



MS HOMESTAYS GUIDELINES

How to Thrive with a Canadian Host Family and Enjoy the Adventure

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Welcome to Canada and to your new home away from home! Living with a Canadian host family is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in Canadian culture, improve your language skills, and build lifelong connections. To make the most of this experience, here are some friendly guidelines and insights into Canadian customs and expectations.

1. GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HOST FAMILY

- **Build Connections:** Spend time with your host family especially during your first days. Get to know their names, routines, and interests.
- **Every Family is Different:** Every family, like yours, has its own lifestyle and routines. Ask your host family about their daily life, such as what a normal day looks like, to better understand how you can integrate into their routine.
- **Communication is Key:** Always communicate openly. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to ask your host family directly.

2. RESPECTING CANADIAN CUSTOMS

- **Shoes Off:** In most Canadian homes, it's customary to remove your shoes when entering. Your hosts will likely provide slippers or let you know what they prefer.
- **Personal Space:** Canadians value privacy. Knock before entering a room and avoid overstepping personal boundaries.
- **Timeliness:** Punctuality is important. Be on time for meals, outings, or any scheduled plans.

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3. DAILY LIFE WITH YOUR HOST FAMILY

- **Meal Times:** Canadian families typically have three meals a day:
 - Breakfast is often light (toast, cereal, or fruit).
 - Lunch is usually simple (sandwiches, fruit, or leftovers).
 - Dinner is the main meal, shared together in the evening.
- **Help Out:** Offer to help with simple chores like setting the table or washing dishes. It's a great way to bond and show appreciation.
- **Laundry:** You're responsible for your personal laundry. Ask your host to show you how to use the washing machine and dryer.
- **Check-Ins:** Always inform them if you'll be late or have plans to go out.

4. CULTURAL INSIGHTS

- **Diversity:** Canada is multicultural. Your host family may come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, which adds to the richness of your experience.
- **Politeness:** Canadians are known for being polite. Saying "please," "thank you," and "sorry" goes a long way.
- **Direct Communication:** Canadians are not shy to say no or express if something bothers them. Don't take it personally; it's better to have open and clear communication. Feel free to politely and openly share what you want and what you don't like.
- **Inclusivity:** Families will likely invite you to join activities. Feel free to participate, but if there are costs involved (e.g., tickets or meals), you may be expected to pay your share.

5. PERSONAL BELIEFS AND RESPECT

- **Religion:** You are not required to participate in religious practices, but be respectful if your host family observes any.
- **Respect Differences:** Be open to learning about your host's culture and traditions, and share yours as well. Mutual respect creates a stronger bond.

6. STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY

- **Health Insurance:** Ensure you have valid health insurance for your stay. Bring medications you take regularly and any basic remedies for common illnesses.
- **Emergency Numbers:** The emergency number in Canada is 911. For non-urgent situations, your host family or MS Homestays will guide you.

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7. USING SHARED SPACES

- **Bathroom Etiquette:** Limit your time in the bathroom to 10-15 minutes, especially during busy times. Leave it clean and dry for the next person.
- **Kitchen Use:** Ask permission before using the kitchen, and avoid cooking elaborate meals at odd hours.
- **Living Room:** Treat shared spaces respectfully and tidy up after yourself.

8. INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Internet Usage:** Use the internet responsibly and avoid excessive streaming or downloading without your host family's consent.
- **Quiet Hours:** Keep noise to a minimum during late hours to respect your host family's rest.

9. BUILDING A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

- **Be Open-Minded:** Living in a new culture can be challenging, but staying open-minded will help you adapt quickly.
- **Share Your Culture:** Your host family will enjoy learning about your country. Share your favorite recipes, traditions, or music.
- **Express Gratitude:** A simple "thank you" shows appreciation for their efforts to make you feel at home.

We hope you make the most of your time with your Canadian host family. By embracing cultural differences, communicating openly, and participating actively in family life, you'll create lasting memories and meaningful connections. Welcome to Canada, and enjoy this incredible journey!

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