

# UNITED STATES SERVAS TRAVELER RESPONSIBILITIES

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 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 guides, books and maps so you can be prepared. Consider contacting hosts outside major cities. WMT indicates *Wants more travelers*.

- Read the host listings carefully to understand what the host is able to offer and what each country expects of the visiting travelers. 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 between 9 am and 9 pm host's local time; do not expect hosts to return your long distance call at their expense.
- DO confirm arrangements before arriving and notify your hosts if your schedule or arrival time has changed and *if you should eat before you arrive*. Present your original Letter of Introduction to your hosts at the door when you arrive... before being asked. Any travel companions (18 and older) must have their own LOI.
- Servas stays are for one or two nights at the discretion of the host; the visit may be extended later at the host's express invitation.
- DO take seriously your responsibility for getting to the host's home... and getting there on time.
- 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.
- DO be polite and gracious, follow the rules of the house, and accept whatever sleeping and eating arrangements that are offered.
- Use of the telephone or computer is at your host's invitation. Offer to pay for any costs. Public libraries in the US offer the use of computers, often free. You may wish to consider buying a cell phone.
- DO consider carrying your own sheets or a sleep sack, in order to save hosts the trouble of doing extra laundry.
- DO spend time with your hosts— this is the central purpose of the visit! Make time to get involved and share your ideas. Offer to help — Servas means “we serve”. One host may not accept help, but the next may be grateful.
- REMEMBER TO send your hosts a thank you note, add them to your holiday list or friend them on Facebook so you can keep in touch. The best way to thank your hosts is to be a model guest.
- Your conduct should be above reproach. In the unlikely event that a Servas member acts inappropriately, please report the incident quickly to the US Servas office or, if not in the US, that country's National Secretary for action with a cc to the US Servas office at [info@usservas.org](mailto:info@usservas.org).
- 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, must say “No.”