

# Zion International Programs



American Homestay  
Handbook

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## About ZIP

Established in 1986, Zion International Programs was created to facilitate recreational tours and exchanges between Japan and America. However, over the years the role of ZIP has expanded to that of consultant with expertise in the areas of Educational Programs, Sports Training Programs, Incentive/Technical Tours and International Event Programs for all Asian countries. ZIP is ideally located in the center of seven national parks, the most famous of which being The Grand Canyon. Millions of international visitors come to southern Utah each year to witness some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. With McCarran International Airport located in Las Vegas, Nevada only two hours away, it is very convenient to access St. George and all its surrounding beauty from any country in the world.



# Your Homestay Family

Welcome to Zion International's homestay program! Unless otherwise stated, your homestay includes a room, 3 meals a day, and transportation to and from school. We hope that you enjoy your experience with your homestay family, and that you use this special **opportunity** to practice and improve your English more. Homestay families in the USA come in all shapes and sizes. You might live with a couple, a family with children, a single parent with children, a single woman, a single man, or even in a house of adult roommates. Some may have light skin and some may have dark skin. Some might be young and some might be older. Some might have religious beliefs different than yours. Remember, the USA is a “melting pot” of different cultures. Some of our families live close to the school and some live many miles from the school. Each family we have is very different. Your homestay family will be different from your family at home. This does not mean one is better than another, just different. Things may be done very differently than in your home country. While you are living with your new family, you should learn to do things like they are done in the USA. Your family will provide support during your stay in the USA. They will be available for help with homework, light shopping needs, advice on cultural differences, friendship, and conversation. You have the opportunity **to develop** a lifetime relationship with your Host Families!



## Communication

Most Americans prefer direct, **face-to-face** communication. If you have a question, no matter how unusual, it is best to ask your homestay family. Do not be embarrassed. If your homestay family asks you a direct question, this is not to be taken as an insult. This should be a learning opportunity for both of you. If something is **offensive** to you, you should gently tell your homestay family. Talk with EACH member of the family EVERY DAY. Spend time communicating with your family. Stay at the dinner table after dinner to have conversations with them. They want to know about you, your country, your family, your dreams, and your life. This is one of the best ways to improve your English skills and build a lasting **relationship**. Ask questions, watch, listen, and learn to understand and do things in new ways. Communication and **patience** are important.

## Names

Ask your homestay family what names they want to be called. Many times, adults in the USA want you to call them by their first names because it feels more **comfortable** to them. Other adults might want to be called by a title like “professor”, “doctor”, “mister”, or “misses”.

# The American Lifestyle

Please remember that most Americans do not have **servants**. Most families work and go to school between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. This means that you may have to come to school early or stay at school late. This is normal. When your homestay family finally gets home, they will still have to clean, to cook, to **take care of** children, and to do many other things. Usually, everyone in the family helps with these things. Since you will be a part of the family, they will expect you to **do your part**. Please be considerate of your homestay family's time and do not expect them to be your servants. Servants are expensive in the USA. If you want someone to do things for you, you can hire our own maid for \$20 an hour.

Your homestay family is also not **obligated** to entertain you. If you are bored, please find ways to entertain yourself. Not every family will have all the entertainment options that you are **accustomed** to. You, yourself, should purchase any entertainment not already available to you. Please see the transportation section of this handbook about how to find a bus to take you around the city if you want to do something outside your home and don't have a car.



## Rules

Most families have rules. If the family has children, you may have to follow the same rules that the children have. It would not be **fair** for you to be able to do something that they are not allowed to do. Most families also have a curfew. If you have to be out later, please talk to or call your homestay before **curfew** time and let them know why and what time you will be home. This should not happen very often. Many families will not like it if you smoke or drink in their home. If you do smoke, you should smoke outside far from the house. If there are young children living in the home, please do not let them see you smoke. You also need to know that Utah has a law that does not allow smoking inside most public buildings. Please ask your host families about their house rules as soon as you arrive. It will be much easier to become part of the family if you follow the house rules.

# Your New Home

## Your Bedroom

You should have your own room unless you have agreed to share a room with another student. You should have a bed, storage area for your clothes, and a table or desk for studying. Please ask your homestay before you **decorate** your room. Please do not stay in your room all the time with the door shut. If you do this, your homestay family may think that you don't like them.

It is your **responsibility** to keep your room clean. This means vacuuming, changing your bed sheets, dusting, etc. Ask your host family what they expect of you when you arrive in their home. Please try to spend time together with the family when you have the opportunity.

## Laundry

You will be responsible for doing your own laundry. If you do not know how, please ask your homestay family to teach you. You can use your homestay family's laundry detergent and fabric softener. If there are already clothes in the washing machine or dryer, please remove them and place them in an empty laundry basket. You have clean sheets on your bed and are welcome to wash them or change them once a week. Again, please ask the host family what their **expectations** for the laundry room are before using the facility.



## The Bathroom

When using the bathroom, always close the door. If the door is already closed, knock to be sure that no one is using it. If you share a bathroom with other family members, please limit your bathroom time to 15 minutes in the morning. Take a shower or bath every day, use deodorant, and brush your teeth. You will need to buy your own toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, and soap. However, your homestay family should provide towels for you.

Clean up after yourself every day. Pick up your dirty clothes and hang up your wet towels to dry. Don't leave water on the bathroom counters or the floor. If you ruin the counters and floor with water, you may be asked to replace them. Don't leave the sink dirty with hair or toothpaste. It is okay to put toilet paper in the toilet. However, please do not put other items in the toilet. Men should be careful not to urinate on the toilet or on the floor and should clean any **accidents**. Women should place all female products in the trash (not in the toilet), wrapped in toilet paper. Please always flush the toilet.

It is part of your responsibility to share the job of keeping the bathroom clean. Jobs that your homestay family might request your help with are: cleaning the tub, cleaning the toilet, emptying the trash, and mopping or vacuuming the floor. If you have your own bathroom, it is entirely your responsibility to clean it once a week.

## The Living Room

The living room is a common room for the whole family. Please be **considerate** when watching television or listening to music in this room. Movies or television programs should be **age appropriate** for the whole family to watch. Please ask your homestay family what type of movies or television programs you can watch in their home. This is a great place to be to **socialize** with your host families. Being in this room instead of in your bedroom shows the family that you are **willing** to participate in family activities and are trying to be part of the family.



## The Kitchen

Since you are living with an American homestay family, you can expect to be eating American food. Most American families are busy and expect their homestay students to learn how to be more **independent** with their food.

Because families often have a busy schedule, meals may not be served at the same time every night. If you get hungry and eat alone or with friends before your family prepares supper for you, please let your family know so that they don't prepare more food for you. If you will not be coming home for a meal, please let your family know so that they do not wait for you. Please ask which foods are for snacking and which are for meals.

- **Breakfast**

While some homestay families will prepare and eat breakfast together, most families will show you what is available for breakfast and expect you to make it for yourself. A very common phrase you must learn is "**Help Yourself.**" This means that you can take what you need to eat from the kitchen **freely**. Breakfast in America is typically cereal, yogurt, fruit, oatmeal, and other quick meals. On the weekends, host families may make things such as French toast, pancakes, waffles and other bigger meals.

- **Lunch**

You may also be expected to make lunch for yourself. In some cases, the family may expect you to take **leftovers** from the evening meal for lunch the next day. This is normal. You will typically have lunch during your ZIP tours on the weekdays; however, Host Families are in charge of food on the weekends. Often, lunchtime is also on a "Help yourself" basis. If you do not know what you can take for lunch, please ask your homestay family.

- **Dinner**

Some homestay families prepare an evening meal that everyone eats together. Your homestay family may ask you to help with the meal by chopping vegetables or something else to help prepare for the meal. Host Families will always be **in charge** of dinner on a daily basis. You should always offer to help and help to clean up afterwards. This is a great opportunity to talk with your host family and get to know them. Please inform ZIP staff **immediately** if you have any questions or concerns about meals during your stay in the United States!

- **Customs and Manners**

Some families say a **prayer** before they eat. If this is your homestay family's **custom**, wait until after the prayer to start eating. In the USA, you should eat your food without slurping or making noise. Soup served in a bowl with a spoon should be eaten quietly with a spoon. You should chew with your mouth closed. Burping is considered to be **impolite**. Some families will discuss their day after or during the meal. It is polite to enter into this discussion and afterward to help with clearing the table and loading the dishwasher.

- **Cooking for yourself**

In some homestay families, you might sometimes (or always) be expected to cook the evening meal for yourself because the family is too busy and all the adults in the family take care of themselves. If this is your situation, please let the homestay family know what you like to eat so that you can have good food available to cook for yourself. If you eat alone, you should always put the dishes in the dishwasher or wash them by hand. Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink.

- **Disliking the food**

If your family provides food that you do not like, it is acceptable to tell them. You can say, "Thank you for the \_\_\_\_\_, but I really do not like it." You should work with your homestay family to find foods that you like. Remember that the food will not be like the food that you have in your country. Try to **adjust** to eating American food. You might ask your homestay family if you can teach them how to cook one of your country's foods. But don't be offended if they do not like them.

If you want types of food that the family does not normally eat, you need to buy those foods separately. There is no reduction of the homestay fee if you buy your own food unless you have a special agreement with your homestay family about this. If you eat at a restaurant with or without your homestay family, you should pay for your own meal. If you do not have the money to do this, you can ask to stay at home and make your own meal.





# Electronics

## The Television

Your homestay family may or may not have a television for you to use. You need to discuss the use of the television with your homestay family. Most families will ask that you not make any loud noises after 10:00 p.m. (or whenever their bedtime is). If your homestay family allows you to use the television, please be considerate of your homestay family. Other families may not allow people in their house (including you) to watch certain types of movies or television programs or play certain types of games. Please ask your homestay family about their rules.



## The Computer and Internet

Your homestay family may or may not have a computer or Internet and you may or may not be able to use it. If the family gives you **permission** to use it, never change the settings, add or remove programs, change the language, or change anything about it without first asking your homestay family. You should buy a USB drive to store your documents on: never store your documents on your homestay family's computer. Please follow your homestay family's rules about the amount of time that you can use the family's computer. It is a good idea to only use the computer for 30 minutes or less unless you have permission to use it longer for homework. Please never visit **pornographic** sites. Please do not download music or movies **illegally**.



## Personal Devices

We understand that keeping in touch with friends and family, and being able to enjoy your **personal time** is a very important part of your life. However, bringing these devices with you during your American experience can often ruin the experience not only for you, but your host families as well. We will not tell you to leave these items at home; however, you need to limit your use of them. **OVERUSE OF PERSONAL DEVICES CAN RUIN YOUR AMERICAN HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE!** You are here in America to learn English, communicate with your host family, and to experience American culture. None of these things can be accomplished if you are constantly using your phone alone in your room. Many host families do not allow use of personal devices after certain hours of the day. You **MUST** follow the rules of your host family in regard to personal devices **AT ALL TIMES!** Don't limit your **interaction** with your host families because you are too busy on your phone.



# Other Considerations

## Transportation

Your homestay family will provide transportation for you to and from school. Sometimes this means that a family member or a family friend will drive you to school. Or this might mean that the homestay family will purchase a bus pass for you to use to get to and/or from school. If you have planned to meet your homestay family at a certain time or place, please follow this plan or call your homestay family many hours before the scheduled time to ask to change the plans. If you buy your own car, walk to school, or have some other way to get to school, you can ask your



homestay family to reduce the amount of money that you pay every month. It is not your family's responsibility to provide transportation for you to anywhere except school. Some families might be willing to drive you somewhere sometimes, but they are not your chauffeurs. If you want your own chauffeur, you can rent one. Visit <https://www.sgcity.org/transportationandengineering/suntran> for bus schedules and prices. Other options are to walk, ride a bike, roller-blade, or ask friends for transportation.

## Friends

You should always ask permission to have friends over to the house before you invite them. Friends should not arrive after 10:00 p.m. Some homestay families have rules about who can visit you in your home. Most families will not allow you to invite a member of the opposite gender into your bedroom. If you are planning to go out with friends, it is very important that you communicate your plans to your homestay family as soon as possible. Your Host Family will likely be the ones who are driving you or your friends around so it is very important to let them know your plans, and to express your gratitude to them.

## Money



Your home is a safe place where you can relax and be together with your new family. However, you still need to protect your valuables regardless of your home! **DO NOT KEEP LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AT HOME OR AT SCHOOL!** If you do, please put it in a safe place such as a locked suitcase. If necessary, you can ask your host family to take you to the store to buy locks or a small safe. Most families do not allow their children to lock the doors to their rooms for many reasons, so keep your valuables in these safe places. Do not loan money to or borrow money from your homestay family.

# Culture Shock

All cultures are different. This does not mean one culture is better than another. Everyone experiences some form of “culture shock”. Culture Shock is experienced when you are suddenly introduced to an **unfamiliar** culture and way of life. This may cause you to feel **disorientated** and often anxious. However, if you know what to expect and how to react, you will be okay. Here is a guide to get through episodes of Culture Shock:

## Signs of Culture Shock

- Eating a lot or losing your **appetite**
- Sleeping all the time
- Having trouble sleeping
- Feeling **irritable** or critical
- **Withdrawing** from people
- Feelings of sadness and **loneliness**
- Headaches, pains, and allergies
- Small problems seem **overwhelming**
- Being **obsessed** with cleanliness
- Questioning decision to come
- **Idealizing** your own culture

## What TO do

- Realize that it is culture shock
- Remind yourself that it is normal
- Eat well, get enough sleep, get fresh air, and exercise
- Be friendly
- Talk to your homestay family
- Make new friends

## What NOT to do

- Feel sorry for yourself
- Call home all the time
- Spend a lot of time alone

## Culture Shock Stages

- **Honeymoon period**

In the beginning, you will be fascinated by everything new. You will be excited and happy about being in a new culture. You may still feel close to everything at home.

- **Culture shock**

You become **immersed** in new problems: housing, transportation, shopping, and language. Mental tiredness results from continuously straining to understand English. Headaches are common.

- **Initial adjustment**

Everyday activities such as housing and shopping are no longer major problems. Although you may not be fluent yet in English, you can start to express basic ideas and feelings in English.

- **Mental isolation**

When you've been away from your friends or family for a long time, you may feel lonely. You may begin to think that you cannot **express** yourself as well in English as in your native language. This can result in frustration or lack of confidence. Some students stay at this stage.

- **Acceptance and integration**

You are finally able to establish a routine. You have accepted the habits, customs, foods, and characteristics of the people in your new culture. You finally feel comfortable with your new friends, associates, and the English language.

# Conflict Resolution

At ZIP, we understand that being away from your home in a situation outside of your comfort zone can be stressful. We want to do all we can to make your experience in America safe, comfortable, fun, and new. **Conflict** between students and Host Families is not a rare occurrence: cultural and personal differences are always a source of potential conflict. While it may be uncomfortable, there is only one way to work through conflicts: **COMMUNICATION!** ZIP staff is ready to hear about anything that concerns you during your stay. More importantly, however, is that you **communicate your feelings to your host family!** Nothing can be changed if you **bottle up** all of your emotions inside and do not tell anyone. Often, your host family does not even realize that there is a problem. It is not rude to express your feelings to your host family! Please talk to your guide, teachers or host parents about your problems; you will have a much better experience during your stay in America if you do so.



## Host Family Meeting



Sometimes, communicating your feelings to host family by yourself can be very **intimidating**, especially if your English ability is a bit low. Before we initiate **ANY** host family changes, we will sit down with both you, and your host family **to discuss** issues that have come up in the home. This is a very normal, acceptable way to resolve conflict between students and their families, and you should not feel intimidated by the process. **Most issues we see are simply misunderstandings between the Host Family and the student!** What may seem like a major issue is nothing more than miscommunication. Please let us know about your problems as they arise so that we can be of assistance to you.

## Moving Out

We understand that after all we can do, some conflicts cannot be resolved. Except in emergency situations, please allow ZIP enough time to find another host family that will suit your needs. In the case of an emergency such as a serious medical issue, or the very unlikely case of being in an unsafe atmosphere, ZIP will facilitate a Host Family change as quickly as possible. In emergencies, ZIP may also choose to take you to a hotel until we can find a suitable host family. Moving students to a new home is not a common occurrence, but ZIP is ready to do so when necessary: your comfort is very important to us.

# Vocabulary Words

Accident: 過失(かしつ)	Honeymoon period: 全ては新しくて、豪快って期間	Opposite Sex: 異性(いせい)
Accustomed to: 慣れる	Idealize: 理想化をする(りそ うか)	Overuse: 使い過ぎ
Adjust:	Illegal: 違法(いほう)	Overwhelming: 圧倒的ア (あつとうてき)
Appetite: 食欲(しょくよく)	Immediately: 直ちに	Patience: 忍耐(にんたい)
Appropriate: 年相応(としそ うおう)	Immersed: 没頭する(ぼつと う)	Permission: 許可(きよか)
Bottle up: 陰にこもる	Impolite: 無礼(ぶれい)	Personal time: 個人な時間
Chauffeur: 運転手	In charge: 担当する(たんとう する)	Pornographic: ポルノグラ フィー
Comfortable: 気楽(きらく)	Independent: 主体的(しゅた いてき)	Prayer: 禱る
Conflict: 争い(あらそい)	Integration: 統合(とうごう)	Relationship: 関係(かんけ い)
Considerate: 思いやる	Interaction: 対話(たいわ)	Responsibility: 責任(せきに ん)
Curfew: 門限 (もんげん)	Intimidating: 脅かす(おびや かす)	Servants: 僕(しもべ)
Custom: 風習 (ふうしゅう)	Irritable: 癩症(かんしょう)	Socialize: 付き合い
Decorate: 飾る	Isolation: 自分を孤立させる	Take care of: お世話をする
Disorientated: 混乱している	Leftovers: 残り物(のこりも の)	To develop: 開ける
Do your part: 役割を果たす (やくりをはたす)	Loneliness: 孤独(こどく)	To discuss: 話し合う
Expectations: 期待 (きたい)	Manners: 礼儀(れいぎ)	To express: 述べる
Face-to-face: 差し向かい	Misunderstanding: 誤解(ご かい)	To provide: 与える
Fair: 公正(こうせい)	Obligated: 義務付け(ぎむ)	Unfamiliar: 耳新しい
Freely: 自由に	Obsessed: 強迫観念(きょう うはくかんねん)	Valuables: 貴重品(きちょう ひん)
Gratitude: 感謝(かんしゃ)	Offensive (To Offend): 怒ら せる	Willing: 辞さない
Help yourself: 好きなように どうぞ	Opportunity: 機会(きかい)	Withdrawing: 引き下がる

**Dear Students,**

We want you to know that we love our jobs! There is nothing better in the world than watching you all improve your English and learn about American Culture. Our mission at ZIP is to cultivate lasting relationships between our International Students and our American Homestay Families. We hope that you have had a great time spending time with your Host Family all while sharing your own culture with them, and being a part of their family. We hope that you had fun and made memories that will last you for the rest of your lives. Thank you for all of your hard work, and don't forget about us when you return to Japan!

**Thanks for everything,**

*Patrick Gass*

*Mike Thompson*

*Andrew Belmont*