

Hosting with Servas has many benefits. It can introduce you to new people and cultures, help build peace and understanding around the world through meaningful and diverse personal exchanges.

**Note:** *Although a 2-night stay is the preferred hosting period, Servas allows host the option to offer just 1 night accommodation as their preference. Day Hosts do not provide overnight hosting but can meet to converse over a meal or coffee or to explore together.*

## Servas hosts have the responsibility to:

- **Keep your host information up to date**, especially your email address, phone number, photo, and if applicable, WhatsApp number. Include in your profile your expectations, if any, regarding travelers having a Covid-19 vaccine or any other vaccine that you require for visitors. State upfront if you would like to see a vaccine card. Clearly describe physical accessibility and any dietary restrictions within the household. Be sure to complete the More Hosting Details field for these or other details.
- **Reply promptly to every request** — even if you are unable to host. Many travelers are waiting for your response before they contact others.
- **Provide a comfortable (but not necessarily luxurious) place to sleep** for the agreed upon time (one or two nights, as specified in your profile). Consider offering the use of laundry facilities. Provide instructions for appliances as applicable. Explain any nuances such as a sticky latch or a step that might be problematic.
- **Discuss with your guest ahead of time** what kind of accommodation, meals, length of stay etc. you can provide, especially if these will be limited in some way. Discussing any special needs or situations ahead of time could make a big difference to the quality of the visit.
- **Clearly explain any house rules** to your Servas guests (for instance shoes off, curfews, etc.). People from different cultures may have different expectations, so explain how you would like things done in your home.
- **Spend as much time with your guests** as is practical for you. Remember, an important goal of Servas is to learn about the country, culture, and life of your guests, while sharing information about your own way of life. Discussion of topics that promote peace and understanding worldwide are important elements of the Servas visit. Suggest activities your guests can do, especially when you are unavailable. Be considerate of guests who need time for rest or relaxation.
- **Notify the traveler immediately** if you are unable to host them after you have agreed to do so. Perhaps you can suggest another host in the area that the traveler might want to contact.
- **Welcome all travelers** regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation.



## Servas hosts have the right to:

- **Decline to host** at any time if it is not convenient, or if travelers provide insufficient notification. You are never required to host a guest who shows up without notice.
- **Decide the length of hosting** whether you will accept travelers as a day host, for one night or two, or invite travelers to stay longer.
- **Determine the level of hospitality** you provide. Many hosts provide meals, but you can determine whether you will provide meals, allow guests to use your kitchen, or provide no food service. You may provide transportation for sightseeing or to the airport, but are not required to.

- **Request** that travelers not remain in the house when you are away. Restrict your hosting to “male only” or “female only.”

**All hosts have the responsibility to help Servas thrive and grow as an organization that maintains true to its goals and values, and should:**

- **Accept only travelers** who provide you with a current and valid Letter of Introduction (LOI). If they don't send it with the initial contact, please request it. LOIs must have a valid eStamp with an expiration dated after the time of their visit.
- **Discuss situations with travelers** if they behave in ways that you think do not reflect appropriate Servas values. If the issue is not resolved, or they arrive without a current LOI, contact US Servas at [complaints@usservas.org](mailto:complaints@usservas.org).

### Day Host Responsibilities

Day Hosting with Servas offers many of the same benefits of traditional hosting and can be a wonderful option, especially for members who cannot accommodate overnight guests but would like to make new Servas friends. It can introduce you to new people and cultures, help build peace and understanding around the world and establish new and long-term friendships with people from many cultures.

**Servas Day Hosts have the responsibility to:**

- **Keep your host information up to date**, especially your email address, phone number and photo. Include the types of activities and the amount of time you might enjoy together.
- **Reply promptly to every request** — even if you are unable to host. Many travelers are waiting for your response before they contact others. Simply decline to host if it is not convenient, or if travelers provide insufficient notification.
- **Discuss with your guest ahead of time** sharing any anticipated costs, whether you can help with transportation or possibly how you might handle any luggage the traveler might have with them. Also discuss how you will recognize each other. Discussing any special needs or situations ahead of time, including any dietary or physical accessibility considerations, could make a big difference to the quality of the visit.
- **Spend as much time with your guests** as is practical for you. Remember, an important goal of Servas is to learn about the country, culture, and life of your guests, while sharing information about your own way of life. Discussion of topics that promote peace and understanding worldwide are important elements of the Servas visit.
- **Be on time** to meet your guest as agreed upon.
- **Notify the traveler immediately** if you are unable to host them after you have agreed to do so. Perhaps you can suggest another host in the area that the traveler might want to contact or suggest some of the places you were thinking of sharing with the traveler.
- **Welcome all travelers** regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Only meet with Servas travelers** who provide you with a current and valid Letter of Introduction (LOI). If they don't send it with the initial contact, please request it. LOIs must have a valid eStamp with an expiration dated after the time of their visit.
- **Discuss situations with travelers** if they behave in ways that you think do not reflect appropriate Servas values. If the issue is not resolved, or they arrive without a current LOI, contact US Servas at [complaints@usservas.org](mailto:complaints@usservas.org).



Over the past seventy plus years, our members around the world have enjoyed the art of hosting visitors in the Servas way. Communication is the key to a successful Servas experience. The goal of Servas is not inexpensive travel – Servas exists to bring together people from different cultures to promote peace and understanding and to learn how other people live.

**The system works remarkably well when travelers remember to do the following:**

- **Be sensitive and respectful** of your hosts' values and customs. Learn about the area where you will be visiting, use travel guidebooks and maps so you can be prepared. Consider contacting hosts outside major cities. Often, they are less inundated with requests than hosts near transportation hubs or major tourist destinations. Find by searching hosts who Want More Travelers.
- **Read the host listings carefully** to understand what the host is able to provide. Each request should be individualized ... no mass emails.
- **Contact hosts** well in advance and include a copy of your Letter of Introduction and the purpose of your travel.
- **Only call at reasonable hours**, usually between 9 am and 9 pm host's local time; do not expect hosts to return your long-distance or out-of-country call at their expense.
- **Consider noting your COVID vaccination status** when contacting prospective hosts even if not requested.
- **Confirm arrangements** before arriving and notify your hosts if your schedule or arrival time has changed and ask if you should eat before you arrive.
- **Arrive on time.** It is your responsibility for getting to the host's home or agreed upon meeting place... and getting there on time.
- **Present your Letter of Introduction (LOI)** in email requests for hosting and be prepared to present it when you first meet your host if you have not already done so in an email or even text. Your LOI is your Servas "passport." Note that some hosts like to keep a paper copy. Any travel companions (family members 18 and older or friends) must also be Servas members with their own valid LOI. Note, the LOI is the only place your emergency contact information is available to hosts.
- **Stays are for one or two nights** at the discretion of the host; the visit may be extended, but only by the host's express invitation.
- **Meals are not obligatory.** While some hosts will invite you to share meals with them, they are not obligated to do so. Communication regarding meals or use of the kitchen is important.
- **Hosts are not hotels** and accommodations can vary greatly. Be tolerant and open-minded regarding what the hosts can offer as this is central to Servas' culture. If you have particular needs, be sure to discuss them with your hosts ahead of time.
- **Spend time with your hosts.** This is the reason Servas exists. Some hosts will be able to show you around the area, but others will have less time or ability to do so. Don't expect a tour guide. You may also be able to find a Day Host in the area to spend some time with. If you are attending a conference or have other commitments and have little time to spend with your hosts, please use a hotel instead and consider contacting a Day Host for what time you can dedicate to making a meaningful connection.



- **Discuss with your host/day host ahead of time** how they will recognize you if meeting in public. Discuss any special dietary or physical needs that you yourself will need to accommodate and if you have any other commitments during or around your visit.
- **Be polite, gracious and helpful** – remembering that hosts are not hotels. Treat your hosts as friends. Follow the rules of the house, and accept whatever sleeping and eating arrangements that are offered.
- **Offer to help** whether it is cleaning up after a meal or helping with a chore that must be completed prior to taking an outing together. Servas means “we serve”. One host may not accept help, but the next may be grateful.
- **Address any costs in advance** of meals out or activities such as whether you are treating them as thanks or whether everyone will be paying their own way (typical). Plan to pay your own way for activities, meals, etc.
- **Use of the telephone, WI-FI or computer** is at your host’s invitation. Offer to pay for any costs. In some countries, data charges are quite high. Public libraries in the US offer the use of computers, often free.
- **Thank your hosts.** Provide some token of thanks whether it is something from home, fresh flowers or cooking a meal. Leave or send a note of thanks.
- **No Guarantees.** Servas membership does not guarantee anyone the “right” to free hospitality. Servas hosts, on the other hand, do have the right to refuse a homestay request... even without an explanation. Be polite and understanding when a host, who finds it inconvenient to receive you, might say “No.” Do not expect last-minute requests to be filled or maybe even responded to.
- **Your conduct should be above reproach.** In the unlikely event that a Servas member acts inappropriately, please report the incident quickly to [complaints@usservas.org](mailto:complaints@usservas.org).