for ticket issuance. [Amadeus](#) Enterprise tier unlocks full GDS content but requires commercial agreement and certification. [AltexSoft](#)

Skyscanner's Travel APIs require partner application (2-week review) with significant traffic expectations—unsuitable for early-stage projects. Approved partners access free API (commission-based revenue model) [Guru TechnoLabs](#) covering 1,300+ supply partners across 52 markets. [Skyscanner](#) The meta-search model redirects users to OTAs or airlines for booking rather than enabling direct transactions.

Kiwi.com Tequila API offers unique virtual interlining—combining flights from non-partnering carriers into single itineraries with guarantee protection—but currently isn't accepting new public applications, focusing only on strategic partnerships. [Kiwi](#)

For ground transportation, **Omio** provides the most comprehensive multi-modal coverage (trains, buses, ferries, flights) across 46 countries with 3,000+ transport providers including SNCF, Amtrak, FlixBus, and Greyhound. B2B partnership required; contact their team directly. **Trainline Partner Solutions** specializes in European rail with 270+ operators across 45 countries, offering white-label and API options for approved partners.

| Provider | Access Model | Booking Capability | Best For |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Duffel | Self-serve | Full (direct ticketing) | New platforms needing flights |
| Amadeus Self-Service | Self-serve | Limited (needs consolidator) | Free tier testing |
| Skyscanner | Partnership | No (redirect only) | Established affiliate sites |
| Omio | Partnership | Full | European ground transport |
| Trainline | Partnership | Full | Rail-focused platforms |

Maps and practical data offer strong free tiers

Geographic and utility data APIs provide generous free tiers adequate for startup development. **Mapbox** offers 50,000 web map loads monthly free, with subsequent pricing of \$5 per thousand loads—significantly cheaper than Google Maps at scale. Custom styling, navigation SDKs for mobile, and offline caching (with Navigation SDK) make Mapbox the recommended choice for travel platforms prioritizing customization and mobile apps.

Google Maps Platform provides the richest feature set—Places, Directions, Street View—but costs escalate. The March 2025 pricing restructure introduced subscription plans: \$100/month for 50,000 calls (Starter), \$275/month for 100,000 (Essentials), \$500/month for 200,000 (Pro). The critical limitation: geocoding results cannot display on non-Google maps, [Google](#) preventing hybrid approaches using Google data on Mapbox tiles.

For cost optimization, **OpenStreetMap + Leaflet** provides completely free mapping with full commercial rights under ODbL. Self-hosting tile servers costs infrastructure only; third-party tile providers (Stadia Maps, MapTiler, Thunderforest) offer [Switch2osm](#) free tiers of 100,000-150,000 tiles monthly. Data quality varies regionally but covers all tourist destinations adequately.

Currency conversion through Open Exchange Rates provides [Openexchangerates](#) 1,000 free requests monthly (USD base only), then \$12/month for 10,000 requests with all base currencies. **ExchangeRate-API** offers better free tier (1,500 requests) and lowest paid pricing at \$10/month for 100,000 requests.

Weather data from OpenWeatherMap includes 30,000 calls monthly free—sufficient for most travel platform needs. The ODbL license on free tier requires attribution; paid tiers (\$40-\$470/month) remove this requirement.

RestCountries API provides country metadata (capital, population, currencies, languages, timezones) completely free with no authentication required—essential baseline data for any travel platform.

Cost of living data remains challenging. Numbeo offers the most comprehensive city-level data but requires paid subscription with API access; no free tier exists. Expatistan prohibits scraping in their terms of service. [Expatistan](#) Budget planners may need to build proprietary datasets or license from Numbeo directly.

User-generated content faces significant platform restrictions

Social content aggregation has become increasingly restricted across major platforms. **Reddit API** transitioned to paid commercial access in 2023 at \$0.24 per thousand calls, (Rankvise) with enterprise agreements starting around \$12,000/year. (PainOnSocial) Free tier access is explicitly limited to non-commercial use. (Data365) Solo travel subreddits (r/solotravel, r/backpacking) contain valuable discussions but commercial aggregation requires paid licensing.

Facebook Groups API was deprecated April 2024—no third-party applications can access group content or post to groups via API. (TechCrunch +4) This eliminates Facebook travel communities as a programmatic content source; manual community management is the only remaining option.

Instagram Graph API restricts access to Business and Creator accounts only (Basic Display API deprecated December 2024). Personal travel content cannot be accessed programmatically. (Elfsight) Hashtag search (#solotravel, #backpacking) requires Business Advanced connection. Content embedding through oEmbed remains available for public posts.

YouTube Data API v3 provides the most accessible video content integration with 10,000 quota units daily free (Google) (search costs 100 units per query, video metadata costs 1 unit). (Phyllo) Travel vlogger content can be searched, playlists created, and videos embedded within quota limits. Commercial use permitted within terms.

TikTok Display API enables displaying creator videos with user authorization but offers no public search functionality for content discovery. (TikTok) Users must authorize access to their content before display.

Review aggregation carries strict display requirements. **TripAdvisor Content API** mandates TripAdvisor branding, (Readme) bubble rating images in specified colors, and quotation marks around review text. (Readme) (Readme) **Google Places** reviews require author attribution and functional profile links. Both prohibit AI/ML training on review content. (Readme)

For licensed influencer content, platforms like **TRIBE** (30% margin on campaign spend), (TRIBE) **Aspire** (\$2,000-2,300/month), (Stack Influence) and **GRIN** (\$25,000+/year minimum) (Influencer Hero) (Stack Influence) facilitate content licensing with rights management. (Influencer Hero) Standard UGC video licensing runs \$150-500 per piece depending on length and usage rights.

Content licensing enables destination coverage at scale

Lonely Planet content is commercially available through ArrivalGuides API integration—8,000+ curated city guides, 260,000+ POIs, 500+ destination videos across 180+ countries in 16+ languages. B2B pricing requires direct contact; clients include airlines, cruise lines, and major travel agencies.

Wikivoyage provides travel-specific wiki content under CC-BY-SA license—free for commercial use with attribution. The structured article format (Understand, Get In, Get Around, See, Do, Eat, Drink, Sleep) aligns with travel platform information architecture. MediaWiki API access at en.wikivoyage.org/w/api.php; rate-limit respectful crawling at ~1 page per 30 seconds recommended.

Wikidata offers structured destination data under CC0 (public domain)—coordinates, population, country relationships, administrative divisions—with no attribution legally required. SPARQL queries enable extracting destination data at scale for knowledge graphs and destination profiles.

Image licensing ranges from free community sources to premium stock libraries:

- **Unsplash/Pexels:** Free for commercial use, no attribution required (appreciated). API access available. Limited legal indemnification.
- **Shutterstock:** \$29-199/month subscriptions for 10-750 images. API access with reselling capability. Full commercial rights, perpetual license.
- **Getty Images:** Premium quality at \$99-699/month for subscription tiers. \$10,000 indemnification standard. Enterprise API available.

Translation APIs for multilingual content: Google Cloud Translation (\$20 per million characters after 500,000 free monthly), DeepL (\$25 per million characters, superior quality for European languages), Microsoft Translator (\$10 per million characters, most cost-effective at volume with 2 million free monthly).

Tourism board partnerships operate through DMO co-operative marketing programs rather than open APIs. VisitBritain offers partnership tiers from \$15,000-\$100,000 investment with content assets and campaign support. Tourism Australia seeks distribution partnerships with shared target customers and commitment to Aussie Specialist training programs. Approach DMOs with clear value proposition around audience reach and booking conversion.

Visa and event data complete the platform infrastructure

Sherpa° provides the leading travel requirements API covering 180+ countries with visa requirements, passport validity rules, health declarations, and eVisa products. (Sherpa) Real-time updates track approximately 55 policy changes per hour. (Sherpa) OAuth 2.0 API with 25+ language support; custom enterprise pricing includes commission on eVisa sales. White-label webapp and embeddable widgets available for faster integration.

(Sherpa)

IATA Timatic represents the airline industry standard, processing 500+ million passenger checks annually with 70-200 daily rule changes. Pre-integrated with Amadeus, Sabre, and all major airline systems. (IATA) Enterprise pricing (contact IATA directly); airlines report \$0.60 cost savings per boarded passenger from automated documentation checks.

(IATA)

For basic visa-free data without commercial licensing costs, the **Passport Index GitHub dataset** ([ilyankou/passport-index-dataset](#)) provides regularly updated CSV covering 199 passports with visa-free, visa-on-arrival, eVisa, and visa-required classifications.

Event data through PredictHQ offers comprehensive coverage—20+ million events across 30,000+ cities with 19+ categories including concerts, conferences, festivals, sports, and unscheduled events like severe weather. [PredictHQ](#) Proprietary ranking algorithm predicts attendance and event spend impact. [PredictHQ](#) REST API with free tier available; enterprise pricing for production use.

Meetup API transitioned to GraphQL with access requiring Meetup Pro subscription ([Meetup](#)) (~\$199+/month). Excellent for local community events and solo traveler meetups but the subscription requirement creates budget considerations.

Legal considerations favor API access over scraping

Web scraping for travel data carries significant legal and operational risks. **HiQ Labs v. LinkedIn** (settled 2022) established that while scraping publicly accessible data doesn't violate the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, terms of service violations create enforceable breach of contract claims. [Morgan Lewis](#) [Proxycurl](#) Creating fake accounts to access content exposes additional CFAA liability. [Farella Braun + Martel](#)

GDPR compliance is mandatory for any platform serving European users. Scraping personal data (names, emails, photos, location data) requires legal basis—typically legitimate interest—with proper documentation. Fines reach €20 million or 4% of global revenue. Clearview AI faced multiple European DPA fines for facial recognition scraping. [Octoparse](#)

Robots.txt is advisory rather than legally binding, but ignoring it undermines good-faith defenses and provides evidence in litigation. Best practices: honor crawl-delay directives, implement delays between requests (10-15 seconds minimum without specified crawl-delay), use identifiable User-Agent strings with contact information.

Commercial risks strongly favor official API access:

| Factor | Web Scraping | Official APIs |
|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Legal Risk | High (TOS violations, CFAA) | Low (within terms) |
| Data Quality | Variable, breaks with changes | Consistent, documented |
| Reliability | Can be blocked anytime | SLAs available |
| Maintenance | High ongoing effort | Lower with versioning |
| Support | None | Developer support |

For sustainable platform development, budget for commercial API access rather than building scraping infrastructure. The apparent cost savings from scraping disappear when accounting for legal risk, maintenance burden, and data quality issues.

Recommended implementation approach prioritizes affiliate economics

Phase 1 (MVP): Start with free tiers and affiliate programs requiring no upfront investment. Integrate Booking.com affiliate (4-5% commission), Hostelworld affiliate (5-7%), Viator API (8% commission, immediate access), and free government safety APIs (US State Dept, UK FCDO). Use OpenStreetMap + Leaflet for mapping, Wikivoyage for destination content, and RestCountries for basic metadata. Estimated monthly API costs: under \$500.

Phase 2 (Growth): Add Foursquare Places for venue data (\$1,000-3,000/month), GeoSure for safety intelligence (subscription-based), Duffel for flight booking (\$3/order + 1%), and OpenTable/TheFork for restaurant reservations. Integrate GetYourGuide after reaching traffic thresholds. Estimated monthly API costs: \$3,000-8,000.

Phase 3 (Scale): Negotiate enterprise agreements with Amadeus or Sabre for full GDS access, pursue Sherpa° or IATA Timatic integration for comprehensive visa data, license Lonely Planet content, and establish direct tourism board partnerships. Budget for International SOS or similar enterprise risk intelligence. Estimated monthly API costs: \$10,000-25,000+.

Throughout all phases, the affiliate model—particularly for accommodations and experiences—generates revenue that can offset API costs. A platform with strong booking conversion can achieve positive unit economics on API infrastructure through commission income even at moderate scale. Prioritize integrations that drive bookings over those that only enhance content without revenue potential.