# BnB-ing in Seattle: when, where and with?





Seattle was the ninth most visited city in the US in 2018 with  $\sim$ 41 million visiters. It is the top tourist destiniation in the Pacific Northwest. (Best Choice Review, 2019)

With it's growing popularity, taking a trip to Seattle may require planning. I personally prefer renting a BnB (on AirBnb or ) because these properties add a local flavour to the trip and can be found in all neighbourhoods, even where a hotel of my preference may not be present. As of November 2018, there are over 8,700 listings on AirBnb for Seattle. 75% of these are entire houses or apartments. (Inside Airbnb, 2018) So, if you are planning to visit Seattle, there are many BnB options.

Here, we will try to answer the following questions, to help us a plan a BnB trip to Seattle:

- 1. When should I visit Seattle? Though there are many factors that should influence this decision, in this post we will be exploring the BnB seasonal availability.
- 2. Where should I stay? Analysing the distribution of available properties and pricing accross neighbourhoods.
- 3. How does the number of people travelling affect my plan for the trip to Seattle? What the unit pricing and availabilty look like for different groups of people.

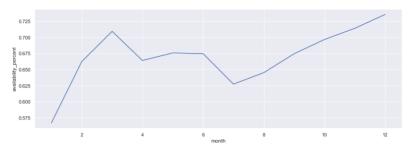
We will be using 'Seattle AirBnB Open Dataset' that has over 3800 listings and their calendar (availability and pricing by day) for the entire year of 2016. Let's dive in!

When should I visit Seattle?

Seattle is great all year round- you can catch the cherry blossoms in March, the tulips in April, the sun in July & August and the light snow and festive cheers in the winter months. So here is how data can help us make a choice.

The AirBnb hosts have the ability of choosing the availability calendar for their property. Which means availability of properties is not just dependent on the demand, but also the travel plans of your host!

Here is how the availability of properties looks like accross the year:

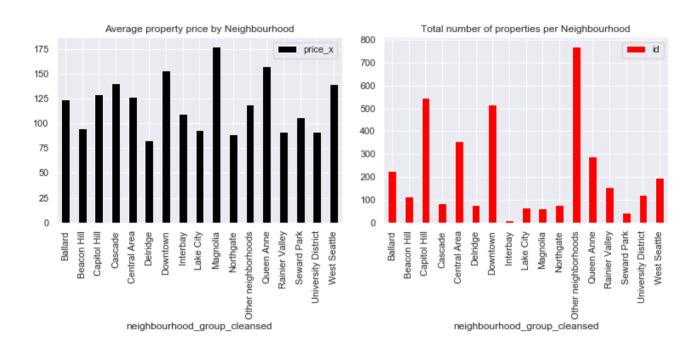


% properties available by month of the year (weighted by daily availability)

December is the month with the highest availability- 74% of the listed properties are open to hosting guests. While only 62–64% of the properties are open during the summer months, which also has a high number of tourists. So, if you are planning a trip in the summer, booking your accommodation a few months earlier will ensure you get a place you like, while a last minute plan in December may be an easy pull (It is a low month for tourism- weather and family holidays).

# Where should I stay?

Seattle can keep you entertained with a variety of options- nightlife at CapHill, the tourist-y Downtown with the wheel & pike place market or the scandinavian heritage at Ballard. Along with your preference, here is some additional information about accommodations in the Seattle neighbourhoods that can help you decide where to stay:



The above suggests that Magnolia is the most expensive neighbourhood (avg price = \$176/ night) with less than 100 BnB property options. If you plan to stay in this area, you may want to keep your options open. For eg: you can consider staying at Ballard, a close neighbour of Magnolia with over 200 properties and relatively cheaper ones.

How does the number of travellers affect my plan?

An increase in the total number fo people travelling together can help reduce costs per person (economies of scale!), but may also make it hard to find accommodation. Let us see, what the AirBnb data tells us about the number of people a property can accommodate.





It can be seen in the green chart above that price of the properties increase with increase in the number of people it can accommodate. However it flattens out between 9 and 12, with the exception seen at 11 people (only 3 properties with 1 very highly priced property).

Unlike conventional hotels, the price of the accommodation does not double when we move from a number like 4 people to 5 (would have to book 2 rooms instead of 1).

Another interesting take away — There seem to be more properties offering accommodation for even number of people than odd (blue chart). So if you are looking for a place for 5 people, and can't find a place, be sure to check out the 6 persons options. There may be more availabilities and the increase in price will be potentially nominal- eg, when you change from 5 to 6, average property price increases by \$20 (from \$180 to \$200), i.e. an increase of only \$4 per person.

There is a lot more we can explore using this data, and here are a few ideas if you would like to try:

- 1. Explore weekly seasonality (availability on weekdays v/s weekends)
- 2. Sentiment analysis of reviews to pick properties or neighbourhoods
- 3. Analyse the trend of AirBnb visiters to predict demand remaining supply

Similar data is also available for other cities, so if you are going somehwere, get analysing!

#### References

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# Inside Airbnb. Adding data to the debate.

Inside Airbnb is a set of independent tools and open data that allows you to explore how Airbnb is REALLY being used in...

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