Homestay Meal Guide



When you decide to host one of our students, you agree to provide a high quality and positive homestay experience. Our students are away from their family and friends living in a new country and everything will seem strange, including the food you provide and the mealtimes you follow.

As a homestay host, providing delicious and satisfying home-cooked meals using fresh ingredients, is a fantastic way to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere for your students and to make them feel more at home.

Some useful recommendations

We always seek feedback from our students whilst they are studying with us. We find that there are a few common themes that come up, so we are providing some top tips to help you when planning meals, keeping in mind dietary needs and preferences. We expect our hosts to plan meals with a strong emphasis on fresh, home-cooked goodness and prioritizing food safety.

Common Feedback	Recommendation
The food served is too spicy.	We strongly recommend sitting down and talking with your new student on arrival to find out their preferences. Remember, it is easy to add flavour at the table, but taking it away is impossible.
Too many ready meals which are small and not healthy.	A lot of our students come from countries where they are served meals cooked from scratch containing multiple fresh and sometimes home-grown ingredients. **We understand that people live very busy lives but fresh produce and home prepared meals are always best.** Please do not serve ready-made, frozen microwave meals every day. These often contain high levels of salt, sugar and fat and the portions may not be enough for energetic teenagers. If you do serve a ready meal now and then, please include fresh salad or vegetables to supplement the meal.
Served 'out of date' food	**We ask you do not use Olio or similar platforms as serving outdated food is not acceptable and must be avoided.** Students do not understand 'best before' or 'use by' labels or that things have been frozen. Freezing food with expiring dates may lead to complaints as they see an expired date and to them the food is a health hazard. **Always prioritise fresh ingredients** and please practice safe food handling techniques.

Suggested Meal Options

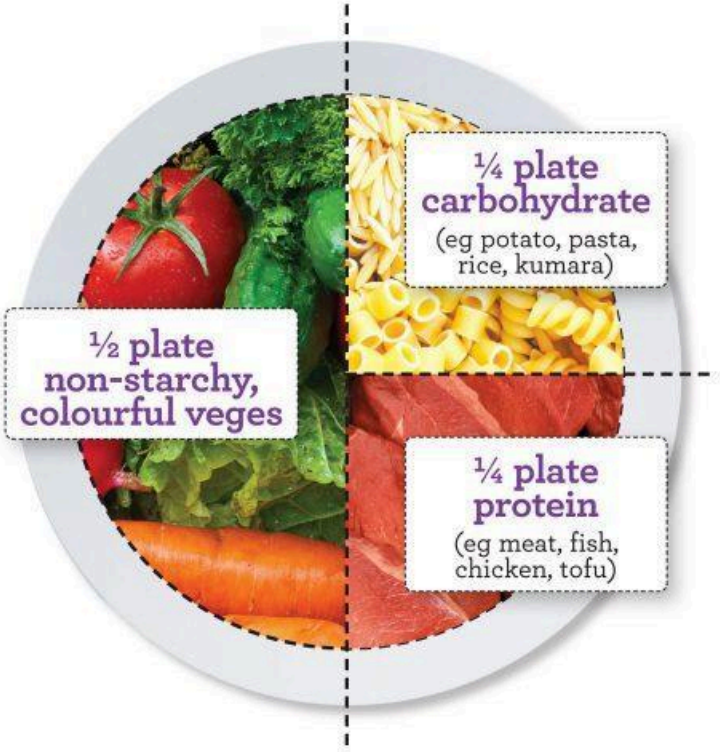


Below please find a list of suggestions to help when planning meals for our students:

Breakfast	Lunch at weekends	Dinner
• Wholegrain Cereal • Porridge oats • Croissants • Pancakes • Eggs • Bread • Yogurt • Fruit • Toast with jam or marmalade • Fruit juice, coffee & tea We do not expect you to provide a cooked breakfast but perhaps occasionally at the weekend, that would be nice.	A light meal in the UK: • Sandwiches or wraps made with fresh bread meat, cheese, salad • Soup • Toasted sandwich • Salad bowl Crisps or similar savoury snacks are good as an accompaniment. Offer a piece of fruit, yoghurt or biscuit.	This is the main meal of the day and should consist of a good balance of protein, vegetables, and carbohydrates. Prepare dishes featuring fresh ingredients like: • Eggs, cheese, fish, and meat • Vegetarian options like beans, legumes, or nuts • Include a starchy option like freshly cooked rice, pasta, or potatoes. • Offer a simple dessert made with fresh fruit, like yogurt, cookies or a homemade cake

General Tips:

- **Communication avoids lots of problems later:** Talk to your student before or on arrival so you can find out about any dietary allergies and restrictions like vegan or vegetarian. Ask about their preferences so you know if they like food spicy or plain and if they dislike certain vegetables or other foods. This saves wasted time and food.
- **Mealtimes:** Students should be served the same meals as their hosts and eat at the same times, unless commitments occasionally prevent this. It is an important time to get to know each other and talk about the day.
- **Variety is key:** Offer a mix of meals throughout the week to avoid repetition.
- **Plan it out:** Create a weekly meal plan that is within your budget, to save last minute decisions and resorting to fast foods which are expensive and unhealthy.
- **Keep it Simple and Fresh:** Don't feel pressured to cook elaborate meals. Simple, well-prepared dishes using fresh ingredients are always appreciated.
- **Balanced meals:** Ensure that your meals are balanced as you are feeding hungry teenagers. Opt for balanced meals with protein (meat, fish or beans); carbohydrates (rice, pasta or potatoes) and vegetables.



- **Embrace Culture:** Share a traditional meal from your own culture and be open to trying dishes from your student's background, using fresh ingredients whenever possible.
- **Batch Cooking:** Consider preparing large batch meals like stews, casseroles or pasta dishes in advance to save time during busy weeks.



- **Ask your student if they want to help:** This is a great way to make your student feel at home if they are interested. It can be a fun way to learn about each other's cultures or just get to know one another.
- **Consider portion sizes:** Provide enough food to be filling but not excessive. Remember these are busy teenagers.
- **Weekends:** Remember that **you are paid** to provide lunch for your student at weekends. Please ensure that if you are not at home on a Saturday or Sunday, you provide your student with sufficient ingredients to make themselves a lunch and they know where these are stored.
- **Snacks:** Students are told to provide their own snacks and you are not responsible for providing additional food between meals. Please make sure that your student is given room in the fridge or larder to store their own snacks and are aware that they should not help themselves to your food.

Additional Considerations:

- **Beverages:** Provide water, juice, tea, and coffee throughout the day.
- **Kitchen access:** Discuss whether your student will have access to the kitchen for preparing their own meals or snacks.
- **If you agree to cater for special diets:** Don't panic as there are lots of very good cookbooks or delicious and healthy recipes available online.

By following these tips and focusing on fresh, home-cooked meals while prioritizing food safety, you can ensure your students have a happy and well-fed experience, creating lasting memories filled with warmth and delicious flavours.



Homestay Dinner Inspiration

We often get asked for ideas on what to cook for students. They are in your home so it is important to include them as part of the family and that includes at meal times. Of course, remember to consider any dietary restrictions your student may have when choosing a recipe.

Classic Comfort Food:

- **Roast Dinner:** Roast a joint with fresh vegetables for a satisfying meal. Serve with potatoes, gravy, and seasonal roasted vegetables.
- **Shepherd's Pie:** Prepare a lamb or beef filling with vegetables, topped with creamy mashed potatoes and baked until golden brown.
- **Fish and Chips:** Use fresh fish fillets coated in a light batter and pan-fried. Pair with homemade oven-baked fries and a side of tartar sauce or lemon wedges.

- **Vegetarian chili:** Try a hearty chili packed with beans, lentils, vegetables, and spices. Serve with brown rice, cornbread, and a dollop of vegan yogurt for a lighter touch.
- **Casserole, soups or stew:** Perfect for winter evenings; a meat of your choice and packed with seasonal vegetables.



Global Flavours:

- **Italian:** Whip up a classic pasta dish with fresh vegetables and a sauce. Bolognese, lasagne, pizza – the options are endless. Offer a simple side salad and crusty bread for dipping.
- **Tex-Mex:** Prepare a chili with ground beef, beans, corn, and fresh toppings like avocado, sour cream, and salsa. Serve with brown rice or cornbread.
- **Thai Curry:** Create a fragrant curry using coconut milk, vegetables, and your student's preferred protein (chicken, tofu, etc.). Serve with steamed rice and fresh herbs for garnish.
- **Greek Mezze:** Present a spread of small plates featuring hummus, dolmades (stuffed grape leaves), pita bread, olives, and a refreshing Greek salad with feta cheese.
- **Stir Fry**: Always a favourite, quickly and easily put together with proteins and whatever fresh ingredients you have.



Don't Forget Dessert:



- **Fruit Crumble:** Top fresh seasonal fruit with a crumbly topping served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.
- **Homemade Yogurt Parfait:** Layer fresh fruit, granola, and homemade yogurt in a glass for a refreshing and healthy end to the meal.
- **Fruit, yoghurt or ice-cream**

Remember:

- **Adapt to Preferences:** Ask your student if they have any favourite cuisines or dishes they'd love to try.
- **Embrace Local Flavours:** Incorporate fresh, seasonal ingredients from your local markets for a unique and delicious experience.
- **Presentation Matters:** Plate your meals attractively to create a visually appealing dining experience.

By following these tips and using your creativity, you can create a delightful and memorable dining experience for your homestay guests, showcasing your culinary skills and warm hospitality.

Supplementary Payments:

We pay a supplementary payment of £20 per week for hosts providing for students with a particular dietary restriction, including:

- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Halal
- Kosher
- Lactose-free
- Gluten-free

