

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the first Host in France newsletter.

Inundated as we have been, and still are, with requests for stays with English-speaking host families, it's been hard to find the time to compile this newsletter. We hope our efforts have not been in vain and that you find the information and news of interest.

We take the opportunity to thank all those families who have hosted so well and also to thank those families who have not yet hosted for their patience.

The number of stays organised this year has more than tripled and this seems to be an ongoing trend. The number of existing French customers who are returning to book another stay and those who have been referred to us by them are a testimony to how well Host in France is working. Thank you one and all.

Our organisation is now 3 years old. After organising close to two thousand stays with British families and receiving a great deal of feedback from both the French and the British, we are now in a better position to offer some helpful advice.

Firstly, we should say that for some host families, hearing how successful a year it's been grates on the nerves, as some hosts have not yet been offered a guest. We don't like this situation either and we'd like it to change.

The requests we receive are often very specific. We place some examples throughout the newsletter to give you some idea of the whole process of organising a stay.



Reçues le 22 Octobre 2012

Je recherche un séjour en immersion en France pour mes 2 enfants de 16 et 18 ans si possible chez deux familles différentes du 29 octobre au 4 novembre 2012 près de notre domicile (Montpellier).

From requests like this, we make a shortlist of those host families who best fit the bill (right area of France, composition of the family, time of year, hosts' interests, with or without English lessons etc). We send our shortlist back to the French guest, or their family, for them to make a final choice. What we're trying to say is that, in the end, it is the French guest that makes the final decision.

Summer has been great !

with well over 95 % very good feedback from both hosts and guests



*I get all the students to write a little diary every day and at the end of his Matthis wrote 'It has been a very, very, very, very good week - thanks'! So that was really nice for us.
Helen, Calvados*

*We really loved hosting and look forward to having the chance to do it again. We became very fond of both girls and miss them now they've gone !
Judy, Aude*

We were extremely well matched as she is interested not only in music, but the arts, philosophy, history.
I loved having camille to stay and am keen to do it again as soon as possible. please send me more students.
Michele, Loir et Cher

We were both worried about our first hosting but for us it couldn't have gone better, Louise is a pleasure to have with us and we just hope she is enjoying it too.
Oh and by the way her english has improved since she arrived.
Brian & Gill, Vienne

Alain arrived safely and we think that the week spent together was a success from both points of view. He was a very personable young man, very helpful around the house and keen to fit in with us in every way.
We would be very happy to host people like Alain again.
Clare and Francis, Tarn

*We had a lovely time with Lea, she is a very mature and likeable girl who was very helpful. She is a very bright girl who picks things up very quickly.
I think the same can be said for Samuel who has come to stay with us for 2 weeks.
As I am writing this I can hear him playing the piano, which he also does beautifully.
Karen, Gironde*

*For such a young person Clement is incredibly well-balanced and politically aware. We found it very refreshing to have such a vibrant and thinking young man in our home and would love to welcome him back at any time. We miss him, his laughter and his sense of humour !
Paul and Lesley, Dordogne*

*We went to Paris and had a wonderful picnic by the seine and boat trip with Manu's family, they are very nice and we had a wonderful afternoon together . We look forward to hearing from you soon hopefully
Tiphanie, Alpes Maritimes*

[The importance of being kept up to date with your availability.](#)



Our method of working makes it vital that we are regularly informed of your availability to host. If we do not know that you are unavailable to host, we send potential French guests your host description, along with others, for them to make a choice. If you are chosen to host, we send you a “request for a hosting” email asking if you will host the guest. It is sometimes only then that we are informed that you are not available (for various reasons) on the dates requested. This disappoints the potential guest and also has an effect on our reputation as a good hosting company. Do please then keep us updated with your availability.

Please also bear in mind that your host description contains all of your family members. Do then let us know if one or more members of your family will be away as this can affect the choice that the potential guest makes.

We will unfortunately be unable to offer you as a host to potential guests if we do not receive a response from you to our request for an availability update.

[Vetting the guests](#)

On receipt of a request for a hosting from a French client, we send back a form for them to complete. We ask questions about dietary requirements, health problems and their level in English. We also ask if the guest is motivated to do the stay as an unmotivated guest is someone we try to avoid sending to the hosts. We pass on this information when we offer a guest to you.

[Pocket money and pick ups](#)

Please note that for younger guests, we now ask that an extra 50 Euros is given to the hosts on arrival as pocket money. The pocket money spent will need to be accounted for.

The host may ask for compensation for the fuel and toll costs for picking the guest up and dropping them off should there be any distance involved.

[Contacting the French guest or their family.](#)

When a stay is confirmed, we send you an official “confirmation of stay” document which contains both your contact details and those of the guest. We would like to insist that you get in touch with the French family as soon as possible to introduce yourselves. This is partly so that final arrangements for the stay can be agreed and also because, until then, the French family have been on trust that you, as a host family, exist at all.

Please write to them in either English or French as feels appropriate (or possible).

[Insurance.](#)



We insist that French guests have adequate insurance cover for their stay with the host. We also insist that extra cover is taken out by the guest (or their family) if they wish to do any activity that might be considered as dangerous during their stay (horse riding, climbing etc).

Please ask the guest for proof of insurance cover if you have any concerns.

English lessons.

We offer French guests the choice of a stay with or without English lessons. When English lessons are asked for (and paid for) the lessons must be formal and include written work on grammar and vocabulary which the guest can take home with them.

It is often a good idea that the guest writes a diary of their stay (including photos if any) that they can take away as a keepsake (in English of course).



Why we ask for news during the stays we organise.

We ask that British hosts send us news during the stays we've organised so that we can forward it to the French parents.

We of course know that most hosts are in touch with the French families and/or that the students themselves contact their parents during the week or two weeks they are away from home.

However, the fact that we, as an organisation, care about the students - when the stays have often been organised some time in advance – is very much appreciated by the French and gives our organisation, and the host families themselves, a very good image.



Also, we have noted, from experience, that, if we don't write first to the French parents, we seldom get any feedback from them. Conversely, when we send them news it prompts the French to respond with a nice message which we are then very happy to forward to the British hosts 😊

Finally, we keep all the feedback we receive here to be able to respond to French parents who ask for comments from previous customers and, more important, as it has already proved useful twice when we received complaints about two host families who had been previously described a few times as perfect hosts.

Bonjour, Pourriez m'indiquer s'il existe des séjours pour les vacances de la Toussaint pour ma fille qui a 14 ans et adore l'équitation (plutôt dans la région Languedoc Roussillon).

A few “Must Do’s”

- Do please confirm receipt of the confirmation of stays we send you. It is very important that we know that you have received the contact details of your guests. Also, until you contact the French guest, they have been on trust only that you even exist. 😊
- For your own security, do get written permission from a younger guest's family should the guest wish to do an activity that might be considered dangerous. It is also a good idea to discuss permissions in general prior to the stay.
- Many guests have asked to do another stay with the same host family. Please remember that stays must be organised through us so do please ask the guest or their family to get in touch with us directly.

Je recherche, pour Claire, 13 ans, une famille pas trop loin de notre département (74 – Haute Savoie) avec de très jeunes enfants.

A strange quest

We organised a stay for a French husband and wife in their 60's. They needed to improve their English prior to a trip abroad. They chose to stay with a host family in the Ariège and they let us know that they would also be bringing their parrot with them. We had to wait a bit before receiving a photo of the couple but they did send us this ! (The parrot didn't require any formal English lessons).

The parrot obviously wins the most unusual guest of the year competition. 😊



Françoise et Joseph, 56 & 67 ans : Nous avons le souhait de nous perfectionner en anglais tout en profitant des vacances pour marcher et découvrir d'autres personnes.
Tout le sud-ouest ou la façade atlantique, partout où on peut faire des balades en pleine nature, si possible à moins de 3 h de route de Bordeaux.

Adult stays



As we said, we are now receiving more demands from adults for stays with British host families but they are not yet numerous. The reason that requests for stays from adults is growing is because, up to now, "sejours linguistiques" were, in their mind, dedicated to teenagers. Many French adults have stayed in a host family in the UK as a youth and don't imagine that they can stay with a British host family too.

Please note that asking for adult guests only will mean we won't, at least for the time being, be in touch quite so often. 😊

The new database

The speed of growth of Host in France took us very much by surprise and has meant that the computer programs we have been using up to now to find the best match of hosts and guests is now too slow a process. We have in fact been using 6 different programs to make our research !

We are now installing a new database that will help us to keep up with demand and also allow us to sleep at night. (This database is private and is only viewed by Host in France).

The database will automatically update your and your children's ages and we will therefore need to know your dates of birth if you have not already supplied them. We will also need to be kept informed of the arrival and departure of members of the family and of any pets and animals (as many guests these days have allergies). Do please, if you think it necessary, also send us updated photos of your children, as they do tend to grow 😊

A NICE QUOTE FROM A HOST

Our two Young guests arrived safely at about 2:00 pm on Saturday afternoon and they've settled down quite well although I will say they are quiet and shy and appeared like rabbits caught in the headlights for the first couple of days.



Merci de me contacter pour envisager un séjour en immersion d'une semaine (semaine 45) pour mes 2 enfants (séparément) de presque 15 ans (jumeaux), région Rhône-Alpes

Sound advice

We do hope to be in a position to be able to offer all host families the opportunity to receive a guest. It may be that we can improve your own host description with new photos and more information about your family interests. (One of our hosts neglected to mention that he had an observatory in his garden !)

If you think you'd like to send us photos and/or more information about yourselves, we'd be pleased to receive it. Your previous occupation for example could be just what a French guest is looking for.

Laura, 16 ans, cherche séjour du 3 au 10 Novembre en Normandie. Elle aime la musique, la lecture, le cinéma, fait de la danse et a fait de l'équitation. Elle souhaiterait prendre 5 heures de cours durant son séjour.

Amanda's Feedback

After hosting quite a few guests for us, Amanda, without being asked, wrote this article on a website dedicated to British people living in France.

Thanks Amanda :-)

"Just wanted to let you know (if you don't already) about Host in France.

Run by Nadege and Anthony, it served us brilliantly last year when we hosted about ten French children (and one delightful father and daughter!) wanting to improve their English throughout the holidays.

Host in France are looking to expand their base of English families living in France. After some positive national TV publicity, they have more requests than they can find families for, and I want to spread the word for them and give other families the chance to benefit from this highly lucrative and hugely rewarding experience.

Basically you send your details to Nadege and Anthony via the site, they ask a few questions to get a full idea of you and your family, then they try and match requests from French guests. They offer a selection of families for each request, contact you if the French family choose you, check availability etc.

They handle everything beautifully, sensitively and efficiently - leaving the final travel organisation etc to the two families. The guests arrive with a cheque on their first day, and we never had a single problem... the system works on a perfect balance of trust, good organisation, and instinct. I cannot recommend them highly enough, they are always there for both parties, but never interfere.

Some children choose to have lessons, some don't. The lessons are charged at € 15 to €20 an hour included in the cheque. Everything is clear to everyone, and whilst it obviously affects the whole family having a stranger to stay and live with you for a week (sometimes two), we found that we had been well-matched (the advantage of the detailed info. everyone gives to Host in France) and the fact that we had 'visitors' meant we did loads of fun family stuff; went out on trips, went swimming, bowling etc. and our kids loved all the activity.

If you're interested, I highly recommend getting in touch and finding out more".

Amanda, February 2012

David and Julia

After a lifetime in teaching, my wife and I retired to France in 2007 and for the past five years we have lived among the hills and woods of the Tarn region to the north of Albi.

Initially our lives were full, attempting to recall irregular verbs, avoiding the pitfalls of *les faux amis* and trying to navigate the treacherous waters of French bureaucracy.

But, as time passed, we began to look around for something else, something which would give our lives a clearly defined focus. I think we always knew that whatever it was would involve an element of teaching and that we would recognise it when we saw it: it was at that point, as if by magic, that we were introduced, by good friends, to the wonderful organization which is 'Host in France'.

Our first student, Charles, was a charming young man who came to us from the Paris Conservatoire. Our piano, which had experienced several traumatic moves during its life, had finally received a long-



overdue tuning (shameless 'plug' for Albi Pianos) so that we were able to hear Beethoven as intended and not like a pastiche of early Stockhausen. Then came Christine, a lovely young lady from Alsace. Very apprehensive on arrival, she blossomed during her week with us, her smile and sense of fun lighting up every room on the gloomiest days. She arrived uncertain as to which direction she wanted her life to take. She left, her heart set on studying languages and she is now in her second year at Strasburg where she is studying English and has since added Italian and modern Greek to her portfolio. Alex,



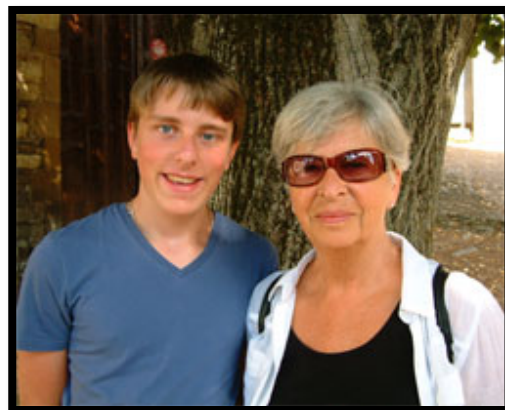
one of our younger students, was highly competitive and turned every situation, however mundane, into a challenge. He was an avid games player and loved cycling and each day involved intense games of Scrabble, Chess, Othello...often all three. We look forward to his *fourth* visit early in the New Year. Anne-Marie, from Nantes, was a delightfully poised, self-assured young lady whose heart is set on a career in journalism and as a first step was aiming to secure a place at the school of journalism in Lille.

This summer, we hosted Max – our youngest student – from Paris who was chauffeured to us courtesy of his delightful grandparents; Raphaëlle, her rigorous career path to becoming a surgeon already in place; and the extremely bright and very interesting Julien who was able to speak with authority, not only on French history and politics but also British history (including the consequences of the abdication of Edward V111)...in English! We also enjoyed the very interesting experience of hosting twins from the Ardèche; it was fascinating to see how the brother-sister dynamic adapted according to context. Finally came Vincent, a very bright, intelligent and funny young man with a wicked sense of humour. His presence in our home was an absolute joy.

All of our students – several of whom have maintained contact – have been a source of great pleasure and satisfaction. They have, without exception, proved to be hard-working, diligent and conscientious and it has been most gratifying for us, after many years spent devising ways to motivate young people - not always successfully - to teach students whose level of self-motivation is already remarkably high.

We know they will all be hugely successful at whatever they choose to do. Their parents are to be congratulated – they are doing a fantastic job of nurturing their offspring and it has been a great privilege for us to play a small part in it.

In conclusion, a word of thanks to 'Host in France' in general and Nadège and Anthony in particular, for providing a late opportunity to two former teachers who were clearly not quite ready to "call it a day". We thank you for all your support and encouragement and look forward very much to continuing our extremely happy and fruitful working relationship. It has been the greatest fun!



David.

Examples

Marie, 16 ans cherche séjour en Périgord, Charentes Maritimes, Nantes. Un couple avec de jeunes enfants (- de 6 ans de préférence), avec si possible un des deux parents professeur d'anglais.

J'ai 18 ans, je vais intégrer une prepa Mathsup à Annecy avec l'intention de rentrer à l'ENAC (Ecole Nationale D'Aviation Civile). L'Anglais étant très important au concours d'entrée, je souhaiterais passer d'un niveau de terminale moyen à un bon niveau. Mais centres d'intérêts sont l'Aviation, l'astronomie, l'escalade, le ski, les jeux vidéo.

We do very much value our partnership with host families and will do all we can to make it possible for everyone to enjoy the experience of hosting in the future.

With our best wishes,

Nadège and Anthony