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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### ***1) What are the benefits of homestay?***

For international students, a homestay is the most affordable and rewarding housing option. The benefits go beyond the safety and convenience of home living to include lasting friendships with Americans. The benefits for English language development and American cultural exposure are excellent. Serious students and scholars benefit from the comfort of home living in an atmosphere well suited for learning.

### ***2) How can I sign up for a homestay?***

Due to the popularity of the homestay program, it is important to [apply](#) as early as possible. The simple online Application must be accompanied by a \$285.00 Placement Fee. When both the Application and Placement Fee have been submitted, you will receive an official Homestay Confirmation Email containing host family information and complete arrival and orientation instructions.

Homestays are assigned on a first-come first-served basis. In cases where homestay space is not available, applicants will be notified and their Placement Fee will be refunded in full.

### ***3) What is the Homestay Confirmation Email?***

This is very important. When we have received your completed Application and Placement Fee, we will send you a Homestay Confirmation Email containing: 1) your host family description, 2) airport pick-up information, 3) Orientation to Homestay details, and 4) the calculated Homestay Fee for your first full session, course, or rotation. You must read the email carefully, reply to let us know your arrival details, and print it for your records. It is a good idea to bring the printed email with you as you travel.

### ***4) What does the Placement Fee cover?***

The Placement Fee covers the cost of processing applications and payments, carefully matching students with a host family, orienting students, recruiting and maintaining homestay hosts and homes, and all administrative overhead.

### ***5) What does the Homestay Fee include?***

The Homestay Fee includes a fully furnished private bedroom with linens; a shared bathroom; access to laundry facilities, microwave, and refrigerator; internet access; and bedroom air conditioning from May 1 through September 30. It also includes daily, self-serve continental breakfast and three family-style dinners each week to be enjoyed with the host family. The Homestay Fee is all-inclusive. There are no additional taxes, utilities, or fees.

### ***6) What is Orientation to Homestay?***

On move-in day, you will first come to the Right at Home Homestay office for a brief Orientation to Homestay. During orientation, you will have a chance to meet the Homestay Coordinator, pay your Homestay Fee, present your valid passport with visa, and sign a [Homestay Agreement](#). Your host will then come to the office to pick you up with your luggage and take you to your homestay. Before accessing your host's Internet, you will need to sign the [Internet Agreement Form](#).

When you arrive in your homestay, your host will introduce you to the family, give you a house key, explain the household rules, and share all personal contact information (i.e. street address; home, cell, and work phone numbers; email addresses, etc.). Your host will help you with transportation on your first day of class.

### ***7) Can married couples live in a homestay?***

Yes! Married couples find homestay a perfect way to balance a sense of home with opportunities to practice English and make American friends. Couples are assigned a large private room with a double bed and two desks. Both husband and wife must complete their own Application and submit it with a combined Placement Fee of \$435.00. For couples, the Homestay Fee is paid directly to the host at a rate of \$52.00 per night.

### ***8) How are host families chosen?***

Each homestay is different. Some host families include a husband, a wife, and children; some are single professionals; and some are retired couples. Each host brings their own unique approach to welcoming students into their home lives.

All host families are chosen for their warm hospitality, gracious homes, and close proximity to the universities and programs we serve. Each host family must submit an extensive application with criminal record checks and personal references, and be interviewed in their home before they can be accepted as hosts.

### ***9) May I choose my own host family?***

No. We take care to know each host very well, so we are best suited to make placement decisions. Based on the information you provide on your Application, you will be placed with the best possible host to suit your individual desires and needs.

### ***10) How is my move-in date determined?***

Your move-in date is two days before the enrollment start date for your university session, course, or rotation. Exceptions may apply during national holidays. Please be considerate in planning your flight arrival time for a reasonable hour.

### ***11) How is my move-out date determined?***

Your move-out date is one day after the enrollment end date for your university session, course, or rotation.

### ***12) What will the food be like?***

Homestay students eat their host's normal food. It is difficult to define typical American food since the United States is made up of so many different cultures. However, you will enjoy a much wider variety of fresh, healthful foods than simply American "fast food." Also, most Americans enjoy food from around the world and look forward to trying the food from your country.

***13) If I have restrictions on what I can eat, can I have a homestay?***

Almost always, yes. Simply state your needs on your Application and we will discuss it with your host when we assign you to that home. For special requests, see the [Guidelines for Accommodating Dietary Restrictions](#).

***14) How can I eat my non-homestay meals?***

At your request, your host will provide space to store your personal food for lunches and non-homestay dinners. You may also use a designated microwave to heat food when the host is not serving a family-style dinner. In addition, the Philadelphia area is full of delightful, inexpensive restaurants and food trucks of every variety designed for busy students. You may eat in one of the fabulous area restaurants or use a take-out service and enjoy your meal in the host family kitchen.

***15) Who does the student's laundry and cleaning?***

Homestay students are responsible for their own laundry and cleaning. Most American families do not have domestic help. Therefore, it is normal for everyone in the home to help with some of the light housework as asked (e.g. washing dishes, taking out the trash, cleaning the shared bathroom, or sweeping after dinner). Homestay students are responsible for keeping themselves, their rooms, and their laundry clean.

***16) What about telephone use?***

Most students communicate via email, Skype, and cell phone. For local calls in the 215 area code only, you may use the house phone. If you need to make a long distance call, you must arrange a convenient time with your host and use a calling card.

***17) May I use my host's computers or printers?***

No. Hosts' computer and printer equipment is personal property and cannot be used by homestay students. Your room will have internet access and most students bring a computer of their own. If you do not have your own computer or printer, you should ask your university or academic program about gaining access to a computer lab on campus.

***18) What about transportation?***

The [SEPTA](#) is Philadelphia's public transportation system, offering many options for smooth commuting both inside and out of Philadelphia. Your homestay will be convenient to a bus, train, or trolley for use during the day. After dark, you should travel with a friend, use a taxi, or use one of the many campus transportation services available through your university or program. Students should take advantage of free bus loops, door-to-door shuttles, and walking escort services provided by their universities.

Your host will carefully teach you the best transportation route from your homestay to your classes by taking you there on the first day. Your host is not responsible for providing transportation for you.

***19) Will there be other international students in my homestay?***

Frequently, there is more than one international student living in a homestay. This can be a wonderful way to make a good friend. Remember: all homestays are English-only zones. Out of respect for everyone learning English, if two students speak the same native language, they will not be permitted to use that language in the homestay.

***20) May I have contact with my host family before move-in day?***

For security reasons, it is the policy of Right at Home Homestay not to share personal identifying information about our hosts until after we have had a chance to meet you in person. On move-in day, your host will provide you with personal contact information when you arrive in their home: street address; home, cell, and work phone numbers; email addresses, etc. If you wish to send a message to your host family, you can use the Contact Us tab on this website to send a message to your host. We will be happy to forward it for you.

***21) May I send my luggage ahead of me?***

No. We can not accept luggage ahead of the student's arrival.

***22) May I move into my homestay early?***

No. Your homestay room will not become available until your move-in date (two days before the enrollment start date for your university session, course, or rotation). If you wish to come to Philadelphia earlier than your move-in date, you can arrange a convenient Hotel or beautiful Bed & Breakfast Inn right here in University City.

- [Hilton Inn At Penn](#) - 3600 Sansom Street
- [Sheraton University City](#) - 3549 Chestnut Street
- [Cornerstone Bed & Breakfast](#) - 3300 Baring Street
- [The Gables Bed & Breakfast](#) - 4520 Chester Avenue
- [Spruce Hill Manor](#) - 3709 Baring Street

***23) May I have personal airport pick-up?***

Yes. Personal airport pick-up is available through Friendly Express Limo, Inc. by sending an email to [bookaride@yahoo.com](mailto:bookaride@yahoo.com). Detailed instructions for arranging this clean, safe, and professional service directly to the Right at Home Homestay office will be included in the Homestay Confirmation Email.

***24) How will I get to my homestay on move-in day?***

On move-in day, your first stop will be the Right at Home Homestay office where we will get a chance to warmly welcome you. Here, you will have a brief Orientation to Homestay, sign a simple [Homestay Agreement](#), present your valid passport with visa, and pay your Homestay Fee for your first full session, course, or rotation. Then, your host family will come to the office to also sign the Homestay Agreement, pick you up, and take you with your luggage to their home. There, they will introduce you to the whole family -- and your new homestay.

***25) How can I pay for my homestay?***

Payment for your first four week session (\$868 = \$31.00 x 28 nights) is due at Orientation to Homestay on your move-in day. You may pay in the form of a postal money order, traveler's checks or American dollars (no credit cards or personal checks, please). There are no refunds. If you wish to stay in your homestay longer, tell your host after two weeks so your room can be saved for you. After your first four week session, you will pay your host directly (\$868.00) at the beginning of each 28 night cycle.

***26) How long is the homestay commitment?***

There is no minimum commitment, but homestays lasting fewer than four weeks are subject to availability. The Homestay Fee for the first four week session is due on move- in day. There are no refunds. Many students stay longer than one session and live in their homestay the entire time. If you wish to move out of homestay at the end of your first four week session, please tell your host and the Homestay Coordinator after two weeks so we can re-assign your room. You may not remain in homestay after the end of your academic program. Your move-out date is one day after your enrollment end date.

***27) What if I want to change my homestay?***

This almost never happens. If there are unresolved conflicts between a student and host, the Homestay Coordinator can be included to help reach a peaceable agreement. If the student or host has willfully ignored the [Homestay Agreement](#) which both parties signed on move-in day, the other party may be permitted to dissolve it at the offender's expense.

***28) What if I want to remain in my homestay longer than my first full session, course, or rotation?***

If you follow the Homestay Agreement, your homestay is guaranteed for four weeks (28 nights). If you are still enrolled in your university and would like to stay in your homestay after four weeks, you may request an extension from your host. With the approval of the Homestay Coordinator, you may reserve your homestay by paying for the next four weeks. You may request extensions to remain in your homestay as long as you are enrolled in your university or program.

***29) I'm planning to be away during my stay. What happens then?***

Just as with any university housing or rental, room reservations are from move-in day to move-out day consecutively. If you choose not to eat meals or not to sleep in your room, you will need to continue paying according to schedule. Students who move out of homestay in good standing may return to the homestay program by applying through the website and paying the placement fee again. See our [Non-Use Policy](#) for more details.

***30) How will I get to the airport on move-out day?***

At least three days before your flight, you will need to arrange for airport transportation. Hosts can recommend a taxi or if you prefer, Friendly Express Limo. All transportation originates at your host family's address. The offices of Right at Home are not available for group pickup. To arrange service with Friendly Express Limo, please send an email to [bookaride@yahoo.com](mailto:bookaride@yahoo.com).

***31) What are my responsibilities on move-out day?***

On move-out day, you will need to 1) complete a [Homestay Evaluation Form](#) and give it to your host or the Homestay Coordinator, 2) clean your bedroom and wash your linens, and 3) turn in your house key. Of course, you will want to save time to take one last photo of the hosts who have become your dear friends!