

# HOMESTAYS ABROAD

THE INS & OUTS OF LIVING WITH A HOST FAMILY

# INTRODUCTION TO HOMESTAYS

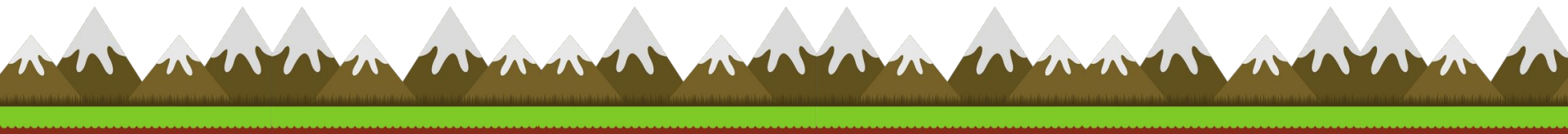
Homestay (noun) | \ 'hōm- , stā\ : a stay at a residence by a traveler and *especially* by a visiting foreign student who is hosted by a local family

Homestays are a fantastic way to immerse yourself in your host country's culture, as they offer a myriad of opportunities to maneuver cultural and social differences between you and your hosts -- often in a new language!

While living with a local family can be uniquely enriching and result in lifelong friendships, the experience isn't without challenges



**It's best to know what to expect up front to make the most of your stay!**



# PROS & CONS

What might I like or dislike about my homestay?





# HOMESTAY PROS

## Cultural Immersion

Homestays can provide a more authentic cultural experience: a window into the realities of daily life in your host country

## Language Skills

Opportunity to use local language with native speakers in a low-stakes setting. It's practice for exploring your city & meeting new people

## Your Home Away from Home

Homestay family can serve as a support system & excellent resource in times of need. You open yourself to lifelong friendships & connections

SOURCE: [GO OVERSEAS\\*](#)



## HOMESTAY PROS CONT.

### **Budget-Friendly**

Often a cheaper option since they're inclusive of meals, laundry, and sometimes even light cleaning services

### **Stretch Yourself**

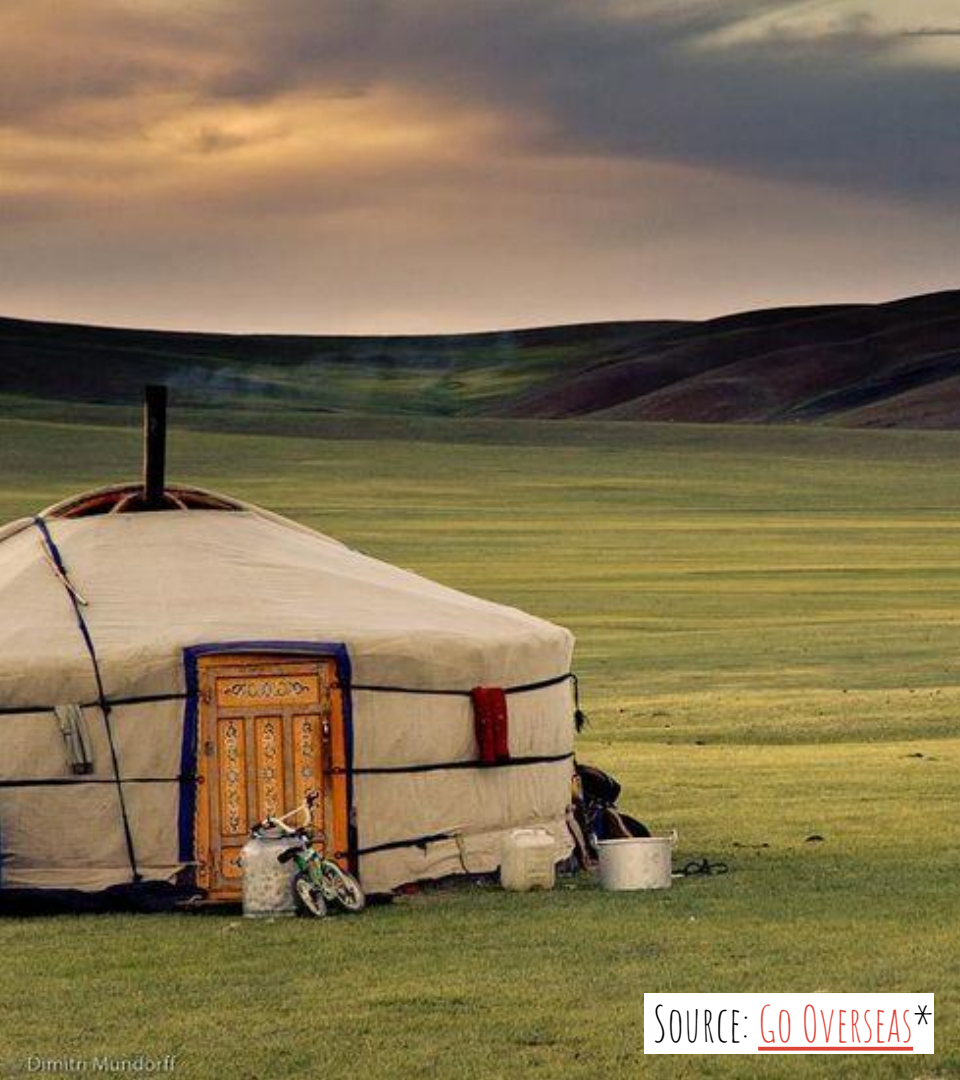
There's no growth without challenge. Trying new foods, humbling yourself learning a new language, getting up close & personal: it's how we learn & develop ourselves

SOURCE: [GO OVERSEAS\\*](#)



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KRISTIN SCHUMACHER-SMITH & FAMILY // CHILE



# HOMESTAY CONS

## Feeling Dependent

You can feel awkward depending on your hosts; might not be the space to be 100% yourself; feeling like “a burden” to your hosts

## Rules

You must respect rules/expectations set by hosts: can include curfew, rules re: guests, checking in, etc. -- not ideal for everyone

## Lack of Allies?

Potential for isolation from other travelers; location can be an issue; missing out on connections with other foreigners

SOURCE: [GO OVERSEAS\\*](#)



# HOMESTAY CONS CONT.

## **Lack of Privacy**

Different cultures, different views on privacy; your host family's concept of personal space may differ from your own; set up of home

## **Conflicting Personalities**

Misunderstandings not uncommon when crossing cultures & language barriers; important to be conscientious of different interpretations of behavior

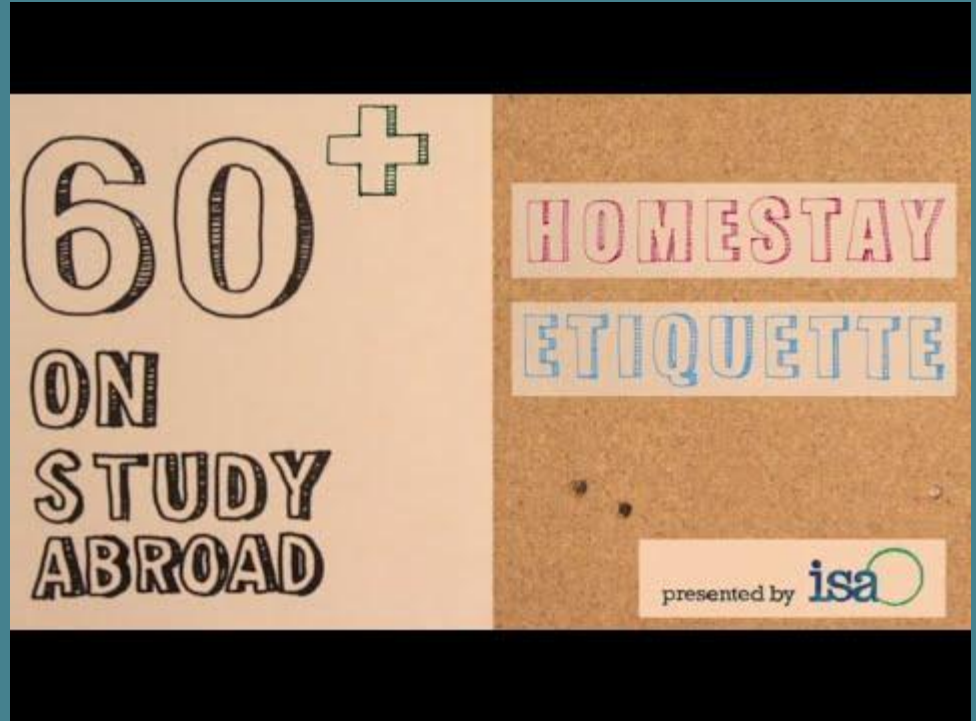


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KELLY HUGHES & HOST PARENTS // SOUTH AFRICA

# DOS & DON'TS

I'm sold on a homestay! What should I know about being a respectful guest?



SOURCE: ISA (VIDEO) // GO OVERSEAS (TEXT)\*

# Do...

**Make your needs known:** Communicate your needs with your organization and family so they're best equipped to meet your needs

**Join your family for meals regularly:** Not only will this be a great way to enjoy home-made local cuisine, you'll also get to enjoy the conversations that meals inspire

**Talk about the "rules" early on:** Communication is key! Be sure all parties are clear on expectations. Ask: Is there a curfew? When are meals served? What are your family's preferences for knowing your whereabouts?

**Bring a thoughtful gift:** Bringing a gift that's representative of you or your culture is a great ice-breaker and sets the foundation for a warm friendship

**Be respectful of customs:** Be cognizant of how traditional and religious the local culture is. You'll likely be seen as an extension of your host family, meaning your behavior around town may reflect on them as well

**Communicate with your organization:** Reach out to let them know when you're persistently displeased or to brag about how great your family is! Your organization likely has a protocol in place to resolve misunderstandings between hosts and guests

# DON'T...

**Be messy:** Make an effort to keep your space as tidy as possible. Respect your host's home even more than you would your own -- it will go a long way in maintaining a positive relationship

**Be a diva:** Do your best to distinguish between poor hospitality & poor circumstances. If you're uncomfortable, kindly communicate it to your hosts without whining or gossiping

**Be a pushover:** Sometimes negative feedback is necessary. In rare cases, hosts might not be doing enough to fulfill their part of the agreement -- politely let your voice be heard

**Be embarrassed:** When practicing a language, you're bound to make mistakes. Talk to your family: graciously let them laugh and correct you when you inevitably make mistakes

**Forget to make other friends:** Remember that there's an entire new community out there to meet. Despite how much you love your family, try not to rely on them for *all* your socializing

**Lose Touch:** Upon leaving, make an effort to say thanks to your family for letting you into their home. Do so in a way that's uniquely you & don't forget to keep in touch: it's never been easier with modern technology. Plus, you never know when you might be back...





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MARIO ADKINS & HIS HOST PARENTS // EL SALVADOR



# HOMESTAY SPOTLIGHT

A Study Abroad Homestay in Morocco  
with CIEE



SOURCE: CIEE STUDY ABROAD (VIDEO) \*

"THERE IS NO GROWTH IN A  
COMFORT ZONE AND THERE  
IS NO COMFORT IN A  
GROWTH ZONE."



# LEARN MORE!

The Abroad Guide: ["What to Expect from A Homestay Experience"](#)

GoAbroad: ["How to Make the Most of Your Homestay Abroad"](#)

IES Abroad: ["Homestays vs. Dorms, How to Pick the Right One for You!"](#)

StudyAbroad.com: ["Apartment vs. Homestay? Pros & Cons"](#)

Travel Life: ["Homestays Abroad: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"](#)

