

HOMESTAY HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



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Homestay is a great experience through which you can learn about Japanese language, culture and customs through daily conversation and communication with your host family. At times you may be at a loss about your new life with host family who speak another language and live in a different lifestyle. However, this is surely a once in a lifetime experience for both of you and host family to get to know each other's language and culture. We hope you find this handbook useful for you to make your homestay life fun and memorable.

If the university determines that this rulebook has been violated, you may be asked to leave your host family and will therefore have to find your next accommodation on your own.

A. Before choosing homestay

(1) Homestay is great for those who...

- ✧ Want to enjoy cultural difference through life with host family
- ✧ Want to learn Japanese language in a daily setting
- ✧ Love to interact with people and actively get involved with it
- ✧ Have a positive way of thinking and are highly adaptable

(2) Who are host family?

- ✧ Live in a house, or an apartment
- ✧ With or without (small) children
- ✧ Able to speak English or cannot speak it much

There may be more than one KGU exchange student in one family, and in that case, you will be notified beforehand. This does not apply if your host family does not inform KGU of them having another student from another university or an institution at their house.

(3) How is my host family chosen?

We always do our best to find a host family that matches your requests. Also, as we hope your stay with your host family will be an enjoyable as well as comfortable one, we take your health-related information including your dietary needs into account, and inform your prospective host family of such information. Then, your prospective host family evaluate your requests to make a final decision on whether accommodating you at their home and becoming your host family. For this reason, note that the more selective you get your

preferences, the more difficult it is for us to find a host family for you. Also note that we may not always find a host family that completely suits your wishes, and under certain conditions, we may not be able to assign you a host family. In such cases, we will recommend you a dormitory as an alternative.

(4) How long does it take to KGU from homestay? How can I get to KGU?

Many homestays can be reached in about an hour from the university, and some have a bus and train to get to the university (It is common in Japan that it takes about an hour to go to school.) Although transportation expense to KGU will be paid by you, we are unable to take your travel preferences into account. (e.g. shorter commuting time, accessibility to KGU, etc.)

(5) About the Homestay accommodation fee

One semester (Fall)	About 380,000 JPY
One semester (Spring)	About 420,000 JPY
Full year (Spring-Fall)	About 800,000 JPY
Full year (Fall-Spring)	About 850,000 JPY

B. What should I prepare before going to Japan?

(1) Pre-arranged items

Private Room

- ✧ Bedding (bed or futon)
- ✧ Closet or storage space
- ✧ Desk and chair
- ✧ Air conditioner
- ✧ Wi-Fi



Meal

- ✧ Weekdays: Breakfast and dinner
- ✧ Weekends and National Holidays: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

(2) Self-arranged items

- ✧ Clothes
- ✧ Towels
- ✧ Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, facial wash, soap, shampoo, etc.)
- ✧ Items other than listed in (1) Pre-arranged items

C. What is not included in the Homestay accommodation fee?

① Lunch on weekdays

You are to make or buy your own lunch on weekdays including during long-term breaks.

② Outing Money

The cost of going out with the host family is not included in the homestay fee.

③ General Living costs

Please pay for your own phone bills, dry cleaning and other daily necessities, etc. If you need to borrow your host family's phone, please buy a pre-paid international/domestic phone card at a convenience store and use it to make the call.

D. Let your homestay life begin!

(1) Greetings is the basics of daily communication

On your first day, your host family comes to KGU to pick you up. You must be excited but nervous at the same time. The same is true for the host family. Begin with smile and say hello from yourself. The first impression is very important!

Some families may be a bit late for coming to meet you for work reasons etc. But please be a little patient as we sure that they will definitely come pick you up.

(2) Once you arrive at your homestay

Leave your baggage and ask your host family to guide you through the house. They will explain their house rules that they want you to follow. It is advisable that you take notes not to forget.

① House inspection tour

Ask your host family to guide you through the house that you are going to stay. Please check

with your host family with the followings;

- ✧ Where is my private room located?
- ✧ Where is the electrical switch?
- ✧ How can I use air-conditioner?
- ✧ Where is the outlet?
- ✧ Where is the bathroom and toilet?
- ✧ Where is the kitchen and dining room?
- ✧ Are there any rooms that I should refrain from entering?

② Check and follow house rules

Now that you are going to be a member of the family, follow the house rules. Write down the rules and always check back until you are fully accustomed to them. Don't hesitate to ask your host family if any questions or anything unclear come up.

For example, it is better to check on the followings;

Going out / coming home

- ✧ May I borrow the house key?
- ✧ Is there a curfew?
- ✧ By what time and how should I let you know that I come home late / stay outside?

Meals

- ✧ What time do we have breakfast, lunch and dinner?
- ✧ By what time and how should I let you know that I don't eat at home? (By e-mail? Short message?)
- ✧ If I come home late, may I heat up my meal and eat at home?
- ✧ I don't eat XXXX and XXXX. (your dietary needs and requests)

When you want to invite your family and friends

- ✧ May I invite my family and friends?
- ✧ May I do so while you (your host family) are away from home?

Restroom / bathroom / toilet

- ✧ Where can I put my items such as toothbrush, facial wash and towel?
- ✧ Where can I put my shampoo and soap?
- ✧ What time may I use bathroom / shower?
- ✧ How long may I use bathroom / shower?
- ✧ Where should I put my sanitary items? (Female)

Laundry

- ✧ Should I do my laundry on my own, or may I ask you to do it with the family's laundry?
- ✧ How often may I do the laundry?

- ◇ Where can I put my clothes that need to be washed?
- ◇ How can I dry my laundry? Where can I hang them dry?

Living room

- ◇ May I watch TV?

Kitchen

- ◇ May I cook sometimes?
- ◇ May I use the fridge? May I put my food or ingredients in your fridge? If so, where should I store them in the fridge?
- ◇ May I drink something in the fridge without asking you?

Beside these, it is encouraged for you to list up the question you want to ask your host family in advance for smoother communication.

E. Tips on how to communicate with your host family

(1) Greetings are the basics of daily communication

- ◇ In the morning: 「おはようございます」 (“Ohayo Gozaimasu” meaning good morning)
- ◇ When going out: 「行ってきます」 (“Ittekimasu” meaning I’m leaving)
- ◇ When coming home: 「ただいま」 (“Tadaima” meaning I’m home)
- ◇ When going to bed: 「おやすみなさい」 (“Oyasuminasai” meaning good night)

(2) Meal time

In Japan, people say 「いただきます」 (“Itadakimasu”) before eating their meal and 「ごちそうさま」 (“Gochisousama”) after eating. Those are the phrases to express gratitude to the person who cooks and prepares the meal for you.

Considering which menu would make you happy, your host family prepares your meal. So please give it a try at least once. There may be a food that you don’t eat in your home country, but you may be able to eat it prepared with Japanese seasoning. Take a little bit on your plate first and taste it. If you think it’s good, then take more of it and enjoy.

Let’s ask your host family about manners when eating in Japan. Ask them how to hold chopsticks and rice bowls, or how to eat noodles, etc. and try them in a real setting. It would be a valuable experience that cannot be done in your home country.

(3) Help daily house chores

You are not a guest in your homestay. In order to experience real Japanese lifestyle, you choose to stay with host family. As a family member, you are encouraged, but not forced, to help daily house chores.

For example,

- ◇ Cleaning
- ◇ Clean up the table after meal
- ◇ Bring your dishes to the kitchen sink
- ◇ Hang dry your laundry / washed clothes

Let's help even a small matter if your time allows. This may be a chance to enrich your communication with your host family and make you feel more like a family member.

(4) Spend some time in living room

There are some people who like to stay in their room outside of meal time. But you choose to stay with host family, why don't you spend some time in the living room with the family to watch TV and have a chat? Your host family will surely be happy to talk with you. It is definitely a great chance to improve your Japanese skill.

(5) Share your schedule by making calendar

Make your calendar and write your schedule such as class timetable, school events and trip with your friends. Share it with your host family by placing it somewhere your host family can easily check so that they know your schedule like whether you eat at home or not.

(6) When going out with your host family

Your host family may ask you to go out with them. If you have time, please do join them. Please note that incurring cost such as transportation expense or entrance fee should be covered by you. If your host family covers your expense, please don't forget to say 「ありがとう」 ("Arigatou" meaning thank you).

F. Be mindful of...

(1) Electric bill in Japan is expensive!!

Electricity bill in Japan is very expensive, thus there are a number of homes try their best to save it. Especially air-conditioner consumes lots of energy and costs a bill. When using air-conditioner, please be careful of setting temperature. Also, if it is hot, wear light clothes, and if it is cold, wear a lot of clothes in the house to adjust the temperature with clothes as much as possible. When you are out of your room, make sure to turn off the air-conditioner as well as your room light.

(2) Save water

Saving water is another important habit when living in Japan. When taking shower to wash your body, don't keep the water running. You can drink tap water in Japan.

(3) When throwing away your garbage

Please make sure to check with your host family on how to dispose garbage. Rules of separating and disposing garbage in Japan are very strict.

(4) Dry your futon



People hang their futon outside to dry because the humidity is very high in Japan and mold may grow. Ask your host family how to dry your futon. Futon that is dried in the daytime smells like sun and are comfortable to sleep in!

(5) Clean and keep your room tidy



You rent your room from your host family. Please clean your room frequently and keep it tidy. Check with your host family where to place the cleaning tools and how to use them. At the time you return home from homestay, if you clean up and make your room even more beautiful than when you moved-in, you are already a Japanese!

(6) Clean yourself too

Take a shower or a bath every day to keep yourself clean!

(7) Keep your valuables at your own risk

We strongly encourage you to keep your valuables such as passport and cash in the locked places like your suitcase. If you lose something in your room, you may doubt your host family, causing awkward atmosphere within your homestay. In case of emergency, your host family may enter your room without your permission. To live comfortably, don't put your valuables in reach of other people.

(8) When breaking or damaging something in your homestay

If you damage the floor, wall or any piece of furniture in your homestay, tell your host family right away and apologize. It is very important for you to be honest and tell the truth to the family. Also, please report it to CIEC when necessary.

(9) When sick

Going to see a doctor when you are sick as it could be infectious. Wear a mask when around your host family so they do not get sick too.

(10) About time management

- ✧ Follow the curfew, preferred shower time limit, etc. of your host family.
- ✧ Let your host family know when you go out, go on a trip, what time you're coming home (or not coming home) every time.

(11) Having friends

- ✧ If you would like to invite your friend over to your host family's house, please make sure to ask your host family every time in advance.
- ✧ Do not bring friends of the opposite sex into your room.
- ✧ If your friends and family come to Japan for a visit, please have them stay in a hotel or other similar facilities.

(1 2) Large purchase

Please let your host family know ahead of time if you will purchase a bicycle, or something large

(1 3) When uploading photos with your host family onto social media

Please always obtain permission from your host family when you wish to upload the photos with the family or your room to any social media.

G. Important

(1) When your host family is away

During your stay, your host family might have to leave the house for a few days. In this case, please discuss with your host family regarding where you will stay.

<If you are to stay at your homestay>

- Make sure to discuss what should you do regarding meals.
- Be careful not to cause any damage to the house (fire, water damage and such)
- Don't forget to close all entrance door and balcony

<If you are to stay at a KGU dorm>

- Depending on availability, you may be able to stay at a KGU dorm.

(Limited availability. Contact CIEC as soon as possible to enquire)

★You will have to cook for yourself and at your own expense.

- Your host family will not receive compensation for the period as your accommodation fee will be used to cover your dormitory fee.

(2) Eating out with friends

When eating out with friends, you will pay for your own meal. Your host family is under no obligation to give you money for your meal.

However, if they do, don't forget to thank them.

(3) Refund of accommodation fee

There will no refund of accommodation fee if you move-out early.

H. When you don't get along well with your host family

You are away from home and here in Japan, live with your host family. During your stay, there must be a lot of things that don't work well in the way you think, or you don't know what to do. You may be frustrated and stressed out, and have a negative impression toward your host family. If this is the case, we would suggest you to try the followings.

- Step 1) Talk to your host family about what you think a problem or trouble, and share your honest feelings with them. Most occurrences of students not getting along with their host family are caused by lack of communications. You may feel a language barrier, but it is important for you to show them that you really want to communicate with them. Your host family will surely try their best to understand you.
- Step 2) If you think you cannot solve the problem by doing Step 1, please consult CIEC staff. In some cases, we intervene and talk with your host family.

I. Closing

In the beginning of your homestay, you are still nervous but have lots of expectations. At first you feel that things may work easier than you expected. However, as time passes, you may be tired and feel stressed about the cultural and lifestyle differences. On such an occasion, let's remember why you chose homestay. After a while, you get used to the life in homestay and you will surely have a lot of fun. If you feel distressed or disappointed, come back and read this handbook again.

Each host family has their own lifestyle, habit and set of rules. It is nonsense to compare your host family to your friends'. Look brighter side of your host family and always be grateful for them accepting you as a family member.

Click on the below pictures and have a look at our alumni homestay participants' voices!

The host family experience at KGU! (Deedee, France)



The host family experience at KGU! (Marcello, Italy)



International students at KGU meet their host families for the first time!

