

## Establishing a Dialogue with a Potential Exchange

Before deciding on and embarking on a home exchange, it is important to satisfy yourself that the home exchange will deliver everything that you expect of it. The best way to do this is to establish a dialogue. Initially, the best way to make enquiries is by email. You will have a number of questions. Sometimes it is easier to arrange to call them to find out the answers. If it is an overseas call, you may prefer to use the free Viber, FaceTime, Skype or some similar VOIP service. There are pros and cons as to whether initially to talk or use email. Talking is good because you start to build a rapport with your exchangers and get a feel for what type of people they are. Email is great too, as you have a written record of their answers. Many of the questions you may have will already have been answered in the website description of the house.

Here is a suggested list of the types of questions that you will want to ask:

- Is there a car included?
- Where is the nearest airport?
- Which is the easiest way to arrive at the house?
- Is there good local public transport?
- How many bedrooms and bathrooms (this is usually explicit on the website)?
- Is there a laundry in the house for washing and drying linen and clothes?
- How far to the nearest bank, grocery and liquor stores, and which do you recommend?
- What is the average local temperature at the time of year you intend to visit?
- What are the local views and attractions?
- Are there good local restaurants and cafes?
- Does the home have television?

These questions are only suggestions; you will find that you also have more specific questions to add, dependent upon your individual needs. Reading my book, *Luxury Globetrotting on a Staycation Budget*, will answer many of these questions.

Be careful not to ask too many email questions, as having to spend hours answering emails may deter the prospective home exchangers from exchanging with you. Try to apply common sense in the approach you use.