



# Guide to Host Accommodation

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# What is host accommodation?

Host accommodation provides a total immersion experience through staying with a local household. Unlike exchanges, our hosts look after international students all year round and are very experienced at hosting.



Immerse yourself in local culture and a chance to further develop your language skills with experienced hosts. Hosts can provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere while in a new country.

## Why host accommodation and not host family?

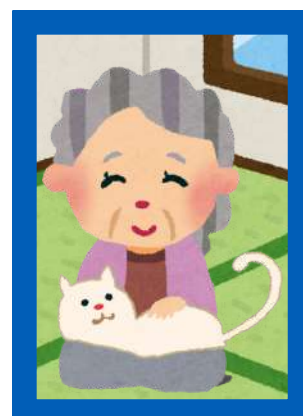
Each host placement is different. Some are mothers whose older children have left home. Some hosts have children living at home. Very occasionally, we also have fathers whose older children have left home, hosting male students. Host accommodation comes in all shapes and sizes.



Hosts may or may not have children of varying ages living at home. Both have advantages; with children, students have the chance to make a new friend with similar interests. On the otherhand, hosts without children have more spare time to dedicate to the student.



We call it host accommodation (or homestay) instead of host family to reflect the different types of home situations.



# Pre-trip



Prior to allocating your host, we ask for you to write a short letter introducing yourself in the target language. It can include information about you e.g. hobbies, interests, likes and dislikes, etc. We will then send it to the host with your profile photo.

A short profile and contact details of your host will be available approximately 10 - 14 days before your trip. It is advisable to contact them and introduce yourself before arriving. Hosts come in all shapes and sizes so please keep an open mind.

Your host accommodation is usually within a 45 minute radius of the language school or work placement (depending on your trip) when travelling on foot or public transport.

Your host will help you to plan the best route to the school or your placement (if on a work experience trip), they are the local experts. Please allow a small amount of money for your local transport.

## Arrival

Depending on your destination, some hosts will meet you on arrival at the airport or train station. Other times, private transfers or public transport are the best option. Transfers are available to select when booking your trip.

If you would like any advice on getting to your host, please contact us.



# Host Accommodation Selection

- ✓ Each host is carefully selected by a specialist accommodation officer.

The accommodation officer visits the host accommodation to ensure they can match you with a household that will



give you the best experience. The officer also monitors feedback from guests and is available to support during your stay.

- ✓ Gender, age, allergies, dietary requirements and preferences are taken into account. In some cases, there may be a supplement for this.





✓ If you are travelling independently, most host accommodation will be in a single room as standard with the exception of peak periods where single rooms may be fully booked and only twin rooms are available. We will always consult with you before going ahead and you will be paired with someone of the same gender and similar age.

In general, summer camp accommodation will be twin rooms with someone of a different nationality to you but same gender and similar age.

In the case of group trips, bedrooms will be in multiples with other students on the trip.



✓ If hosts have the available rooms, they may have other students staying with them as well. You may or may not have a private bathroom, sometimes students share a bathroom with other students and sometimes students share with the host.



# Common cultural differences

Studying abroad means experiencing new cultures which you should respect. Here are some examples of differences to be aware of:

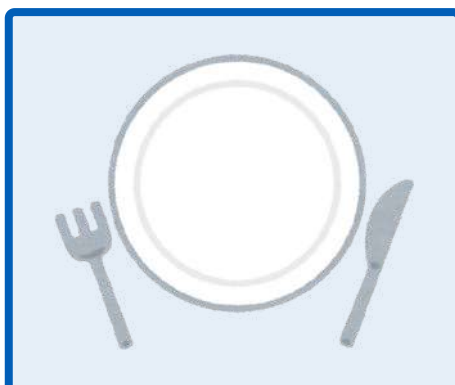
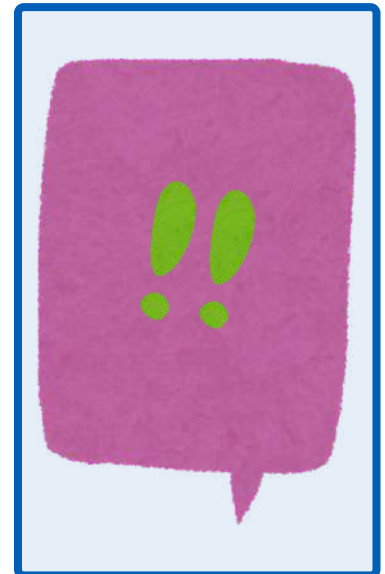


## Greetings

Compared to UK, French and Spanish people (but not typically German) greet each other with a light kiss on one or two cheeks. Even on first meeting, your host may greet you with a kiss. Please don't worry, this is all typical and usual.

## Communication Styles

Different cultures have different etiquettes, and it's important to approach them with an open mind. Some Europeans communicate more directly and straightwardly than you may expect. While this might feel impolite in the UK, it's simply a normal way of communicating in other cultures.



## Later evening meals

Some households will eat later in the evening than you may be used to. This is particularly common in Spain due to their afternoon siesta and the weather.

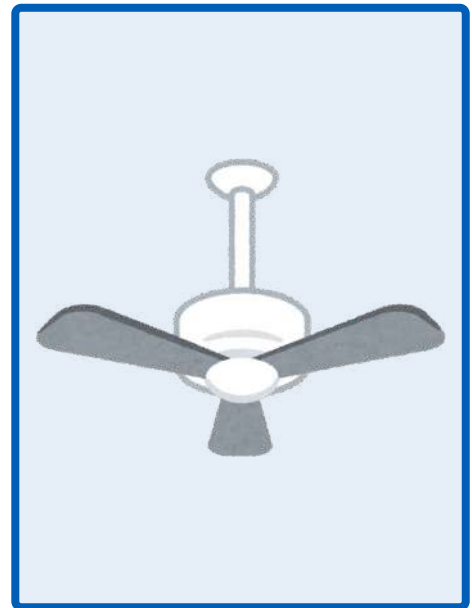


## Cuisine

Try to keep an open mind for meals, there may be new food to try. It is unlikely that your host will eat traditional food everyday. If you have any dietary requirements, we will inform your hosts but please remind them or contact us if you feel like the food isn't to your requirement. In Spain, the main meal is at lunch time so evening meals are often lighter.

## No aircon

Most hosts will **not** have air conditioning as standard even in hot countries. Please be aware of how to keep your room cool, close shutters/curtains during the heat of the day etc so you can maintain a good temperature in your room. See our Guide to Hot Weather in your Babel account for further information. Also, ask your host for tips on how to keep cool.



## Shorter showers

Water shortage can be a big problem in mainland Europe especially during heatwaves. It is more common to have shorter showers or shower less frequently.

## Plumbing

In some places, it is necessary to be frugal with toilet paper or not flush it down the toilet since it could block the pipes - please respect this.



# Always remember to...

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## Be Open

There may be some traditions or customs that are different abroad. Try to keep an open mind about things that may be different to what you're used to.



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## Be Respectful

Respect is sometimes shown differently abroad. In particular, consider your language choice when talking to people of different ages.



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## Be Polite

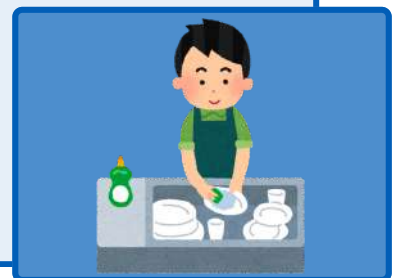
Host accommodation is not a hotel; you will be staying with a host in their home. Please be mindful of noise at night and inform your host in advance if you do not intend to eat at home on any occasion.



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## Be Tidy

You will be staying in someone's house, please keep your things tidy and clean up after yourself. If you accidentally break anything, please tell your host immediately.



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## Enjoy yourself

Embrace cultural differences and experience new things!

