



Banff Education Centre



HOMESTAY:

- *Your homestay family can be families with or without children, single or older married couples or single people.*
- *You are a part of the family and not a guest.*
- *Homestay family will prepare dinner and usually the whole family will eat together*
- *Homestay family will provide food for you to make your own breakfast and lunch*
- *If you have a problem, talk with your host family. Canadians are happy to hear your feelings. Don't be afraid to tell them directly if you are having some problem in their home. For some cultures it is not polite to talk about your problems. In Canada, it is **NOT** polite to not talk about your problems.*
- *If you can't speak with your homestay family, please write out a homestay complaint form and we will bring up your points with your homestay family and help you to resolve the problem.*
- *All complaints must be either e-mailed to the school or written on the forms provided. We will not be able to address any issues until we receive a written explanation of any situation.*
- *When a number of people live together it is almost certain that there will be differences. Please remember that your Canadian family are also a number of individuals that will have different traditions, opinions, cultural habits and that is why you have chosen to have a homestay experience.*

Notes for successful a Homestay experience:

A homestay is a great opportunity for you to experience life in a Canadian family and improve your language skills at the same time. The key to having a successful homestay is to try to become like a member of the family as much as possible.

- *Spend as much time with the host family as you can. Rather than watch TV in your room, join your host family in the family room.*
- *Get involved in family life by helping out with the children, pets or light housework or by volunteering to prepare a meal sometime.*
- *Whenever possible join the family when they go out, even for such things as grocery shopping or to visit friends and relatives. Of course, you'll make your own friends, but try not to spend all your time with them and away from your host family. In some cases your friends will be welcome to join in your host family's activities.*
- *If you have questions about homework or just any general questions about English or Canadian cultures, just ask! While your host family members are probably not English teachers, they will always be able to help you with areas such as pronunciation and common usage. They are also interested in sharing their culture, language, and experiences with you.*
- *Don't wait to be asked to join the conversation. It is not considered rude in Canada for everyone to join in and give their opinion during a group discussion. If you are shy and don't attempt to participate in family conversations, especially during dinner time or other family time, you will be losing a great chance to improve your ability to speak English. While one-on-one communication is easiest, joining in a family discussion will bring the greatest improvement in your ability to communicate.*
- *Please advise your host family of your plans **BEFORE** you go away. If your plans change while you are away, please call and let them know as soon as possible. Remember that your host family is your "Family in Canada" so treat them with respect.*

You can say, “No Thank you”.

Canadians, in general, take great pride in being able to decide how and where they will fill their time. Canadian culture allows for what is known as “empowerment.” This means that we are all responsible for what we do (or don’t do), where we go (or don’t go), and whom we spend our time with (or don’t.) If a Canadian is invited to a party but they are tired or if they don’t want to go, they say, “No thank you.” Canadians expect the same of visitors from other countries to do the same. If you are invited to go somewhere or to participate in an activity and you say, “Yes”, Canadians will assume that you want to go or do the activity. In Canada, you will be expected to be honest about what you want and what you need. This is “empowerment”.

Homestay families will want to include you in their daily activities. It is important to participate with your host family but it is also important to keep your priorities. In Canada you can say, “No thank you”, without offending your Host Family. If you have to do homework or if you don’t want to participate in a family activity you can tell your Host Family and they will understand. If you would like to join the Family for the activity but you don’t have time because of your schoolwork, ask your family if you would be able to join them at another time. They may be disappointed that you will not be able to join them but they will understand and not be offended. It is important to remember that your priorities are important and your Host Family will respect them. You are a member of your Host Family and it is important to contribute to your family when you are able.

Religion and religious activities can sometimes be a concern for Homestay students and families. If your Host Family belongs to a particular religion and they invite you to join them in their religious activities, you can say, “No, thank you”, if you are not comfortable with the activity. Host Families understand that there may be religious differences between themselves and their guests. It is important to remember that you must respect your Host Family’s religion and not ridicule their beliefs. In Canada, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone because of race or religion.

Arrival Time:

If you are not taking our Airport shuttle, please make sure you inform your homestay family the exact time that you plan to arrive. If you do not tell them, they may not be there when you arrive or they may end up waiting for the whole weekend or for many hours.

Meals:

Typical Breakfast Foods: toast, cereal, eggs, bacon, muffins, coffee, juice, etc.

During the week, many Canadians have a simple breakfast that may consist only of juice, toast, and coffee. In many families, each family member prepares his/her own breakfast. Ask your family what their breakfast routine is and where you can find the food if you have to prepare breakfast yourself. Be sure to ask for instructions on how to use any appliances you are unfamiliar with. On weekends, a larger breakfast is often eaten late and is called “brunch”.

Typical Lunch Foods: sandwiches, leftovers, fruit, cookies, muffins, etc.

Most Canadians, prepare their own lunch either the night before or in the morning just before they go to work or school. A typical lunch is a sandwich, a piece of fruit, cookies or treat, and a drink, which is put in a bag and carried to work or school. Some popular sandwiches are peanut butter & jam, ham & cheese, egg salad, and tomato and cheese. Again, use your English to find out where the available food for lunch is kept if you are going to make it yourself.

Typical Dinner Foods: meat, vegetables, pasta, salad, rice, potatoes, stir fry.

Traditionally, dinner is the main meal of the day. All family members are generally expected to be present and to assist in some way in either the preparation, serving, or clean-up of this meal. (Often every member of the family will take part in some way in the dinner preparation, table preparation, or clean-up.) Most families have established a set tie for this meal and family members planning to be late or absent will make sure that the cook is informed. Please be sure to let the person preparing the meal know if you plan to be late or absent for a meal.

Schedules:

Please respect the schedules of the homestay family. If they go to bed early, please do not play music, watch loud TV, or have people over. If you are out late, please be very quiet coming back in the house. You will be given a key to the house so that you can enter. Do not lend this to anyone or lose this key. If you lose the key, you may need to pay for a replacement or for the homestay family to change the locks.

Bathroom and Shower:

If you are not sure how to use the shower (or anything in the house), please ask the family. Please do not spend hours in the bathroom as other people may also need to use it. Showers are usually around 10 minutes. Do not spend more than 15 minutes in a shower.

Guests:

Guests are generally not allowed. Do NOT bring a (new) boyfriend or girlfriend to sleep in your room. If something like this happens, you will be asked to leave the homestay without refund. If you would like to have a friend or family member also stay at the homestay, please speak to the school and we will see if this is possible and what extra fees will need to be paid.

Smoking:

Generally it is NOT okay to smoke in someone's house. Most people who smoke must smoke outside.

Telephone:

Please ask permission before using the telephone. Local phone calls are free. Please buy a long distance phone card (available at the grocery store) if you wish to call someone outside of Canada. It is fine to receive phone calls but make sure phone calls do not come before 7:30am or after 9pm.

Internet:

Most families have internet. Many also have wireless. If your family doesn't have internet, it is best to use the computers that are available free of charge or the free wireless internet at the school.

Language:

Please only speak English with your homestay family. This will help your English skills greatly.

Accommodation Cancellation:

Homestay – Before Arrival: If written cancellation notice is given 12 weeks or more before beginning of Homestay, all money will be refunded including Homestay Placement Fee. If written cancellation notice is given less than 12 weeks before the beginning of homestay, all money will be refunded except for the Homestay Placement Fee.

Homestay - After Arrival: The student should inform BEC in writing 3 weeks before the intended check-out date if he/she decides to terminate the agreed Homestay period. A \$100 change fee will be placed on Homestay changes when at least 3 weeks notice is given. If the notification period is less than 3 weeks, then in addition to the non-refundable notification period, a \$150 cancellation fee will apply.

After starting any accommodation placement, written notice of cancellation is to be submitted to the school 3 weeks before the intended departure date. A refund will be given only for fees paid beyond the 3 week period and is calculated from the date the notification is received.

Damages:

If you damage something in the house, please tell the family and apologize. It is much better than them finding it later. Please make sure you have liability insurance. You are responsible for any damages. The school can not be held responsible for any damages you may cause.

Problems:

Please correct any problems as soon as they happen. Many problems may turn into bigger problems if they are not addressed. At BEC we have a written policy that is in place so that we can fully understand and file any problems.

Please remember that we are here to help you enjoy your experience.