

What to Bring your Host Family



Student Preparation Activity

It's hard to imagine what your host family will be like and how their daily lifestyle is different from your own. You are probably excited to meet them and you want to bring them a gift, but it's hard to think of a gift that will be unique to them and will adequately demonstrate where you come from.

The objective of this activity is to help you brainstorm gifts for your host family that will help you teach them about where you come from; however, we also hope your gift can be a catalyst for interaction and deeper discussion with your host family regarding the differences and similarities between your lifestyles. Remember that you do not have to bring a gift for every single family member.

Step 1: Brainstorm gifts that would be unique and meaningful. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

Foods:

Are there any packaged foods that are considered specialties from your region (ex: wild rice from Minnesota; dried cherries from Michigan or Washington; barbecue sauce from Kansas City)?

Now, think of how you would advise your host family on how to use that food. Do you eat it right out of the package? Or are there recipes that include this food that you might be able to cook with them?

Here are some other ideas of foods you could prepare with your host family that are considered typical of the U.S. (and easy to pack if you get them in box form!): Chocolate chip cookies, brownies, pancakes (which go well with the maple syrup that might be typical of your region!), macaroni and cheese, S'mores. Can you think of any others?

Products or brands:

Are there any products that are manufactured in your region (such as OshKosh B'gosh overalls from Wisconsin; John Deere artifacts from Illinois; Burt's Bees products from Georgia)?

You could also bring a calendar or book about your town or state that has lots of pictures.

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Clothing or accessories from your favorite sports team:

Do you support a certain college or professional sports team? If so, which team, and what sport do they play? Could you describe this sport to your host family if they don't know it? Do they have this sport in the place you will be visiting?

Step 2: Make a photo album to show your host family what your life is like where you're from. Include photos of your friends and family, your home and neighborhood, pets, favorite pastimes, vacations you have taken, special events you have participated in, etc.

You might even want to include a planner or school schedule to show what your daily lifestyle looks like. Your host family will enjoy hearing about your life and how it differs from theirs.

Write down any key vocabulary words that you will need to explain your personal interests and favorite pastimes:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Step 3: Finally, share your list of possible gifts with your classmates and practice showing your photo album and explaining the photos in the target language as you would do with your host family!