OTA Cost Calculator

for Southern African Hotels & Lodges · 2026 Edition

Waterberry Hospitality Group · Bespoke Hotel & Lodge Management
www.waterberryhospitality.com · Mbabane, Eswatini

Why this calculator matters

Independent properties in Southern Africa often lose **15–25% of revenue** to Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). Shifting even a portion of bookings to direct channels can significantly boost your bottom line.

- Booking.com: ~15–18% commission
- Expedia & others: 18–25% commission
- Effective rate with promotions: up to 28%
- Direct booking cost: usually 3–5% (payment processing + website fees)

Your OTA cost calculator

Metric	Your property	Example (20-room lodge)
Annual Room Revenue	R _____	R 4,000,000
% of Bookings via OTAs	_____ %	65%
Average OTA Commission Rate	_____ %	20%
Annual OTA Commissions Paid	R _____	R 520,000
Equivalent Direct Cost (4.5%)	R _____	R 117,000
Potential Annual Savings	**R _____**	**R 403,000**

Instructions: 1) Enter your annual room revenue. 2) Enter % of bookings from OTAs (check your PMS reports). 3) Enter your average commission rate. 4) Calculate the difference between OTA commissions paid and the equivalent direct cost.

Real-world impact examples

Small lodge — 12 rooms, Eswatini
Revenue R 2,200,000 · OTA share 70% · Commission 22% · **Savings potential: R 268,000 per year**

Mid-size game lodge — 35 rooms, Zambia
Revenue R 8,500,000 · OTA share 55% · Commission 18% · **Savings potential: R 636,000 per year**

How savings affect RevPAR

On a **R 2,000 booking**:
• Via OTA (20% commission): you receive **R 1,600**
• Direct (4.5% cost): you receive **R 1,910**
→ **+R 310 per booking** straight to GOP.

Tips to reduce OTA dependency

- Optimise your own website for direct bookings
- Strong email & WhatsApp marketing to past guests
- Loyalty programmes and special offers for direct bookers
- Professional revenue management (Waterberry can help)

Ready to unlock more profit?
Request a complimentary property assessment today.
Contact: marc@waterberryhospitality.com · or use the form on our website.

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