

Homestay

Remember:

- You are a guest in someone's home, not at a hotel. You will need to repeat the customs and restrictions of your host family.
- You are no longer in Japan. People do things differently in different countries. Keep an open mind.
- Communicate your desires, needs, and difficulties. You will need to be more assertive in your communication than you would be in Japan. Your hosts are not mind-readers and may not have the experience to guess what your needs and expectations are.
- It is likely that your hosts will give you much more freedom and independence than you might expect. They probably will not "take care of you" the way that a Japanese host family might. It's not being cold; it's respecting your autonomy. You are now living in another culture.
- Don't be afraid to ask for information or clarification. If you're not sure, ASK.

But:

Don't hesitate to talk with the person or agency in charge of the homestay if something doesn't "feel right." Examples: insufficient food, lack of respect for your privacy, unusual requests to help with chores (excessive babysitting, hard physical labor), unsanitary conditions, insufficient heat or cooling, or unreasonable restrictions on your activity. Talk with others and compare experiences. If something is wrong, LET THE AUTHORITIES KNOW. Most homestay families are warm and gracious and want to create a good experience for their guests. Some homestay hosts are not god people. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable or dangerous situation, get out.

Useful links:

Homestay Web	http://www.homestayweb.com/
Avoiding scams	http://www.homestayweb.com/scams.html
World Hostel Database Hostel Traveler	http://www.homestayweb.com/
Trip Advisor	http://www.tripadvisor.com/

- What kind of problems might you encounter on a homestay? (Think hard.)
- What would you do to solve those problems?
- What is the English you'll need to know to solve or get help with those problems?

House rules

Emergency numbers

Meal schedules, food between meals

Curfew, coming and going

Phone / Internet / TV / other facilities (pool, sauna, etc.)

Laundry

Pets, children

Household tasks & chores

Noise

Bath & toilet (water usage)

Guests

Alcohol and drugs

Family members' privacy

Lodger or part of the family?

Your rights

Safety

Privacy

Food

Comfort

Cleanliness

Freedom