

Staying in a homestay

Homestays are an excellent way of immersing yourself in the English language and culture as well as providing a fantastic opportunity to practise your conversation skills outside the classroom. Many of our students remain in close contact with their homestay families for years after they leave and find staying with a host family in London is a valuable and exciting experience.

YOUR HOSTS	<p>All our homestays are carefully chosen and inspected and should be of a high standard. However, please remember that a homestay does not always consist of a couple with children. Often retired couples or single ladies make excellent hosts, with more time to spend with their guests than busy parents! The most important thing is that they treat you as a full member of the household and spend time with you during meal times and should chat in the evenings and provide a welcoming atmosphere.</p> <p>The maximum number of students in any family is usually 3 and you will be the only student in the house speaking your language unless specifically requested. English will normally be the language of communication in the homestay.</p>
FIRST DAY	On arrival an adult will welcome you to the homestay and will give you all the required information you need.
YOUR ROOM	Your room should have a bed (and bed linen, blankets etc.), table, chair, adequate lighting and heating and storage space for your belongings. If there is no desk in the room there should be another room where you can work quietly. You should not have to share a room unless you have requested a twin room with a friend or partner. Your host should change the bed linen each week and clean the room for you but please keep the room tidy and offer to help with the cleaning.
THE BATHROOM	You should have free access to the bathroom and should be allowed to take a bath or shower every day, but please try to arrange in advance with your hosts when the best times are for this. If washing and toilet facilities are in the same room, try not to shower when everyone else is getting ready first thing in the morning.
MEALS	<p>If you have requested half board accommodation your host will provide you with a continental breakfast and an evening meal. In England this is generally between 6 and 7pm but your host will confirm the time with you. If you are going to miss a meal or if you have any special dietary needs or dislikes, please let the enrolments team know well in advance so they can let the family know before you arrive. English food may be different to what you are used to. It may be necessary for you to adapt to the new flavours or the way the food is cooked.</p> <p>If you have booked bed and breakfast accommodation you will have breakfast only. Please bear in mind students are not normally allowed to use the kitchen.</p>
LAUNDRY	Your hosts will make sure that your sheets and towels are washed about once a week but they are under no obligation to do your personal laundry for you. However, many hosts are willing to do this (sometimes at an extra charge). Please talk to your host about this. Alternatively, they will be able to show you the nearest launderette.
KEYS	Some hosts will provide you with your own house keys which are your responsibility so please look after them carefully. Alternatively, you may just be given a key at certain times- please ask your host about this. Make sure that you know how to lock the door and if you are going to be late back at night let your family know so that they do not accidentally lock you out!
PETS	Many homestays will have a family pet – usually a cat or a dog but they could also have a rabbit, hamster or similar! It is quite normal for the pets to live in the home so if you are not used to this or do not like the idea then please let us know in advance and we can find a homestay with no pets.

It is very important to remember that your hosts are not expected to provide the facilities of a hotel, you are a guest in their homes and should respect their wishes.