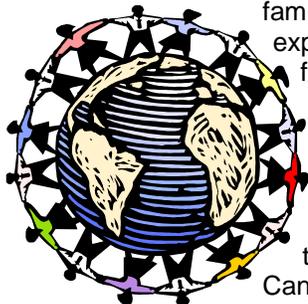


THE HOME PAGE

THE UVIC HOMESTAY STUDENT RESOURCE PAGE

APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCES!

Just as each of you are different, so are your host families! You will have a different experience from each of your friends, so **please do not compare your host family with others.** Appreciate your host family for who they are and make every effort to enjoy your time together with your new Canadian family.



DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME IN YOUR ROOM?

Do you want to interact more with your host family but don't know how to come out of your room? Here are some suggestions:

- Offer to set the table for dinner.
- Offer to help prepare dinner. If you don't know how to cook, ask your host family to help you learn.
- Offer to teach your host family how to make a typical meal from your home country.
- Ask your host for help with your homework.
- Ask them to go for a walk.
- Ask them if you can walk the dog together each evening.
- Ask them if they would like to play a game or do a puzzle.
- Show your host some photos of your family and home country.
- Suggest watching a TV show/DVD together.
- Ask your host for a convenient time to invite some friends over to your house for a movie night.
- Ask your host to teach you how to bake some of their favourite Canadian treats.
- Offer to teach your host a few words/phrases in your native language.



CONVERSATION TIPS

Are you nervous about starting a conversation with your host?

Do you want to get to know your host family better? Here are some tips to assist you in getting to know your host better.

Ask open-ended questions instead of yes/no questions:

- What do you like best about living in Victoria?
- What do you do at work?
- Which countries or places have you visited in the world?
- What are your hobbies or interests?
- What do you know about my country and culture?
- Can you tell me about some differences between Canadian culture and my culture?
- Can you suggest some fun activities to do while I am staying in Victoria?

Interview your host about a topic that you are learning about in class:

- What do you think about _____?
- What's your opinion regarding _____?
- Can you tell me something about _____?

If you are having difficulty expressing yourself:

- Write it down before you say it.
- Use your dictionary.
- Use gestures to help explain what you mean.
- Talk to one family member at a time. It can be difficult to talk with many people at once.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes and to ask your host to repeat what they have said if you didn't understand. Let your host know if you have any questions or concerns.

- I'm sorry, I don't understand. Can you please explain?

Remember that your host wants to support you and help you improve your speaking and listening skills while you are here in Victoria. That is why they have chosen to become a host family.

EATING ETIQUETTE

Eating habits can be very different from country to country. In order to adjust to Canadian eating styles and feel comfortable in your home, please follow these guidelines when eating in your host family's home:

- Try to eat quietly. Making loud noises while eating (e.g. slurping, burping, etc.) is considered very rude in Canadian culture.
- Do not eat with your mouth open. Many Canadian families enjoy conversation during meals, but it is impolite to talk while you have food in your mouth.
- Leave enough food for the rest of the family and try not to waste food. Serve yourself a small portion first and then, after everyone has been served, go back for more if you are still hungry.
- Use a knife and fork for most meals. If you are not sure how to eat something, watch to see how your host eats it.
- Do not eat food in your room. If you do take a small snack into your room, please make sure that you do not leave the dirty dishes in your room. Take the dishes back to the kitchen, wash them, and return them to their proper place.

Here are some useful phrases to use during meal times:

- May I please have another serving?
- Could you please pass the _____?
- I'm sorry, I took too much food. Could I please wrap it up for leftovers?

Remember to always say please when you are asking for something and thank you after you have received it.

It is customary in Canada to **thank the cook** for the tasty food that you have just finished eating!

- "Thank you very much for dinner; it was delicious!"

PHONING HOME

Many of you want to know how to contact your friends and family back home. **Students are not permitted to charge long distance telephone calls to their host family's telephone bill. When calling long-distance from your host's home, you have two options:**

- call "collect".
- purchase a phone card – \$5, \$10 or \$20 (plus GST) cards are available and can be used from any private or public telephone.
- Use Skype, Viber or other free apps for your smart phone.

Please limit your local phone calls to friends to 10-15 minutes in your host family's home.

If you are planning to use the phone for longer than 15 minutes, please ask your host family if anyone needs to use the phone first, or if anyone is expecting a call during the period that you would like to use the phone.

BATHROOM 101

Bathrooms and bathroom etiquette in Canada may be very different from those in your home country. Here are a few helpful hints to make your adjustment to your Canadian home a little easier!

Showers:

- Keep your shower time to approximately 10 minutes as hot water is limited in Canadian homes.
- Make sure the shower curtain is inside the bathtub before starting the shower.
- Turn on the fan or open the window so that the moisture can escape from the bathroom during your shower.
- If any water drips onto the floor from the shower, ask your host family for a towel so that you can wipe up the floor.
- Talk with your host family to set up a shower schedule that is convenient for all members of the family.
- Do not shower between 10pm and 7am as this may disturb other people in the home.

Toilet:

- Always flush the toilet after you use it.
- Regular toilet paper should be discarded in the toilet. Please do not put this in the garbage can.
- Never flush large objects such as feminine hygiene products (tampons or maxi pads) down the toilet. Wrap them in toilet paper and place them in the bathroom garbage can.

Please keep the bathroom clean and tidy. If you have a private bathroom, you are responsible for cleaning the bathroom yourself.

If the toilet becomes blocked, please **tell your host immediately** so it can be fixed before there is flooding or damage to the home. They will be happy you told them!

PROBLEM SOLVING

The more effort you put into your Homestay experience, the more reward you will gain from the experience.

- If you have a problem with your host family, please make sure that you talk to your host family in a positive and constructive manner so that you can solve the problem together.
- Please refer to the *Communicating with your Host Family* Information Sheet for some helpful sentences that you can use to speak openly and honestly with your host family about any concerns or difficulties you are having in their home.

Please email (homestay@uvcs.uvic.ca) or come to talk to a Homestay Coordinator if you have any questions about your homestay or you are unsure about:

- **what to say to your host family about a problem.**
- **what is common Canadian behaviour or customs in a Canadian home.**

For example:

- Should you take off your hat at the dinner table? *Yes, it is considered very impolite in Canada to wear a hat during dinner.*
- Do you have to clean up after preparing a snack in the family kitchen? *Yes, all family members and guests should clean up any mess or dishes that they have used in the kitchen.*
- **your role in your host's home or a particular situation with your host.** For example:
 - If your host invites you to dinner at a restaurant, do you pay? *No, you should not pay because your host is responsible for providing you with dinner each night.*
 - Should you help clean up the dishes after dinner each night? *Yes, each member of a Canadian family helps to set the table before dinner and clean off the table after dinner.*
 - Do you have to clean your private bathroom? *Yes, you are responsible for keeping your private bedroom and bathroom tidy and clean.*



PRIVACY

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As an adult international student living in a Canadian family home, you are required to:

- prepare your own breakfast
- keep your bedroom clean and tidy
- clean up after yourself in a shared or private bathroom, or in the kitchen after preparing food
- bring your dirty dishes to the kitchen after you are finished eating or drinking
- wash your clothes and bed linens in the laundry machines
- call your host family if you will be late for dinner, or if your evening plans change while you are away from home
- keep your emergency contact card with you at all times
- always be respectful and polite with all members of your host family

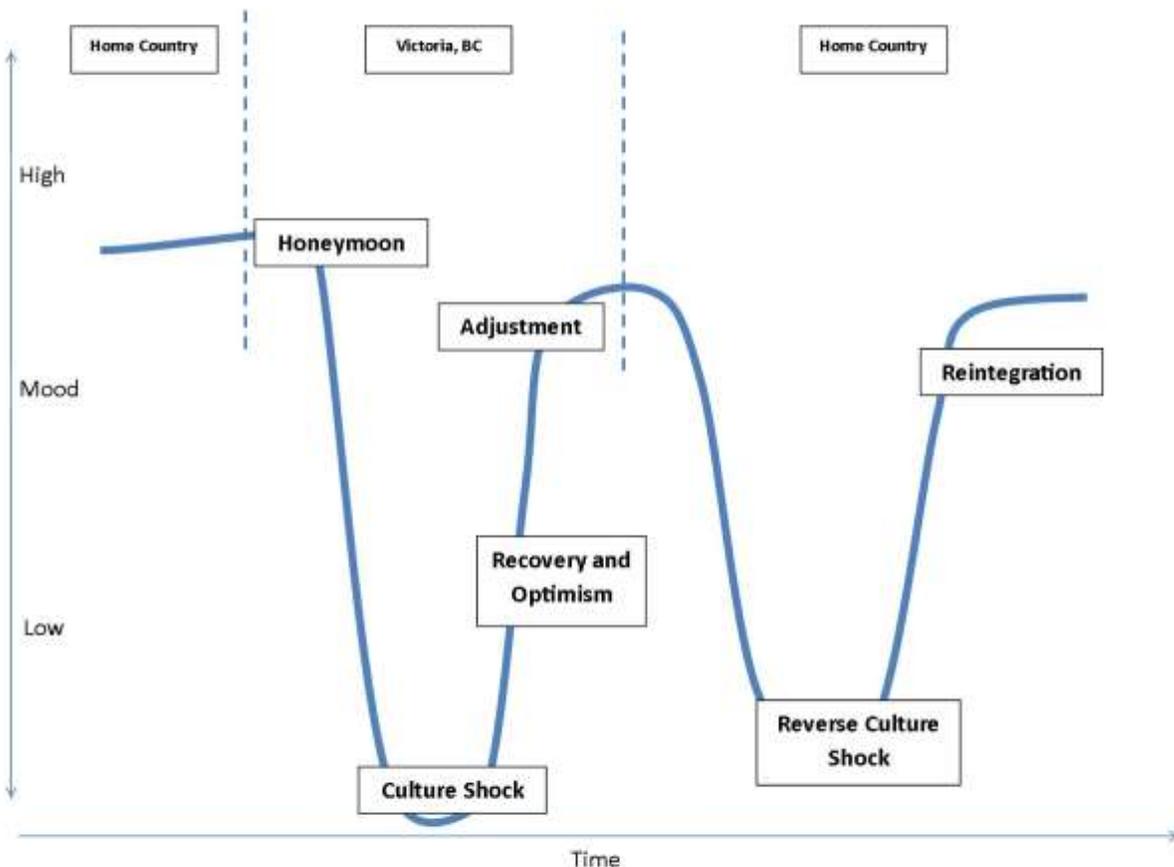
Your room is your private space, so your host family will normally not enter your room without asking you first. As your host is responsible for the security, safety, and comfort of the home, your host may need to enter your room if:

- the heat or lights are left on
- the window is left open
- wet clothing / towels are left on the furniture or floor
- the room smells like smoke
- your host needs to clean or repair something
- your host is concerned about the safety or condition of their home
- there is an emergency in your room

CULTURE SHOCK

The first few weeks living in a new country with a new family can be difficult for many students. You may feel homesick and frustrated with your new environment and the language. Some students deal with change better than others, but all new students will go through a predictable sequence of stages in adjusting to new circumstances.

The adjustment phase, also called Culture Shock, usually takes 3 to 4 months, but will depend on the length of your stay. Culture Shock is a natural adjustment process, and learning about it will help you understand some of the emotions you will likely experience.



Stages of Culture Shock: Adapted from Oberg (1960) and Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963)

Honeymoon: Upon arrival in Victoria, you will feel excited and eager to learn about your new home. Everything will seem new and wonderful! Typically this stage is relatively short, but socializing with other students, getting orientated to Victoria, and being involving in your host family's activities will help make the overall transition a smoother and more positive process.

Culture Shock: As you settle in to daily life, the novelty and excitement wear off, and you may start feeling sad or unsatisfied. Students typically begin to miss their family, friends, and everything that was familiar. Students long for home and may become sad, lonely or depressed.

Recovery and Optimism: Once your new life becomes more familiar and you are more comfortable with living in Victoria, you will be happier. Students that make friends and experience success in their courses reach this stage earlier. So do your best to meet others, socialize, and join in activities!

Adjustment/Acculturation: You will become more comfortable in your surroundings, will be able to balance Canadian culture with your own culture, and embrace differences. Students will begin to appreciate their experience and living abroad.

Reverse Culture Shock: You will experience many of the same ups and downs when you return home. Students appreciate staying in touch with their hosts and fellow students. You will want to talk about your experience and reminisce the times shared.

Reintegration: You will learn to adjust your new perspectives into your home country's environment and eventually feel comfortable at how the experience abroad fits in at home. Your experience, while difficult at times, will help you become better global citizens.

As an international student, you may already be aware of certain symptoms of culture shock, and may notice these in yourself:

1. Excitement and stimulation
2. Anxiety and frustration
3. Confusion, irritability, or withdrawal
4. Sudden intense feeling of loyalty to home culture
5. Physical reactions such as appetite change or headaches
6. Changes in sleep patterns (more or less sleep is needed)
7. Depression, boredom, or lack of motivation
8. Relationship stress

Many students don't realize that what they are experiencing is culture shock, so if you notice any of the indicators in yourself or fellow student, we encourage you to talk it out with your host, friend, teacher or inform the Homestay Program. Not all students will exhibit symptoms of culture shock, but most will experience the roller coaster ride of adjusting to a new culture – here are some tips for helping you adjust:

- Take part in the family's activities, whether it is an evening out for a walk, the movies or helping clean up after dinner.
- Decorate your room with pictures from home.
- Communicate with your host family and let them know how you are feeling.
- Keep in touch with home – email, call and facebook your friends and family.
- Ask your host family if you can invite friends over – this will help you socialize with others.
- Let your host family know your food likes and dislikes.
- Share information about your home country and culture, perhaps by making a traditional recipe from home for everyone to enjoy!
- Accept that you are experiencing these feelings and know that it is normal – culture shock is temporary!
- Make the most out of being in a new country and culture!

Developing friendships and a strong relationship with your hosts will help you deal with culture shock and likely make the feelings and symptoms less severe. We trust that you will have a wonderful experience while in Victoria, and please know that your hosts, teachers, and the Homestay Program coordinators are here to support you!



LUNCH BAG IDEAS



Most Canadian lunches include a sandwich, a snack, some fruit and a drink. Here are some ideas to help you enjoy your lunches.

Sandwiches:

Sandwiches are usually 2 slices of bread, or 1 pita, bagel, croissant, soft tortilla shell or sandwich bun with meat, vegetables, or cheese inside.

Typical sandwiches are:

- Sandwich meat, mustard, mayonnaise and lettuce
- Cucumber and cream-cheese
- Peanut butter and jam or honey
- BLT—bacon, lettuce, tomato and mayonnaise
- Tuna fish • Egg Salad
- Banana, peanut butter, and honey
- Mixed vegetables (tomato, avocado, cucumber), cheese, and alfalfa sprouts

Leftovers:

It is also very common in Canada to take “leftovers” for lunch. Families will often make extra portions of the dinner meal, so that family members can take this food for lunch the next day. These extra portions are called “leftovers”.

Microwaves are available for you to heat up your lunch. They are located in the Continuing Studies Building, the Student Union Building (SUB), Finnerty Café (Lower Bookstore) and the University Centre Cafeteria.

Typical leftovers are:

- Pasta dishes (lasagna, spaghetti, linguine)
- Meat or fish with rice or potatoes
- Burritos • Pizza
- Stir-fried rice & vegetables

Snacks:

Snacks are small food items for you to eat in between meals if you are hungry. You can also eat your snacks at lunchtime with your main lunch items.

Typical lunch snacks are:

- Cheese and crackers, yogurt
- Instant soups and noodles (just add hot water)
- Fruit such as apples, oranges, and bananas
- Mixture of peanuts, raisins and chocolate chips
- Raw vegetables such as carrot and celery sticks
- Rice cakes, muffins, cookies, or granola
- Tortilla chips and salsa

Helpful Sentences:

Your host will want to know what foods you like and dislike eating when they are buying groceries for your meals.

Here are some direct but polite examples of sentences you can use when talking to your host about lunch food options:

- Thank you for buying the food for my lunches. I would like to eat _____ for lunch. Could you please buy some _____ next time you are shopping?
- I am not used to Canadian food and _____ hurts my stomach. Could I please try _____ instead?
- May I please join you on your next trip to the grocery store?
- I really enjoyed dinner tonight. Could I please take some leftovers in my lunch tomorrow?

Please refer to the *Communicating with your Host Family* Information Sheet for more examples of ways to ask your host family for different types of food.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Questions or concerns about homestay?

- Please remember that our homestay coordinators are always happy to talk with you. Everything you discuss with our staff is confidential.

Homestay Coordinators' Information

Phone 250-472-4268
Email homestay@uvcs.uvic.ca
Office Hours Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm
Location 2nd floor, Continuing Studies Building

Stressed about class? Feeling homesick? Need to talk?

- UVic has Student Counsellors that specialize in cross-cultural communication. You can make an appointment by calling the Counselling Office at 721-8341.

24-hour Safe Walk Line: 721-7599.

- If you are on campus in the evening, please ensure you know about the UVic Safe Walk Program. Campus Security will escort you from any building on campus to the bus stop or your car.