



Homestay FAQs

1. **When will I receive my housing assignment?**

You will receive via email your housing assignment **one week** before the official program arrival day.

2. **Can I contact my host family?**

We encourage you to do so. You may introduce yourself via email once you receive your housing assignment. Note that some of our hosts may not be very technologically-savvy and may be slow to respond.

3. **When can I move in/when do I have to move out?**

Move-in and move-out dates are indicated in your acceptance letter from IAU. If you need to arrive earlier or leave later than those dates, *you should not expect to move into the homestay early, and it is your responsibility to arrange your own accommodations.*

4. **Will my host speak English?**

Efforts are made to place students with no French background in homestays where the host speaks a minimum of English, but *students should not expect their host to be fluent in English.* Your host will be French, so trying to speak French is part of the adventure of being abroad and stepping out of your comfort zone. If you are enrolled in a semester program you are required to take a French course, which facilitates communication with your host.

5. **Will I have my own bedroom?**

Some host families have single bedrooms for host students, but many have shared bedrooms. You can indicate your preferences in the housing questionnaire, though such preferences cannot be guaranteed.

6. **Will I have my own bathroom?**

Probably not. Apartments and houses in France are much smaller than in the U.S., so be prepared to share a bathroom with your host. You will be able to take a daily shower, respecting time constraints and the schedule of the rest of the household. The French make efforts to conserve water, so showers should not be longer than ten minutes.

7. **How far from the city will my host live?**

Most homestays are an average of a 25-minute walk from classes. If you live farther out you will receive free bus passes each month. Europeans are accustomed to walking long distances on a daily basis, so bring comfortable shoes.

8. **Will my homestay have wifi?**

Yes, although sometimes the connection may not be as strong in your bedroom as in the rest of the house.

9. **Should I bring a gift?**

Though not expected, many students present their host family with a small gift representing their home region.

10. **How do meals work?**

You will receive breakfast every day and six dinners per week. You must eat breakfast before 10h00 on weekdays

and before 11h00 on weekends. One evening per week, you should have dinner outside of the homestay. If you are unable to come to dinner one evening, you must give the host family at least 24hr notice.

11. What do I do for lunch?

You are responsible for your lunches, and should expect to eat them outside of the homestay.

12. What is a typical French meal?

Meals in France vary widely from family to family, and not all French people are gourmet chefs. A typical breakfast includes fruit, bread, jam, cereal, tea or coffee—no eggs or bacon. A dinner consists of an appetizer, a main course, and cheese or dessert/fruit. Try to be open-minded when trying new foods and dishes.

13. What if I have food restrictions?

You may indicate allergies in the housing questionnaire, and you will be matched with a host who can accommodate your allergy. Because very few hosts are willing to accommodate students with dietary restrictions (vegan, gluten or lactose-free), your other housing preferences will likely not be met. Many students with gluten and/or dairy intolerances in the U.S. find that they do not have issues with French gluten and dairy products.

14. Can I cook my own meals sometimes?

You will not have free access to use the host family's kitchen. You must ask your family which parts of the kitchen you are allowed to use. You can request a small space in the kitchen/refrigerator to store a few of your food items.

15. Will my host clean my room?

Your host is responsible for cleaning your room once per week, but it is your responsibility to keep your room organized and tidy. It can be seen as disrespectful to your host to have a messy room. You may not eat or drink (aside from water) in your bedroom.

16. How does laundry work?

You are allowed to do your personal laundry (or to have your host do it if they prefer that you do not use the washing machine) every week, once a week, in the host's washing machine.

17. Do I need to pack sheets/towels?

Your host will provide sheets and towels. You should bring a towel if you plan to take it to the beach or to hostels.

18. Do I have to follow any rules in the house?

Yes. As a guest in your host's home, you must follow their house rules. This may include, but is not limited to, wiping down surfaces in the bathroom after use, not showering after certain hours, clearing off table after meals, switching on/off lights during certain hours, etc.

19. Will I have my own set of keys?

Yes, but you must be very careful not to lose them. Some keys in France are very expensive to replace, and it is your responsibility to pay to replace lost keys.

20. Is there a curfew?

No. You may come home late at night as long as you are respectful and your entry does not awaken your hosts. In order not to worry the family, you must inform the host (perhaps by text message), if you intend to spend the night elsewhere. Likewise, your host must inform both you and IAU beforehand if he/she will be absent. Both students and families must inform IAU of any absences over 24 hours.

21. Can I have friends/family stay with me when they visit?

You may not invite guests over (during the day or overnight) without permission from your host. Hosts are not obliged to host anyone other than the student, including visiting friends and family. A list of suggested hotels for

guests can be found on the [Travel Logistics page](#) of our website.

22. How are students matched to hosts?

Placements are based on students' responses to the housing questionnaire and the hosts' profile. Specific needs such as a pet-free home due to allergies and medical needs will be given first priority in the matching process. Other preferences are taken into account but cannot be guaranteed. Housing coordinators make periodic visits to the homestays to be sure that the cleanliness and comfort meet IAU's standards.

23. What happens if I break something in the homestay?

You are responsible for repairing or replacing any damaged or destroyed object belonging to your host. IAU declines all responsibility. You must notably respect laws forbidding firearm possession and alcohol and drug consumption.

24. What is the weather like in Aix?

Aix has a typically Mediterranean climate; warmer in the summer around 80-90F and cooler in the winter around 40-50F. Homes in Aix are heated in the winter, but air conditioning is not typical in France or Europe at large.

IMPORTANT: In case of a conflict that you are not able to solve with your host family, you must contact the Housing Coordinator in order to try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. The most common source of problems is simple miscommunications, which the Housing Coordinator can help solve. Please note that changing host families is **not** the first step.