SustainableBolivia

An Overview on Living with a Host Family

- The monthly costs that you pay to live with your host family are meant for your meals and extra use of household amenities. Please expect or offer to pay for any other outside activities you may join your family for (restaurants, excursions, etc.).

- Try to strike a balance between your own private time and the time spent with your family. You will likely enjoy meeting up with other volunteers and spending time outside of the house. However, you want to try to also spend a solid amount of time with your family to reap the benefits of living with a Bolivian family.

- Communicate with your family about using their landline phone. Phone plans vary and you should ask about making calls to cell phones versus other landlines. As well, you should avoid making long-distance calls and instead use the Sustainable Bolivia international office line or go to a local call center.

- Lunch is the primary meal in Bolivia. You will normally receive a soup and main dish at lunch and much lighter items for breakfast and dinner. If you will not be present for a meal, please communicate with your family and you can also ask them to save your plate.

- Many middle to upper class families here have a person called an *empleada* who helps with cleaning the house, doing laundry and sometimes making meals. Some are treated strictly as an employee by the family but you may certainly build a friendly relationship with them.

- Please inquire with your family about washing your clothes. If they have a wash sink you should be able to wash your clothes by hand or a household cleaning person may offer. If your family has a washing machine be sure to ask about using it, as they may be more sensitive about the use of such expensive household items. Be prepared to buy your own washing powder.

- Be sure to clean up after yourself in any common areas of the household (ie Kitchen, bathroom, living room). Your bedroom should also be kept in a respectable condition.

- Be mindful of your water and electricity use. Limit your time in the shower and turn off lights when not in use. Unplug electronic devices when you are not using them.

- When going out be sure to inform your family of your plans, especially if coming back late. They will consider you a part of their family for the time you are here and will worry about you just as they would their own children.

- Sustainable Bolivia asks that all volunteers sustain from alcohol and drug use while volunteering. However, we understand that volunteers will enjoy going out on weekends. We simply ask that you do not bring any alcohol or drugs into your host family's home, as this would be a sign of great disrespect. The owner of a property can face imprisonment if illegal substances are found on their property.

- If you wish to have guests over to the house be sure to ask your family's permission in advance. In general it may be frowned upon to have overnight guests as well, especially without informing them.

Last updated 20180517