

Homestay FAQ

What is Homestay ?

The Homestay program was established to provide International and U.S. Odyssey of the Mind teams the opportunity to experience each other's cultures. After World Finals, International teams may stay in U.S. homes with American families, providing first hand experiences for both groups.

Do we have to be a U.S. team competing at World Finals to participate?

No! Any Odyssey team can participate. Having an International team stay with your team families is a great experience for any team to have.

How do the International teams get to the Homestay families' city?

If the Homestay team is competing at World Finals, sometimes the International teams travel home on the bus or in vehicles with them. If that's possible, that is very helpful for the International teams. Sometimes International teams make their own travel arrangements to the Homestay city. It is always important for teams to share travel information so people are met and no one gets stranded!

How do we arrange where the team members stay?

Coaches of the International team and the U.S. Homestay team exchange information when setting up the Homestay. Most teams have 5-7 members, and travel with 2 adults. Homestay families usually have 2-4 guests stay with each family. This helps with transportation and helps the International team members to always have someone they know with them.

Are the International teams insured during their stay?

Yes.

Would we know in advance of any special medical/dietary needs?

Yes, coaches should discuss this when setting up the Homestay visit.

What kinds of things should we do while the International teams are staying with us?

International kids want to experience what U.S. families do together! Things like picnics, going to the mall, swimming, and playing in the park are fine. If both teams want to schedule outings together to special places---it's up to them. Museums, national parks, fairs---anything that teams would like to do together to experience U.S. life is great. Spending time together is what teams enjoy most.

What is the cost for Homestay families?

U. S. families provide a place to stay and meals. Visiting teams bring their own spending money, and are expected to pay their own way for movies, souvenirs, admission fees, etc. Sometimes visiting teams need to use the host families' washing machines. Hosting International teams does not need to involve a lot of money.

Are Homestay families expected to spend 24 hours a day with their visiting teams?

No! Sometimes visiting teams have outings on their own -- they can make arrangements with their host families for that. Many people have to work, so it is nice to have evening and weekend events planned for the host and visiting teams to do together so that everyone can participate. It is helpful to have someone from one or more host families available during the day so that the visiting team can be together somewhere if their host families have to be at work all day.

Do the International teams speak English?

Usually there is at least one person with the team who speaks English. Often, most or all team members do (especially older teams). It can range from no English to fluent English. It's all part of the fun adventure of hosting a team!

How long do teams stay?

Most teams stay 3-7 days. It's nice for teams to be able to stay through the weekend after World Finals, so working members of host families can spend more time with teams.

How do the International teams get to the airport when it's time for them to return home?

Coaches make those arrangements together when planning the Homestay. Most times the Homestay families get team members to the airport. In some cases, bus or some other type of travel may be arranged by the International coach. Any help that you can give to transport International teams is always greatly appreciated.

Should a single family try to host an International Team?

This is not a good idea. The experience is most enjoyable for everyone involved when two or three families work together to host an International Team. It is best if the hosting families already know each other and work well together. They may be parents of team members, from the same school, or relatives and neighbors.

Is it better to have two or more adults available during the day?

Yes, this is better if possible. If you want to take the International Team and coaches and your kids and their team members anywhere during the day, you will need multiple vehicles and drivers. This can be an opportunity to involve adults who may not have guest team members staying in their homes.

Our kids will still be in school the week following World Finals. Can the International students attend school with them for a day?

By all means. Consult with your school administrators well in advance and arrange the dates and possible activities.

Do Division IV Teams do Homestays?

Yes. Most International Div IV teams are made up of Odyssey Alumni who still enjoy it and University students intending to be educators. In some Universities, Odyssey of the Mind is part of the curriculum for future teachers. This is an opportunity for US OotM Alumni, young teachers and professionals to have a great time hosting these University students.

Do Division I Teams do Homestays?

Yes, but not as many as Div II and Div III. With elementary school age teams you can expect there to be more adults. Usually an additional parent or two will come with their kids and coach.

What should we do if we want to participate in the Homestay program?

Please contact Tom Scott at OdysseyHomestay@gmail.com We will do our best to match you with an International team that wants have a Homestay experience!