

ExchangeHomes.Com



Home Exchange HINTS & Advice Book

For visitors and members of our vacation home exchange program



Guidelines for a Successful Home Exchange

Introduction

Home exchange is a mutual exchange of homes or vacation homes. Your exchange partner may live in the same country or half way the world! Your homes may be similar in size and style or completely different—all that matters is that both parties are completely happy with the exchange arrangements both have agreed.

Staying in a real home provides you with choices. It's a kitchen when you crave scrambled eggs at 2 a.m. or the convenience of a laundry room when your toddler has gone through five outfits in one day. Perhaps after a hectic day of sightseeing the last thing you want to do is get dressed for dinner. Take-out in a foreign place takes on a new meaning and is actually fun. Live like the locals and enjoy all the comforts of home away from home. Many people turn to exchanging their homes when planning sabbaticals, family and school reunions, or scouting retirement and job opportunities worldwide.

The dollars and cents reason is easy to figure out; you don't pay a penny for your accommodations. Very often the exchange reaches beyond dwellings to include cars and/or pet care, rewarding you with additional savings on rentals and boarding. Many people opt to travel to more exotic locations for longer periods with significant savings on accommodation costs.

Many Members tell us they join under the impression that the biggest benefit will be the money they save, and that will undoubtedly be achieved, with savings of thousands of dollars on hotels, cars and meals being typical. But afterwards, nearly everyone will say that the greatest benefits are associated with experiencing an area like a local, not a tourist and having the comfort of day to day living in a home rather than a cramped hotel room.

Apart from the obvious saving on hotel bills, the greatest advantage of home exchange is the chance it gives you to experience a different lifestyle, often getting to know your exchange partners' friends and neighbors. However, arranging a successful home exchange does require careful planning. There is no way you can be guaranteed to find the perfect exchange partner, but there are several ways you can maximize your chances of arranging an enjoyable exchange.



Some members will be able to arrange an exchange in a short time with very little preparation, but most will find it wise to plan carefully, confirming decisions taken in writing to avoid any misunderstandings.

To up your comfort level, look to swap with someone in a similar lifestyle or stage of life. Singles, seniors, large families, kosher kitchens, handicapped accessibility all have their own particular needs so swapping in similar circumstances can greatly ease the transition into someone else's home

It is critical that visitors and members understand that when they join and add their home exchange listing to our database, they are not "placing an advertisement", but joining a membership group of people, all with the desire to arrange home exchanges. And, if everyone just enters their listing then sits back, never instigating any contacts themselves we will be out of business in a year because no one will ever make a single exchange!

Be as adaptable as possible about exact destinations. Part of the fun of home exchange is discovering exciting exchange offers in places you may not have considered visiting before.

Remember that the key is flexibility and don't discard offers at face value. You may have stipulated that you want an exchange with a family in London, but do you know where Farnborough or Sittingbourne are? Both are cities approximately 40 miles outside of London; both have superb road and rail links with London.

Compared with North America, Europe in its entirety is small—about the size of California and Texas combined. France may be your prime choice, but its neighboring countries of Belgium, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg are all just a short drive away by American standards.

We have many members who live in prime locations; we also have lots of members who live in the most out of the way, unheard of places who manage to achieve multiple exchanges each year, some to distant parts of the world, others with members much closer to home. They work hard all the time, checking the new memberships as they are added, sending out carefully prepared introductions. They tell us that they enjoy the preliminary work just as much as the end results.



Each exchange is unique; a bond of trust must build up as you get to know your exchange partners through emails, phone calls, faxes or letters. These Guidelines are meant to act as a checklist to help you plan your exchange from the initial inquiry stage, swapping information, agreeing an exchange to the final preparations before your vacation.

We never pretend that setting up a successful home

exchange is easy; it's often hard work. You need to devote just as much effort to finding the exchange you are looking for, as you expect your fellow members to put into finding your listing and contacting you!

Our Home Exchange Guarantee!

We *GUARANTEE* that if you don't arrange an exchange during your first year's Membership, we will extend your listing for a second year completely free of charge!

At the end of your first year of membership, simply email us if you have not yet made an exchange and we will gladly extend your membership for an additional year at no cost to you.

Contact Between Members

- Introduce your family—everyone's ages, the interests and hobbies of any children, plus some details covering your own hobbies and employment.
- Describe your home—its type, age, size and any special features it has along with a brief list of household equipment your exchange partner will be able to use. *Note: if you are offering a swimming pool and/or Jacuzzi don't forget to indicate if they are shared rather than private.
- Describe your neighborhood, climate, local amenities and other areas of interest that are accessible from your home. Stand back and look at your area from a visitor's perspective.
- Give details of public transport and distances to closest airports and major cities.
- If you are offering to exchange your car, give details of make, year, automatic or manual and condition (Note: never make a definite agreement to swap cars without first checking that your insurance company will cover your exchange partners).
- "Sell" your home to prospective exchange partners by telling them why they would enjoy staying in your home and area.
- Try to exchange with people of similar circumstances if possible. If you are a retired couple, your home may very well not be geared up for the needs of a family with toddlers. Likewise, if you have a young family, exchanging with another family—with baby equipment, toys, books and often local playmates and baby-sitters—makes the vacation so much easier.
- Prepare your Basic Exchange Offer Information to save in your Stored Templates folder (in your Admin Area on the ExchangeHomes.com website) so that it is ready to open in the contact form accessed from the full page view of each listing. Always spend a minute adapting each contact to the individual listing. Start your message with a sentence or two on what has

attracted you to their exchange offer. Also address any special needs the member has mentioned in their exchange offer and say why you think your home would suit their needs.

- All email correspondence is initiated from within your own, private Admin Area. ExchangeHomes.com doesn't post your name, street address or email address in your listing, or make them available over the World Wide Web. Remember, when you initiate contacts with fellow exchange members, it's entirely up to you how much personal information you choose to divulge.
- As all your correspondence begins in your private Admin Area, you will see 'threads' of messages back and forth for each member you have contacted and who have contacted you. Copies of all emails initiated on the ExchangeHomes.com web site either by you or to you are stored for later reference. This makes it easy to keep track of your messages.
- If you have agreed to an exchange, but have also been corresponding with other members, update them immediately so that they can pursue alternative arrangements.
- Check out for new listings regularly; remember that you can use your membership to arrange more than one exchange holiday each year. Don't totally ignore members who haven't listed your area as a destination preference— if your offer is attractive you may well persuade them to consider an exchange.

You should soon receive a response to your emails, or contacts from members who have read your listing. Be courteous and always answer all email inquiries so that those you are not interested in can get on with other exchange arrangements. You may wish to keep some of the "no?s" for consideration at a later date. Indicate this to them in your reply, and set up a file to store all your possible future contacts. It is likely that some replies to inquiries you sent out will also come back indicating possible interest at some other time.

Hopefully most members will reply to your emails promptly but there can sometimes be disappointments when members fail to reply or withdraw their exchange offer after publication of their listing.

Another critical point—remember to keep the information in your listing current. If you change your email address, remember to alter it in your Admin, otherwise no one will be able to contact you!

Be as flexible as possible about your destinations. Much of the fun of home exchanging is discovering exciting exchange offers in places you may not have considered visiting before.

Allow plenty of time to arrange your exchange. Take the initiative and contact members directly. Many experienced exchangers contact 20 or more members at the outset. It is easy to contact members by email so do send messages to as many as you want. At

this stage you are not making a firm commitment but just testing interest in your exchange offer. You will soon narrow the field to those members who are interested in an exchange with you.

It is undoubtedly a good idea to have your initial contact letter prepared in advance. (See introductory letter). Go for it and email a copy to everyone whose listing strikes your fancy. Don't be afraid to contact someone who has not listed your particular area as a preference. Most exchangers are prepared to consider areas completely outside their listed destinations and an astonishing number of exchanges involve destinations other than the preferences stated in the listings.

Remember the old, but nonetheless true adage that the early bird catches the worm. The better the offer, the quicker it will be snapped up and if you sit back and don't take the initiative, your chances of setting up a desirable exchange are significantly reduced.

Finalizing Your Plans

Once you have found definite exchange partners, provide them with photos of your home and family and any additional information they have requested, or you think could be helpful. In turn, ask them to provide you with any information that will help you with your plans. This is the point at which ANY details that are considered important by either party should be requested and supplied.

- It can definitely be reassuring to exchange references before finalizing your exchange plans. If you have exchanged before, your previous exchange partners will be ideal referees, implementing the Feedback on home exchanges rating system. This great feature provides potential exchange partners with objective comments about a listing left by previous partners. It allows members to rate and share positive *and* negative experiences with others
- Check that your homeowner's insurance will be valid while your exchange partners live in your home. Make it very clear to your agent that they are your non-paying guests. Most insurance companies will recognize that your home is at lower risk from burglary when it is occupied, but your insurance cover may be invalid if you omit to notify the company before your exchange vacation.
- If you arrange to exchange cars, again check that your exchange partners will be covered under your insurance policy to use your car. Normally, if the proposed exchange is for 30 days or less there are no problems. Also, check with your exchange partner whether his insurance will cover you fully for liability and property damage. If you are exchanging within the US your own policy should cover you fully for any car you drive domestically provided you have the owner's permission.
- Special insurance needs to be obtained from your agent for driving in Canada, and in Mexico, only insurance written by a Mexican insurance company is valid. Also, if a non-owner of your vehicle drives it into Mexico and is stopped for a registration check, both he can the vehicle can end up impounded.

- Agree maximum repair bills to be paid before making a claim. Also agree any restrictions on use or mileage. If your exchange partner's family includes teenagers, stipulate that they are not allowed to drive your car.
- Agree payment of household bills (most exchangers continue to pay their own bills apart from the telephone bill which can be billed separately for the exchange period if arranged in advance).
- Pets—some exchangers are quite happy to look after pets for their partners, but don't feel obliged to offer these services if you are worried about the responsibility. Likewise, don't burden your guests unless you are sure they are happy with the arrangement. In all likelihood your partners will use your home as a base while making daily and often overnight sightseeing trips, and may not want to be tied down with pet care. Clarify everything at these initial stages of making arrangements.
- Plant care—if your guests agree to water your plants for you, stick to simple requests. Unless you are setting up a long-term exchange, plants will survive without fertilizers, foods and supplements until you return.
- Yard and garden care—few people want to spend hours of their vacation tending someone else's yard. This is one instance where the homeowner should definitely arrange for outside yard and pool care so as not to burden their guests.
- Repairs to household appliances - you may agree to reimburse your partners for small, emergency repairs but ask them to consult with you before arranging major repairs.
- If you can arrange an overlap at one of the exchange homes that's ideal, as you will both feel more comfortable about your vacation if you have been able to meet personally. However, this is not usually possible and, if not, arrange for a neighbor or relative or friend living nearby to act as your agent, handing over keys and helping with any problems (unfamiliar domestic appliances can sometimes be a puzzle so it is reassuring to have a "local" to turn to for advice).
- Exchangers are expected to allow use of most of their household equipment by their exchange partners, but if you have anything of value which you don't want used, make certain your exchange partners are aware of what is "out of bounds"; ideally, lock away anything not to be used.
- Pets and plants—Many exchangers are quite happy to look after plants and/or pets for their partners but don't feel obliged to do so if you are in any way worried about the responsibility, or want to spend some time away from your exchange base. If your guests agree to look after plants please keep to simple requests - few people want to spend hours on vacation tending someone else's back yard!

Very occasionally a member may report feeling "bullied" into an agreement about something: possibly allowing unlimited use of their car when they would prefer restricted

use, or caring for a pet when they would prefer not to be tied down, staying the whole period in their exchange partner's home. It really is much better to face the possibility of causing some disappointment now, while still negotiating, rather than let it pass and embark on your vacation feeling resentful or worried. In short—NEVER accept an exchange offer if you feel in any way uneasy about it—far better to risk losing the offer than have regrets later.

Although you may make most of your arrangements by email or phone, always keep copies of all your emails and notes covering phone conversations. This is the stage where it's vital that you are both 100% happy with all the planning.

If any information your exchange partner provides is perplexing to you, always ask for a clear explanation. There can occasionally be misunderstandings over jargon, even between English speakers.

Exchange Agreement

When you are fully satisfied with all the arrangements agreed with your partners, we strongly advise that you finalize everything by preparing an Exchange Agreement stating the dates of the exchange and listing all decisions taken.

We provide excellent samples of both Home Exchange Agreements and Car Exchange Agreements in both Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF formats on the web site. Just go to [Sample Forms and Agreements](#).

We also recommend that once your Home Exchange Agreement is worded to the complete satisfaction of both parties, you use a web site such [EchoSign.com](#) to digitally sign it. All you have to do is upload or fax in an agreement that needs to be signed, and [EchoSign](#) e-mails it to the other party. This service is completely free.

Do NOT buy your tickets until you have a firm, written and signed exchange agreement.

Airline Tickets and Travel Insurance: as the majority of airline tickets purchased are usually non-refundable, do not under any circumstances pay for tickets until you are sure you have a firm exchange agreement. When both parties agree to go ahead and buy their tickets, we strongly advise that you do so simultaneously and then exchange either copies, or documents proving purchase, as an extra reassurance for both parties.

When booking your flight, check that your insurance will cover you for cancellation because of illness, etc. You may also wish to arrange additional insurance cover against your exchange partners canceling for similar reasons (no policy will cover against a member just changing their mind about going ahead with an exchange and this is a small risk you must accept when arranging a home exchange vacation).

Again, your insurance agent will be able to advise you. Alternatively we provide you with a link to a specialist travel insurance company on the website's Resources page.

At this stage you have made a binding agreement to go ahead with the exchange. Withdrawal would be reprehensible and would cause great inconvenience and expense

to your partners. Any members known to have broken a firm agreement, documented as we've suggested above, will be excluded from any future listings. All the major clubs also follow a mutual agreement to circulate details of any members renegeing on an agreement

If you should get an attractive exchange offer after already agreeing to an exchange, why not suggest an exchange at a later date? Just breaking an exchange agreement because a better offer comes along is taboo among home exchangers.

In the case of unavoidable cancellation (death, illness, redundancy in the family), telephone your exchange partner immediately. If at all possible arrange an exchange at another time, or failing that arrange for a friend or neighbor to take your place.

Risks of Home Exchange

ExchangeHomes.Com accepts members' listings on trust. It would be impossible to thoroughly vet each member and at the same time keep the cost of membership at a realistic level. Generally though, it is much safer to have your home occupied while you are away.

By paying to join an organization such as ours, you have already taken a very significant step towards ensuring your ability to link up with other responsibly minded folks. More than once we've had satisfied members contact us and relate stories of unhappy exchanges set up through classified ads, list for free websites, etc. They were anxious to tell us that after joining an established club such as ExchangeHomes.com, their experiences were completely the opposite. In simple terms, you get what you pay for!

The most likely cause for concern is cancellation of a firm agreement. However, if you have arranged adequate insurance and have done all the groundwork before finally agreeing to an exchange, you should have few problems. Very few genuine home exchangers will legally sign a Home Exchange Agreement while intending not to honor it. Your cause for concern should be with a potential partner who, for whatever reasons, appears to be delaying taking this landmark step. There is no genuine reason why a potential partner should hesitate to sign an Agreement—in fact if anyone you are proposing to exchange with does, terminate arrangements immediately and contact us!

Although damage to property can happen, this is rarely a serious problem—having someone in your own home is a great incentive to treat your exchange partner's home with care. Should any accidents or damage occur, the rule is straightforward enough: whoever caused the damage is responsible its replacement or having it repaired.

The most common problem that can occur is simply a difference in housekeeping standards. It is irritating if you have worked hard to ensure that your own home is clean and tidy before your vacation, only to arrive at a home not nearly as well kept. However, rather than let it spoil your vacation just reflect upon the advantages you will still enjoy even the most modest "lived in" home is sure to provide greater space and comfort than a spotless hotel room.

But having said all that, one overriding factor remains: if you would be so concerned about your home being lived in by strangers that you would not enjoy your vacation, please do not even consider a home exchange vacation.

Your Agent

Ideally, try to arrange to overlap with your exchange partner, if only for a few hours, as both parties will feel more assured if they have been able to meet. If possible it is a good idea for one of the exchangers to meet the other at the airport, although in reality this does not often happen. Arranging departures and arrivals so that they overlap by a couple of hours can make a brief meeting possible, in which case arrange to meet your partners at a pre-arranged place in the airport.

Failing this, make sure that a friend or neighbor, who is prepared to act as your agent, welcomes your guests and is available to help with any problems they might have. She or he will retain a set of house keys and will be responsible for passing two sets of keys to your guests.

Home Exchange Book (Information Package)

Again, we've provided a very detailed example of a good Home Exchange Book on the ExchangeHomes.com web site under Help Center > Miscellaneous > Sample Forms and Agreements, or, click here: [Home Exchange Book](#).

Start a book a few weeks before your vacation and include in it any information you think your guests might find useful. This should also be kept for reference and updated for future guests.

Preparing For Your Guests

- Leave your home clean and tidy with free storage space in the bedrooms and kitchen for your guests' needs. Make up the beds that will be used with clean bed linen and provide clean towels.
- If your guests have agreed to feed a pet, leave an adequate supply of food. If the pet is a cat or dog, is it a gregarious type of animal, which normally gets along well with strangers? If it is more inclined to be timid, it would be a good idea to have a neighbor come by and feed it for a few days prior to your departure. That way it will already be used to an altered routine.
- Attach simple operating instructions to appliances and your air conditioning and heating systems.
- Most of your household equipment will likely be left for your guests' use, but if you have any expensive items or other articles you don't want used, either lock them away or make certain that your guests are aware of what is "out of bounds". Irreplaceable antiques and personal items should be put securely away,

especially if some of the guests are small children. Lock up any personal papers or records.

- Clean out your refrigerator and stock it with just a few basic foods for your guests upon arrival so that they do not have to rush out to the supermarket immediately. Leave a supply of staples in the pantry; the general rule of thumb is that guests' replace whatever they use before departure.
- Don't forget any "guest privileges" you may have promised when setting up the exchange. Leave any promised tickets or passes in a pre-arranged place and make guest arrangements at your golf club, etc.
- Leave three sets of keys with your agent (friend or neighbor), and make certain that she or he will be home to welcome your guests. Let other friends and neighbors who would enjoy meeting your exchange partners know of their arrival-home exchange members are generally adventurous and independent and are very likely to enjoy the chance of meeting the "natives".

Contingency Plans

When embarking upon setting up a home exchange, it's always wise to have a contingency plan, ready to be implemented should a genuine crisis occur. Ask neighbors, family members and colleagues if they would be interested in an exchange vacation; research property management companies in your area that might be able to offer a short-term rental.

But most important, before you begin making any contact which could lead to a home exchange vacation, please think very seriously about the commitment you are about to make and if there is even the slightest chance that you may change your mind at the last minute, stop right now. Obviously home exchange is not for you.

The vast majority of home exchanges usually take place without any problems whatsoever, probably because most people are responsible and realize that they are dealing with homeowners just like themselves and not a tour company.

Should a legitimate emergency arise such as a serious illness or a death in the family, if you have already made contingency plans, implement them immediately; otherwise make every effort to make suitable alternative arrangements for your exchange partners.

It is a general consensus among all Home Exchange Clubs, Organizations, etc., that if we ever hear of a member canceling an exchange once a firm commitment has been made and tickets have been purchased, that member will be blacklisted and barred from future membership with ANY club.

Home From Home

Enjoy your rent-free vacation in the comfort of your exchange partner's home and when it is time to depart, leave it exactly as you found it. Replace food and other supplies you

have used. It is a kind gesture to leave a little surprise gift to show your host how much you have enjoyed your vacation—many home exchangers form lasting friendships!

Remember that you are free to contact as many members listed on our website as you wish. You can arrange more than one exchange vacation in a year (some home exchangers arrange short weekend breaks near home) and perhaps, with the later Internet listings, begin making plans for exchange vacations next year.

Some members are able to arrange their exchanges very quickly, while others find it can take some months to find the exchange they are looking for, and then finalize the arrangements. Whenever you see listings which interest you, take the initiative and contact the members concerned without delay—this will increase your chances of setting up the exchanges you really hoped for.

If you have time after your vacation please let us know about your exchange and any suggestions you have which would be useful to pass on to other members.

Other Options Available

Hospitality Exchanges

Hospitality exchange is a reciprocal arrangement involving providing accommodation and meals in your home for a guest in return for the same. Although not as popular as home exchange it can definitely be an enjoyable and inexpensive way of visiting another country, particularly for single people and teenagers. Again, for a successful exchange, care should be taken in selecting compatible partners.

Hospitality exchanges involve little or no exchange of money and members of home exchange clubs often find it a viable alternative when full exchanges cannot be arranged to fit their schedules.

Renting Your Home

ExchangeHomes.Com is a **HOME EXCHANGE** organization. All properties listed with us must offer Home Exchange as the first alternative. We ask members to report to us any listings that disregard this stipulation and appear to be without any genuine intention of entering into an exchange. Anyone proven to be using a membership with ExchangeHomes.Com as a means of advertising properties used exclusively as rentals will be canceled immediately and all fees paid to ExchangeHomes.Com forfeited.

However, if you have already arranged your own vacation you may wish to recoup some of the cost by renting your own home while you are away or you may wish to rent a second home or vacation cottage while it is not in use. Take the same precautions as you would when arranging a home exchange.

The vast majority of people will treat your home with respect in return for reasonable rent, but it is important to be very honest in describing the attractions of your home and

area. (Your guest will be paying for the privilege of living in your home and has a right to know the standard of accommodation.)

Unlike home exchangers, renters don't have the added incentive of knowing they have entrusted their home to you, and thus to treat your property well. For this reason, select your tenant with care; forward a signed rental agreement indicating the total rent payable and when it is due to be paid. As with home exchange, make certain that the home is clean and tidy with clean bed linen and towels provided. Arrange for a friend or neighbor to act as your agent by handing over keys and helping with problems.

Sample Letters, information sheets, etc.

Sample Initial Contact Letter to Another Member

Dear _____

I'm writing to you after reading your listing on the ExchangeHomes.Com web site. Your home and its surroundings seem to be exactly what we are looking for and I am enclosing an information sheet about our home, area and family which I hope you will find appealing.

We are looking for a home exchange between July 16 and July 30 of this year, although we can be flexible within a week or so on either side of those dates.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, _____

Sample Information Sheet To Another Member

Dear _____

This sheet is intended to provide you with some basic information about both my home and the area in which it is located. I will assume that you have not visited Southern California before, but believe me, it really is the perfect place for a vacation. At certain times of the year you can be on the beach in the morning and the ski slopes in the afternoon. Where else in the world is that possible?

My home is located in Santa Clarita, a city in northern Los Angeles County, which consistently rates as either the fourth or fifth safest city in the entire United States. It is a true "family" oriented community with numerous parks and playgrounds and it is also the home of "Six Flags Magic Mountain"., a really terrific theme park.

During recent years Santa Clarita has also been dubbed "the new Hollywood".. Two major Hollywood studios have moved here and locations throughout Santa Clarita are

frequently used for authentic outdoor scenes. It is also called "Tree City" because of the volume of trees planted each year

If you have ever watched one of the Lassie films, Bob Weatherwax, the owner, breeder and trainer of these fine dogs lives very close to us and the "Lassies" can very often be seen in their exercise run alongside his house. Also close by is Sand Canyon, a winding, secluded canyon locale where many stars and personalities make their homes.

We are actually located about 40 miles from several beaches (our favorite is Ventura with its harbor, marina and pier); 40 miles from the mountains and ski slopes and 40 miles from the magnificent Mojave Desert. Universal Studios is a 30-minute drive on the freeway (access one mile, one stop light), Disneyland 90 minutes. If you wish to make trips to places such as the Bay Area and Las Vegas, Burbank Community Airport is just 20 minutes away on the freeway.

Our home is on a quiet street on a 1/4 acre, fenced lot, completely safe for children. Much of the back garden has been designed specifically to attract wildlife and it is a joy to sit on the patio and watch the multitude of humming birds which visit our feeders—anyone exchanging with us, must be prepared to keep them filled!

There is also a lawn with professional-size golf net for practicing your swing, and a barbecue.

The house is 25 years old and we have owned it for 17 of those years. It is single storey, with 4 bedrooms (we have transformed one into an office), 2 bathrooms, living room, family room and a huge, eat-in, country kitchen—very modern with lots of oak. Part of the adjoining, 2-car garage is a laundry area with a washer and tumble drier. We have satellite tv and there are tv's in the living room and family room and a dvr.

The entire house was newly carpeted two years ago and the living room newly furnished last year. The general ambiance is casual; it is a family home where our two daughters did most of their growing up.

It could very comfortably accommodate two adults and 2 to 3 children.

Car exchange is possible and we would be happy to care for your pets, although our two dalmatians will most likely "visit" our daughter during an exchange; we would not want to burden anyone with the amount of exercise they need!

Our exchange party will only be 2 adults, both of us non-smokers. We would also stipulate that inside our home is a no-smoking area. We are both responsible professionals with our own businesses. We have traveled extensively and we would like to exchange for around 2 weeks in the summer.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, _____

Sample of a Reply to a Letter To Another Member

Dear _____

Thank you very much for your letter regarding a possible home exchange. The descriptive material you included provided lots of information and we all loved the photographs of your home.

My family and I are definitely interested in the possibility of an exchange and towards this end, I am enclosing a package of information about my home, my family and the area in which we live.

Please look at everything and if you are still interested in moving forward with the arrangement, please get in touch again.

Please feel free to call or write if you have any questions. We are all looking forward to hearing from you again soon.

Sincerely, _____

Don't forget to include a copy of your information sheet with this letter!

Sample of a Letter of Regret

Dear _____

Thank you very much for your letter regarding the possibility of a home exchange. Your letter was very informative and your home and the area in which you live sound lovely.

Unfortunately, we have already committed to firm arrangements for an exchange this summer, but we would love to keep in touch because there is always next year.

Sincerely, _____

The letter of regret is one of the most important you can write. It lets people know quickly that you are not interested and allows them to immediately move on to other options. Remember, a negative reply is far better than no reply at all, and it's good manners!

Following is some basic information providing you with guidelines on how to manage your home exchange listing on the worldwide web. More detailed instructions can be obtained by clicking the link labeled "Help Center", located in the top margin on most of the ExchangeHomes.com pages. Our F.A.Q. section also contains answers to common questions.

Editing Your Listing

Throughout the period of your membership, you can edit the content of your Internet listing as often as you wish. This represents one of the most powerful features of our web site.

Log in through the "Member login" button with your registered email address and the password you currently have set up in your Admin area.

- At the next page—your own private Admin area—locate My Home Exchange Listing(s) to the right of the screen and click "Edit".
- Make the required changes, and click on the "Save" button at the bottom of the form.
- This will return you to your main Admin area.

Please remember to edit your listing whenever your vacation circumstances change AND if you change your email address. If your email address isn't current, your fellow members will have no way of contacting you. To protect your privacy, your email address is never published on the Internet—all contacts between members are initiated via an email form.

Personal Web Addresses:

There is a text box provided in the Membership Form (in the Contact Information area) where you can include a direct link to either your personal home page, additionally, four other text boxes allow you to set up links to web sites that provide information on the area you live in. Any links to outside websites included in the general text description areas will be deleted. Everyone, members and visitors view the text in the description boxes. If we allowed links to email addresses and personal web addresses to remain, this would present casual visitors with a free means to contact our paid members. It also encourages spammers and email address harvesters.

Please DO NOT CHANGE any editing we may have performed to assist the way certain critical fields within the database sort. The phraseology and text case we use is important to enable other members to perform critical searches and find your listing.

Locating Exchanges by Listing I.D.

When you receive a contact email from a fellow member, a direct link to that member's listing will be programmed to be included in the body of the email. Just click on this link to display the member's listing in your web browser.

To locate a listing by an I.D. number at any other time:

- Go to ExchangeHomes.com
- Click on "Home Listings" in the top margin.
- At the next screen, enter the I.D. of the listing you wish to view in the box in the left margin labeled "Listing I.D."

Photographs

Photographs add enormously to the appeal of an exchange listing and we encourage you to add plenty to your home exchange listing. There is no restriction—add as many as you wish. In fact, it's worth bearing in mind that visitors and members, when searching the listings can specify that they only wish to view listings containing photographs.

For detailed instructions on adding photographs to you listing, just click on the link to the Help Center, then locate "Add Photos and Captions" under the sub-heading Managing Listings.

Restrictions:

- Your digital photograph must have come from an original.
- You cannot link to a photograph hosted on another web site. Addresses change and links become broken. In addition, the legal implications make it impractical.
- It should be in either a JPG or GIF format.

Renewing Your Membership

Your membership lasts for one, two or three years (depending upon the period you selected when joining) and normally you will receive notification from us by email, inviting you to renew. Another reason to keep your registered email address current!

Renewals are offered for one, two or three years and the fee is lower than the published rate for first time joiners. The reduced rate for renewals reflects the fact that you are already set up with us administratively.

However, if you allow your membership to expire and subsequently log on to the site, you will automatically be invited to begin the Listing Renewal Process.

The current renewal fees are:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------|
| 1. One year..... | \$30.00 |
| 2. Two years..... | \$35.00 |
| 3. Three years | \$40.00 |

The choice is yours ...

Member's Privacy

Member's privacy is paramount to ExchangeHomes.com. No personal contact information is displayed in a listing or made available to visitors or other members. ExchangeHomes.Com has developed a reliable advanced system for allowing initial contact between interested parties without divulging any personal information such as names, street addresses, telephone numbers or email addresses.

How does this affect you? It means you can list your home confident that your contact information will never be displayed or accessed by anyone viewing your listing. Fellow members can contact you via the email form located within your listing without ever knowing your email address. Our system keeps your email address and all other contact information secure and hidden from view, and it is only after someone has composed an email to you that your email address is added to the outgoing email.

For full and complete details covering all legal aspects of your Membership, click on the following links on the ExchangeHomes.com web site.

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Membership](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

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