



Homestay Handbook

Welcome to your home away from home!

Living with a local family is one of the most rewarding aspects of your study abroad experience. This guideline is designed to ensure a comfortable, safe, and harmonious living environment for both you and your Spanish hosts.

► YOUR ROOM & UPKEEP

- **Comfort & Amenities:** Every student is provided with a fully furnished double or single room, including a comfortable bed with sufficient linens.
- **Linens:** Your host will provide fresh sheets once a week.
- **Lighting:** Your room will be well-lit for reading and relaxing.
- **Study Space:** If your room does not have space for a desk, a designated quiet study area will be made available to you elsewhere in the home.
- **Tidiness:** We ask that you make your bed and keep your room tidy on a regular basis to show respect for the home.
- **Cleaning:** A deep clean of the room will be done once a week.

► THE BATHROOM

- **Supplies:** There will always be sufficient toilet paper provided. Students are responsible for purchasing their own personal toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc.).
- **Shower Schedule:** Please coordinate with your host family and roommate to find a shower time that works best for everyone.
- **Conservation & Courtesy:** To ensure hot water availability for everyone, please limit showers to 15 minutes per day. Additionally, out of respect for the household's sleep schedule, students are not allowed to shower between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

► LAUNDRY

- **Included Service:** You are entitled to two full loads of laundry per week. Your bed sheets and towels are washed separately and do not count toward your two loads.
- **Care for Your Clothes:** Please inform your host mother of any delicate items that need handwashing or colored garments that might run.
- **Ironing:** An iron and ironing board are available for your use. Students are responsible for their own handwashing and ironing.



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► ELECTRICITY

In Spain, energy conservation is a standard way of life and an important daily habit. We ask that you embrace this local norm and be mindful of your usage out of respect for your host family.

- **Lights:** Please help conserve energy by turning off the lights whenever you leave your room, even just for a moment.
- **Charging & Appliances:** You are absolutely welcome to charge your everyday devices and use personal appliances like hairdryers, electric shavers, and flat irons.
- **Climate Control:** Your room is equipped with a space heater for the winter and a fan for the summer.
- **Safety First:** For your own safety, never leave heaters or fans running when you are not in the room. Please be sure to keep space heaters away from your bedcovers and other fabrics.

► MEALS & KITCHEN ETIQUETTE

Sharing meals is the best way to bond with your host family and practice your Spanish. Here is what to expect from the local culinary routine:

- **The Rhythm:** Breakfast is light and quick (toast and coffee). Lunch is the main event (a large, hearty meal between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.). Dinner is a light wrap-up to the day, eaten late (around 9:30 p.m.).
- **Communication:** If you plan to skip a meal, eat out, or travel, give your host family plenty of notice so food isn't wasted.
- **Snacks & Cravings:** Your three daily meals are fully covered. If you want specific American comforts, sodas, or between-meal snacks, you can buy them yourself and store them in the family kitchen. (No food in the bedrooms, please!).
- **Campus Lunches:** Can't make it home for lunch? Ask your host for a packed lunch. The ICS has a fridge and microwave ready for you.
- **Adapting:** Embrace the local flavors! But if you run into a dish you absolutely dislike, a polite conversation with your host is all it takes.



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➤ STAYING CONNECTED

- **Cell Phones:** Please use your personal cell phone for all daily communication.
- **The House Landline:** Your host family's landline is available for you to receive emergency calls.
- **Time Zones:** Please remind your family and friends about the time difference! It is important to ensure the house phone does not ring and wake your host family in the middle of the night.

➤ GUESTS & VISITORS

Your homestay is your host's private residence, and we ask that you treat it with the same respect you would a relative's home.

- **Daytime Visitors:** If you want a friend or two to come over to study or hang out, simply ask your host for permission beforehand.
- **Meals:** Guests cannot join you for meals unless your host explicitly invites them.
- **Apartment Etiquette:** Please be mindful of neighbors and avoid hanging out in the building lobbies or stairwells, especially late at night.
- **Overnight Guests:** Please note that overnight guests are strictly prohibited. For safety and liability reasons, having an unauthorized guest sleep over is a serious violation of your housing agreement and is grounds for removal from ICS housing.

➤ COMMUNITY LIVING & RESPECT

Living with a host family means being part of a shared household. A little daily courtesy goes a long way!

- **Nighttime Noise:** Spanish apartments often share walls. When returning home late, please keep your voice down and avoid using the kitchen during sleeping hours.
- **Keys & Security:** You will be given your own set of house keys. Always double-check that the front door is securely closed behind you. (Note: If you lose your keys, you are responsible for the replacement cost).
- **Alcohol:** Drinking alcohol in your bedroom is strictly forbidden.
- **Housing Contracts:** Your housing is carefully arranged by us. You cannot move out or change housing on your own; any concerns or requested changes must be handled directly through the ICS administration.