Sweet Apple
HOME MANAGEMENT

Leaving for two weeks

What to do to the house before a trip, so that the house isn't the thing you think about on the trip. Works for a long weekend; essential for anything over a week.

> Almost every "we came home to..." story is water. A supply line under a sink, a water heater, a washer hose — running for nine days. The single most valuable item on this page is the first one.

Water

- [ ] **Turn off the main water valve.** If the house has an irrigation system or a fire sprinkler on the same line, turn off the house side only, or shut the valves under every sink, the toilets, and the washer instead.
- [ ] Water heater: set to "vacation" or the lowest setting. Don't turn a gas one fully off unless you know how to relight it.
- [ ] Washer: shut the two valves behind it.
- [ ] Ice maker: off, so a stuck valve doesn't flood the kitchen.
- [ ] In winter: leave the heat on at 55°, open cabinet doors under sinks on outside walls, and don't shut off the main if the house has a sprinkler system — ask us or a plumber first.

Power and heat

- [ ] Thermostat: 55° in winter, 82° in summer. Not off — humidity and pipes both need it running.
- [ ] Unplug the small things: coffee maker, toaster, TVs, computers, phone chargers.
- [ ] Lights on timers in two rooms, set to different hours. One lamp on all night looks like one lamp on all night.

Doors, windows, outside

- [ ] Every window locked, every door deadbolted — including the one from the garage into the house.
- [ ] Blinds and curtains as you'd normally leave them. Fully closed for two weeks says "gone."
- [ ] Outdoor furniture, grill cover, and anything that blows away: secured or inside.
- [ ] Hose disconnected from the hose bib (winter especially).
- [ ] Lawn cut the day before, and a cut scheduled for the middle of the trip.
- [ ] Cars in the garage or the driveway as usual — not both gone for two weeks from an empty driveway.

Mail, deliveries, and the neighbor

- [ ] Mail hold at usps.com, or a neighbor collecting daily. A full mailbox is the oldest signal there is.
- [ ] No packages scheduled. Pause subscriptions; Amazon has a vacation hold.
- [ ] Newspaper stopped.
- [ ] **One neighbor** with a key, your cell number, and the dates — who'll walk through once midway

- [ ] Garage door: unplug the opener, or lock the manual slide bolt.

Food and trash

- [ ] Refrigerator: eat down, toss what won't last, leave a box of baking soda.
- [ ] All trash out, including bathroom cans. Dishwasher run and emptied.
- [ ] Pantry: anything open into sealed containers. Two weeks is long enough for ants.

(toilets flushed, taps run, nothing dripping, everything the way you left it).

- [ ] Alarm company told the dates and the neighbor's name.

Before you lock the door

- [ ] Walk every room once with the lights off: faucets, windows, stove knobs.
- [ ] Photo of the thermostat, the main valve, and the stove — so on day four you can stop wondering.
- [ ] The "Your house, on one page" sheet on the counter for the neighbor.
- [ ] Set a reminder for the day you return: water on, water heater up, ice maker on, timers off.