



Erasmus+

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How to Survive in a Host Family - Your Ultimate Guide

(Ok, that sounds kinda apocalyptic, so let me assure you: It's quite nice!)

Hey! I suppose you're reading this, because you are either interested in volunteering or you are going to start a project in the near future. And maybe you chose or will choose a project, which involves living in a host family!

So in that case, let me be your noble guide and advisor! Though every family is different, there are some things you can keep in mind and practice to make your own life and that of your hosting family more intimate and personal. That can range from hanging up the laundry all the way to deep late night talks with the parents. I've had it all and would like to share a bit of that. Compressed into handy advices! But enough foreword, let us jump right into it!

Number 1: Keep Communicating!

So, in my opinion, this is the most valuable and important thing you can do, while living with a host family. Sharing your experiences, both past and present ones, as well as plans for the future is something very important, when living together with new people. Through that, they get to know you as person and learn about your character.

So take the initiative and start sharing! Your host family will be glad and return the favor by doing the same! That's how a good communication base is built between you and them. And of course, this base needs further construction! If both of you stop talking frequently, you might lose the foundation of trust you built beforehand. Relationships require time and dedication. And if you want to keep them, you have to invest in them.

Additionally, it's not just about sharing your own experiences. If you talk too much about yourself, people don't get a chance, to share their own life story. So keep in mind to ask questions! Be curious and interested! Try to find similarities and common interests. I'll assure you, you'll find something!

Number 2: Build a Wall!

(Well, maybe I should phrase that a bit differently. This one sounds kinda racist...)

Make sure to keep your own private space! If you want to have a place for resting and being alone, you need to keep and protect it.

Listening, sharing and being interested can be quite exhausting, especially in the start. All these new experiences, people and places can be quite overwhelming! So it's going to be no surprise that you will want to be alone sometimes. Just to process all the stuff that has happened and to think a bit for yourself. And no one is going to be angry with you for that!

But sometimes people don't realize that you might need your Me-Time. And this you need to show them! So if you feel like you want some time off, just say it. Make it clear and do it! Nothing scary about it.

Number 3: Be the Helping Hand!

Isn't it nice to help other people? You will feel good about yourself, and others will know that they can count on you.

This is exactly how it should work in a good relationship between your host family and you.

Luckily, this doesn't mean that you should clean the whole house every two days! It just implies that you could lend a hand from time to time, to support your family. That can be emptying the dishwasher, walking the dogs, doing the laundry and many other small things. Just find something, that fits for you and that is enjoyable. Your family will be very thankful!

If you're not used to doing housework and have no experience, see it as a new challenge. This is just another step towards independent living! It prepares you for your life later on.

And remember: Your host family is making a great effort to offer you a decent stay, so giving something back to them is a good way to thank them!

Number 4: Do Some Fun Stuff!

We shouldn't forget about a main aspect of your stay: Having fun! You're visiting this new environment not only to work in your project, but also to experience cool stuff! And who could be a better source for nice opportunities than your host family? Ok, people in your age maybe... But when it comes to local knowledge and experience, your family is the way to go. Maybe you want to take a biking tour with them? Or do you want to visit the nearest swimming hall? How about ice cream? They know the good places.

Of course you're not supposed to spend every single moment with your host family. But once in a while, you could consider to do an activity together with them. They will appreciate it!

And don't feel shy to ask them! In the end, host families just wanna have fun. Just like you and everyone else!

Number 5: Don't Take this Guide to Seriously!

When it comes to people, everybody is different. And so is your host family. And mine! So don't focus too much on this guide, but more on your own vision. Taking your own approach is quite important!

This guide is just a collection of experiences from me, reflected into some advices. But no one can say, if these tips actually work for you! So meet your family, get to know them and then decide if this here was helpful in any way.

I wish you the best of luck and a lot of new impressions! Save travels!



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