

GREATER CINCINNATI WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL HOME STAY HOSTS OVERNIGHT

THANK YOU for being part of Greater Cincinnati World Affairs Council's mission to promote understanding between Greater Cincinnatians and the world. The following guidelines are offered to help both new and current volunteers develop a successful hosting experience.

Hosting allows Cincinnatians to make friends from around the world, experience different and exciting cultures, as well as hearing first-hand what is happening around the world. The visitors, in turn, take a true perspective of the United States back to their native countries, in addition to fond memories of generous and hospitable Cincinnatians.

Who are the visitors?

The visitors are leaders from around the world. Most are invited here by the U.S. government and travel under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of State. Others are sponsored by a variety of public and private organizations.

Do we treat international visitors in any special way?

No. Be yourself. Remember, your guest is probably tired! He or she may feel the need for some privacy amidst so much activity, or may need some quiet time after struggling all day to express him or herself in a foreign language.

Upon arriving, your guest will appreciate a tour of your home. In his or her bedroom, demonstrate how any special features, such as an alarm clock or electric blanket, work. In the bathroom, explain sink or shower fixtures, the location of lights, wall switches, and door locks. Explain operation of the television. In the kitchen, show where food and snacks are stored, and how to operate commonly used appliances. Explain a family routine, especially the use of bathrooms if they are shared. Discuss meal times and laundry with your guest. If you wish, you may direct them to a nearby Laundromat or instruct them in the usage of your washer/dryer.

What foods should I serve at mealtimes?

Usually, it is best to serve your favorite American food and observe visitors' dietary constraints, if known. If unknown, it is best to avoid any form of pork because Muslims, Jews, and vegetarians cannot eat it. A good safety measure is to prepare one more vegetable dish than you would normally. Many visitors who do not drink alcohol appreciate fruit juices (rather than pop) as an alternative.

Where is Burkina Faso?

Greater Cincinnati World Affairs Council has background information on almost every country. Ask for it if you are unfamiliar with the home country of a visitor. Avoid the

stereotype of American ignorance about other countries by preparing in advance. Use a current atlas and go as far as your curiosity takes you.

What if my guest's English is not fluent?

Greater Cincinnati World Affairs Council will try to find hosts who speak the visitor's language. Since this is not always possible, the use of a dictionary or phrase book may be helpful. Even if the visitor's English is good, **speak slowly, clearly, in normal volume, and avoid slang.**

What should we talk about?

Encourage your visitors to talk about themselves, their countries, their families, and their ideas. Explain our customs and our cultural and social values, but remember that we are not a sales agency for the United States. They have much to tell; we have much to learn. You will have plenty of opportunities to talk with your guest in your home. If your experience is typical, you will be surprised by how similar we all are and will feel very comfortable in your communications. The most important thing to remember is just to relax and be yourself. The best communication will be gained through your natural hospitality and your desire to know your visitor as a person. That is how lasting connections are built.

Should we mention previous international visitors?

Avoid talking too much about them or showing gifts you received from them. Your guest will not want to feel that he/she is "one of many," but is "special."

Two watchwords are **Sensitivity** and **Respect** - sensitivity to another person's feelings and respect for differences. Hosting an international visitor is a blind date. Our council knows both of you, but you don't know each other. We hope you will enjoy getting acquainted!