

# World Cup 2026 Revenue Playbook

# Your Pricing Strategy Guide

# The Biggest Pricing Opportunity in STR History

The 2026 FIFA World Cup runs June 11 through July 19 across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. 48 countries. Stadiums holding 60,000-100,000 per game. Millions of international travelers. Five full weeks of elevated demand.

**This is not a normal high-demand event.** It is a once-in-a-generation revenue opportunity. Some operators will earn in two months what they normally make in an entire year. Others will leave tens of thousands on the table because they did not prepare.

**\$1,718**

per night booked for a  
2BR in Philadelphia

**5-10x**

rate premiums possible  
in small host cities

**6M+**

estimated visitors  
across host cities

This playbook gives you the city-by-city analysis, demand forecasts, pricing strategies, and exact action plan to capture every dollar of this opportunity.

# How the World Cup Drives Demand

Understanding the tournament format is critical for your pricing strategy. Not all games are equal, and the demand curve shifts dramatically as the event progresses.

JUNE 11 - JUNE 28

## Group Stage

48 teams play in groups of 4. Demand varies dramatically by matchup. England vs Croatia is worth 5-10x what Cape Verde vs Ivory Coast is worth. Price by game, not by date.

JUNE 29 - JULY 3

## Round of 32

First knockout round. Only 16 teams are eliminated. Demand increases as stakes rise. Cities hosting popular team matches will see booking surges.

JULY 4 - JULY 13

## Quarters and Semis

Peak pricing territory. Fewer games, higher stakes, more concentrated demand. Philadelphia hosts a Round of 16 game on July 4th, the 250th anniversary of independence.

JULY 19

## The Final

200,000-400,000 people may descend on the host city. Most will not have tickets. They come for the atmosphere, fan zones, and experience. Your maximum pricing ceiling.

## *Beyond the Stadium*

More people travel for the World Cup than can fit in stadiums. Fan zones, training camp visits, and the atmosphere itself draw massive crowds. **Even operators without game-day bookings will benefit from the five-week demand wave.**

# City-by-City Opportunity Tiers

The single biggest factor determining your pricing ceiling: **hotel inventory relative to demand**. Smaller cities with limited rooms will see explosive rate premiums. Major markets will benefit but have more supply to absorb the surge.

CITY	HOTEL ROOMS	TIER	EXPECTED PREMIUM
Kansas City	10-15K	TIER 1	5-10x normal rates
Philadelphia	20K	TIER 1	5-10x (July 4 stacked)
Boston	20-30K	TIER 1	4-8x normal rates
Seattle	30K	TIER 2	3-5x normal rates
San Francisco	30-40K	TIER 2	3-5x normal rates
Dallas / Houston	75-90K	TIER 2	2-3x normal rates
Miami	60K	TIER 3	1.5-3x normal rates
Atlanta	100K	TIER 3	1.5-2x normal rates
NY / NJ / LA	100-140K	TIER 3	1.5-2x normal rates

**The paradox:** The biggest cities host the biggest games but have the most inventory. Kansas City with 10,000 rooms and 50,000 Argentina fans creates a supply crisis. New York with 140,000 rooms absorbs the same crowd easily.

# Which Teams Drive the Most Demand?

Not all countries travel equally. These tiers determine which game days justify your most aggressive pricing. Match the team playing in your city to these tiers.

## TIER 1: PREMIUM DEMAND

- **England** - largest traveling fanbase, high spend, no World Cup since 1966
- **Germany** - soccer is national sport, wealthy country, dedicated travelers
- **Brazil** - 200M people, soccer is cultural identity, passionate fans
- **Argentina** - current champions, fans pay top dollar
- **Netherlands** - fanatic fans, high income, visa-free US entry

## TIER 2: SOLID DEMAND

**France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Colombia, Japan, South Korea.** Strong soccer cultures, wealthy populations. Colombia and Ecuador have large US-based diaspora communities who will travel domestically.

## TIER 3: MODERATE DEMAND

**USA, Canada, Mexico** (home games attract locals, not tourists). **African and Asian nations** with visa requirements typically book later and in lower volumes due to logistics.

### *The Visa Factor*

Travelers from countries requiring US visas book later because they wait for visa approval. **EU, Australia, Japan, South Korea** are visa-free and will book earlier. Factor this into your booking window expectations.

# Real Booking Data Right Now

We manage properties across multiple World Cup host cities. Here is what we are actually seeing in the market as of early 2026.

10-25%

CURRENT OCCUPANCY

65%

SEATTLE USA VS AUS

\$1,000+

KC FLOOR PRICE

**The first wave is over.** When the match schedule dropped on December 6, bargain hunters scooped up underpriced inventory within two weeks. Those properties are gone. What remains is properly priced inventory.

**Low occupancy does not mean low demand.** Fans are still navigating visa approvals, ticket lotteries, flight costs, and trip planning. Most international travelers have not booked yet because they do not know if they are going. The next wave comes when tickets and visas are confirmed.

**Larger properties book first.** 4-6 bedroom units are booking faster than 1-2 bedrooms. Group travelers (families, friend groups) coordinate earlier and need larger spaces. Smaller units will fill later as individual travelers finalize plans.

**Surrounding markets are already pacing ahead.** Beach markets in Texas are running ahead of previous years. Travelers are combining World Cup attendance with broader vacation time, booking extended stays in tourist areas near host cities.

# 01 Hold Your Rates

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**This is the most important advice in this entire playbook: do not panic and drop your rates just because occupancy looks low right now.**

**Why operators panic:** You see 10-25% occupancy for World Cup dates and compare it to your normal booking pace. It feels slow. Your instinct says lower prices to fill faster.

**Why that instinct is wrong:** For an event of this magnitude, occupancy is not the issue. Nearly every property in host cities will book. The question is at what rate. Properties booking first are simply the ones priced lowest. You want to be in the second or third wave, when underpriced inventory is gone and your properly priced property becomes the best available option.

**The math:** If you drop rates by 30% to book early, you lock in revenue you cannot recover. If you hold and book later at full rate, you capture the premium. For a \$500/night property over a 5-night World Cup stay, that is the difference between \$1,750 and \$2,500. Multiply that across your portfolio.

## *When to Reassess*

If you reach May 2026 with less than 40% occupancy for game dates, **then** consider modest adjustments. Until then, hold firm. Monitor weekly, but resist the urge to react to what is still a very early booking window.

# 02 Price by Game, Not by Date

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**The biggest pricing mistake operators make: applying a blanket multiplier to all World Cup dates. England vs Croatia deserves dramatically different pricing than Cape Verde vs Ivory Coast.**

**Step 1:** Identify every game happening in your city. Use the official FIFA schedule.

**Step 2:** Categorize each game by the team tier system (page 5). Tier 1 teams (England, Germany, Brazil, Argentina, Netherlands) justify your most aggressive pricing. Tier 3 matchups get moderate premiums.

**Step 3:** Check for stacking events. Is there a holiday, conference, or local event on the same weekend? Philadelphia's July 4 Round of 16 game stacks World Cup demand with Independence Day and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Triple the demand signal means maximum pricing.

**Step 4:** Monitor what comparable properties are actually booking at. Search Airbnb for your city on each game date. The floor is set by whatever is currently available. If nothing in Kansas City is below \$1,000/night, that is your starting point, not your ceiling.

## *Research Fan Forums*

If your city hosts a Germany game, search German fan forums (use Google Translate). See what fans are discussing: are they booking? What are their concerns? What is their budget? **This gives you demand intelligence your pricing tool cannot provide.**

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## Minimum Stays and Cancellation Policy

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**Two tactical decisions that will significantly impact your World Cup revenue: how long guests must stay and what happens if they cancel.**

**Minimum stays:** For game dates, implement a 3-night minimum around the match date. You do not want someone booking only game night when you could rent the surrounding nights at elevated rates too. Most fans will want at least 2-3 nights anyway to explore the city and attend fan zone events.

**Be strategic, not rigid:** If a game is on a Wednesday, a 3-night minimum captures Tuesday through Thursday. But watch for orphan gaps. If two games in your city are 5 days apart, consider bridging them with a flexible minimum that fills the entire period rather than leaving unbookable gaps.

**Cancellation policy:** This is a nuanced decision for World Cup bookings. Travelers are booking months in advance with significant uncertainty about visas, tickets, and flights.

- **Moderate policy:** Attracts earlier bookings. Guests feel safer committing. You may command a small premium because guests prefer the flexibility
- **Strict policy:** Protects against last-minute cancellations. Better for high-demand Tier 1 game dates where you know the room will rebook
- **Our recommendation:** Use moderate for dates 60+ days out to attract early bookings. Switch to strict within 30-60 days when demand is confirmed and rebooking risk is low

### *The Cancellation Risk*

Some guests will book now to secure a property, then monitor Airbnb for cheaper options. If they find one, they cancel and rebook. **Rates are more likely to climb than drop**, so most early bookings will stick. But know that some churn is normal.

# 5 Pricing Mistakes That Will Cost You Thousands

After managing properties through dozens of major sporting events, these are the mistakes we see operators make every time. Avoid all five and you will outperform 90% of hosts.

## 1 Pricing Too Low, Too Early

The properties booking first are just the cheapest. For the World Cup, occupancy is not the problem. Nearly everything will book. The question is at what rate. Booking first at a discount locks in lost revenue you cannot recover.

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## 2 Using a Blanket Multiplier

"Triple my normal rate for all World Cup dates" ignores the massive variance between games. England vs Croatia could be worth 10x. Cape Verde vs Ivory Coast might be 2x. Price by game, not by calendar.

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## 3 Ignoring Hotel Inventory

Your pricing ceiling is determined by total market accommodation, not just STR comps. In Kansas City (10K hotel rooms), your ceiling is 10x. In New York (140K rooms), it is 2x. Know your market.

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## 4 No Minimum Stay Strategy

Accepting single-night bookings on game day leaves money on the table. Fans need at least 2-3 nights. A 3-night minimum around game dates maximizes your total revenue and eliminates orphan gaps.

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## 5 Set It and Forget It

This is not an event where you configure pricing once and walk away. Monitor weekly. Track pickup, competitive pricing, and occupancy velocity. Adjust upward as inventory shrinks, not downward out of panic.

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# Not in a Host City? You Still Benefit

You do not need to be in a host city to capture World Cup revenue. The five-week event creates ripple effects across surrounding tourist markets.

## SPILOVER

### Suburban and Commuter Markets

Properties within 30-60 minutes of a host city will capture overflow demand. When host city inventory fills and prices spike, budget-conscious travelers look outward. Emphasize transit access and parking.

## SPILOVER

### Nearby Tourist Areas

Beach markets near Texas host cities are already pacing ahead. Fans are booking extended trips that combine World Cup attendance with broader vacation time. Your market may benefit even if it is 1-2 hours away.

## EXTENDED STAYS

### Vacation Destinations Nationwide

International visitors flying from Europe, Asia, and South America will not come for just one game. Many will spend 1-2 weeks exploring the country. Popular tourist markets nationwide will see elevated demand in June and July.

## BUSINESS TRAVEL

### Media and Event Staff

Journalists, FIFA staff, sponsors, and event coordinators create a layer of demand that is less price-sensitive. Their employers pay for accommodation. This supplements fan-driven demand with professional travel budgets.

**Action step:** Compare your pacing for June-July 2026 against the same period in 2025. If you are ahead, the World Cup effect is already reaching your market. Adjust pricing accordingly.

# Your World Cup Action Plan

Whether the tournament is 3 months or 3 weeks away, work through this checklist to position your properties for maximum revenue.

- Identify every game in your city and categorize by demand tier**  
Tier 1 teams (England, Germany, Brazil, Argentina, Netherlands) get your most aggressive pricing

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- Research your market's total hotel and STR inventory**  
This determines your pricing ceiling. Smaller inventory = higher premiums

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- Set game-specific pricing (not a blanket multiplier)**  
Each game date gets its own rate based on team tier and local supply constraints

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- Implement strategic minimum night stays around game dates**  
3-night minimum for game days. Watch for orphan gaps between games in your city

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- Search Airbnb weekly to monitor competitive pricing and available inventory**  
Know the floor price in your market. Adjust upward as inventory shrinks

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- Optimize your listing for international travelers**  
Highlight transit access, group-friendly features, proximity to stadium and fan zones

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- Check pacing for June-July vs. prior year**  
If you are ahead, the World Cup effect is reaching your market. Price accordingly

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- Hold your rates until at least May 2026**  
Do not drop prices based on early occupancy. The demand wave has not arrived yet

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## REAL RESULTS

# How Our Clients Win on Big Events

We have managed pricing through dozens of major events. Here is what happens when you execute a disciplined strategy instead of guessing.

### PHILADELPHIA, PA

## \$1,718 Per Night for a Two-Bedroom

A two-bedroom property in Philadelphia booked at \$1,718/night for World Cup dates. The key? We held rates while other operators in the market dropped theirs to fill quickly. As cheaper inventory disappeared, demand pushed remaining bookings to premium prices.

**\$1,718**

NIGHTLY RATE

**5x**

NORMAL RATE

**July 4**

GAME + HOLIDAY

### KANSAS CITY, MO

## \$1,000+ Floor Price Holding Strong

With only 10-15K hotel rooms and multiple high-demand matchups, Kansas City properties are holding firm at \$1,000+/night. Operators who priced at \$500-700 booked immediately but left significant revenue on the table. The floor keeps rising as inventory shrinks.

# Don't Leave World Cup Revenue on the Table

We manage pricing across 2,800+ listings, including properties in multiple World Cup host cities. Our team is monitoring demand, adjusting rates, and positioning portfolios to capture the full upside of this event.

**\$1M+ ANNUAL REVENUE**

## Free Revenue Report

Get a personalized analysis of your World Cup pricing strategy. We will show you exactly which dates represent the biggest opportunities and how to capture them.

[FreewyldFoundry.com/report](https://freewyldfoundry.com/report)

Or email us at [foundry@freewyld.com](mailto:foundry@freewyld.com)