

## Essentials if You Wish to Offer Your Home for a Home Exchange

I am identifying what I consider essentials that all homes should have for a house swap. Most homes have many more than these essentials. I have come across one with less and this can be very disappointing. I have learned that it is best to ask about a number of these features if you are unsure from the description on the website. However, if you are offering a perfect location, people may consider house swapping with you even if you do not include all of these essentials.

Generally speaking, the minimum requirements are as follows:

- Hot and cold running water and a permanent electricity supply
- Ensure that the home is in good order, e.g. no running toilets, falling curtains, dripping taps, dangerous electrical points
- A fully functional shower with shower curtain or rail
- A plentiful supply of towels and soap
- A hairdryer
- At least one fully functional toilet and a plentiful supply of toilet paper, a toilet brush and cleaning material
- House access should be reasonable. If elevators are required, they should be in working order, if there is only stair access, the number of flights of stairs should be clear and the stairways well lit
- Home should be clean and in good order with all light bulbs working and power points functional
- Kitchen should be clean and tidy with fully functional stove top and oven
- A plentiful supply of kitchen appliances and utensils including a corkscrew, can opener, colander, whisk, chopping board, sharp cutting knife, wooden spoon, peeler, serving spoons and spatula
- At least three pots and pans and a frying pan
- A clean supply of tea towels
- Four settings of a full set of crockery and cutlery
- Some water and drinking glasses
- Dishwashing liquid or equivalent if there is a dishwasher
- A supply of wiping up cloths and a scourer
- A toaster
- A microwave
- A kettle or jug for hot water
- A coffee jug or percolator
- A fridge
- Salt, pepper, sugar, cling film, aluminum foil, kitchen paper
- Bin/ trash bags
- A table and chairs to eat at
- Two lounge chairs or a sofa to sit on
- A functioning television
- Some form of Internet access
- A double bed (not just mattresses pushed together) with pillows, bed linen and covers
- A change of clean bed linen
- A generous supply of coat hangers, and free wardrobe and drawer space to hang clothes in A washing machine or a laundry facility within the building
- Clothes washing powder or liquid and softener
- A dryer or a means of hanging washing to dry
- An iron and ironing board
- Cleaning utensils and materials to clean the house such as dusters, polish, bucket and mop, brush and dustpan, vacuum cleaner

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If you are contemplating offering your house for exchange, I recommend that you ensure that you offer the above list as an absolute minimum. The appliances do not have to be of high quality but they do have to be fully functional. Appliances such as a microwave, a hairdryer and a toaster can be purchased at very low prices. I can't stress enough, they do not have to be top end of the market but they do have to work. If for any reason you are unable to meet this minimum requirement then it is best that you warn potential swappers in advance so that they do not have expectations that cannot be met on arrival.

On a couple of occasions I have encountered a kitchen in a second home with a dearth of utensils. On such occasions, the hosts have made comments inferring that as we are on vacation they assume we will be eating out most of the time anyway. Please do not make that assumption. While that may be the case with some people, it certainly is not with everyone. I tend to go on long trips of up to six months in length. While we do enjoy meals out sampling local restaurants and specialty dishes, by far the vast majority of our meals we cook at home in our exchange house, having purchased groceries in local markets and supermarkets. We need a fully functional kitchen with utensils.