

HOMESTAYS

Definition

Homestay is a traditional practice in many industrialised countries, especially in North America, Australasia and Britain. It is comparable to bed and breakfasts, but even less formal. A homestay property is a non-commercialized, private residence that accommodates paying guest(s) who enjoy staying in the comfort and security of a family home. These guests often reside in the family home for an extended period of time, usually months rather than days. It is a safe, affordable means of housing popular amongst international students, interns, travelling professionals and adult visitors from other countries, who are looking to experience and learn about local lifestyle and culture.



Homestay is not specifically a niche tourism segment, but rather a type of accommodation that is used by tourists when staying at a destination and pursuing other purposes of visit.

Estimate of Global Market Size

It is almost impossible to measure the market size of homestays; however as many as 500,000 international tourists each year are estimated to have used a homestay.

Potential for Growth

Tourists are becoming increasingly adventurous and well travelled. Consequently their search for unique cultural experiences will also increase, and they will seek out new forms of accommodation. Therefore growth rates are expected to be strong, albeit from a relatively small base.

The popularity of homestay will also be boosted by the so-called "gap year" student. Whilst hostel and guesthouse accommodation has proven popular with young travellers due to their desire to interact fully with local families, the same interests are likely to drive the homestay market.

Most tourist boards now offer a homestay option. In particular this has spread outside of the traditional tourism destinations in Europe and North America, to other areas such as Africa, where some countries further segment this market by offering stays with indigenous tribes. Such schemes will raise the profile of homestay tourism.

Brief Profile of Consumers

Homestay consumers are similar in profile to cultural tourists. They predominantly fall into the 45-55 year old age group, and are most likely to be empty nesters (adults whose children have left home).

These consumers have considerable travel experience, are less likely to be quality conscious, and are more sensitive to environmental and social concerns. In addition to these consumers, the younger age group, driven by the 'gap year' student, is also a key demographic group.

Main Source Markets

The main source markets will be the key outbound tourist generating countries. In particular:

- Germany
- United States
- United Kingdom
- Japan
- China
- Italy
- Spain
- Scandinavia
- France

Main Competing Destinations

The destinations where homestays are currently most established include:

- United States
- Japan
- United Kingdom
- Canada
- China
- Australia

Key Tour Operators

Responsible Travel

United Kingdom

<http://www.responsibletravel.com>

3rd Floor, Pavilion House, 6 Old Steine, Brighton BN1 1EJ

Tel: (+44) 1273 600030

Gohomestay

International

<http://www.gohomestay.com>

Email: info@gohomestay.com

Lets Homestay

New Zealand

Specialising in farmhouse homestays in New Zealand

<http://www.farmstay.co.nz>

P.O.Box 3129, Greerton, Tauranga

Tel: (+64) 7 543 3220

Key Points for Marketing and Distribution

The key places for marketing and distributing homestays are websites and the national media in key destinations. In particular:

United States: New York Times - travel section

<http://travel.nytimes.com>

United States: Washington Post - travel section

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/artsandliving/travel>

United States: Wall Street Journal travel section

http://online.wsj.com/personal_journal/travel

United Kingdom: Times - travel section

http://travel.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/travel

United Kingdom: Telegraph - travel section

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel>

Germany: Faz Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

<http://www.faz.net>

Germany: Financial Times Deutschland – travel section

<http://www.ftd.de/lifestyle/reise>

Additional Information

International homestay agency

<http://www.homestayagency.com>

International directory of homestays

<http://www.homestayweb.com>

China Homestay

<http://www.chinahomestay.org>

Homestay 101 online magazine - blog

<http://homestayemagazine.blogspot.com>