



## 2017 HomeExchange Ready checklist

Use this checklist to make your home ready to exchange.

**Tip:** As you make repairs and check to make sure your home is in working-order, don't forget your camera and a note pad. Including photos in your "home manual" is a great way to let your exchange partners know how things operate in your home.

### Doors/Street Access:

- Dress things up: take a tip from fancy real-estate catalogues and spend a little time giving your home curb-appeal.
- House Number: make sure they are clearly marked and visible
- Clear Weeds and dead/dying plants - tidy up your front yard and make the path to your front door.
- Fresh paint: touching up your front door is a cheap and effective way to make your place look inviting. Adding a nice welcome mat can make it inviting but also helps to keep floors clean.
- Doors - squeaky doors are sometimes a fact of life with old homes or homes near the ocean. A little grease will, if not eliminate the squeak all-together, make the issue less problematic.
- Sliding doors and screens - you may have gotten used to your sliding door "sticking" a bit, but an exchange partner may not be so keen to ignore the issue.
- Locks and bolts - ensure these...well...lock! If not, it may be time to replace them.

### Whole house:

- HVAC - Check and replace air filters for your HVAC systems
- Smoke and CO2 detectors - Check batteries and replace as needed.
- Water heater temperature - you may like your water to be scalding when it pours out of your shower, but many people prefer 105 Degrees F/40 Degrees C.
- Fuses and Breakers - make sure your exchange partner know where the breaker box is located.

- ❑ Paint - it's a no-brainer, if there is paint that is chipping or peeling off, it's a good time to touch up those areas.
- ❑ Stains - only so much you can do, but if something is noticeable, let your exchange partner know in their welcome packet. It can be stressful if halfway through an exchange you notice a stain and think that you may have been the culprit.
- ❑ Leaks - even if you live in the middle of the desert where it hardly rains you don't want an exchange partner having to deal with an issue during the one day it does rain.
- ❑ Gutters - take a few moments clear out any gutters that have been clogged and overflowing.
- ❑ Fireplaces and chimneys - Fireplaces should be clean and free of rust. Gas burning fireplaces may not be as dirty, however gas lines ought to be checked to ensure there are no gas-leaks. Chimney inspections should be done yearly as the buildup from repeated use can be extremely flammable.
- ❑ The "little things" - Use this time to fix those little jobs that you may have been avoiding. Repair that squeaking stair, replace that loose footboards, and patch up that dent from a door handle.

#### **Living Room:**

- ❑ Upgrade furniture - chances are, most exchange partners will spend most of their time here. Good time to replace old furniture. Sofabeds are a great addition, especially if you have a smaller home.
- ❑ Rearrange and organize - we all get used to our furniture arrangements, but maybe it's time to refresh the layout for optimal usage.
- ❑ Coffee Table: place some books or brochures out featuring local history and attractions

#### **Seasonal Decor:**

- ❑ Holiday decorations - these may be a great way to welcome someone who is far away from home during the special seasons.
- ❑ Keep it local - Don't overdo it. If possible try to make it as local as possible.
- ❑ High-Maintenance decor - Pass on anything that requires maintenance; including flowers, pumpkins, and evergreen trees. If you chose to include these, be sure to leave detailed maintenance instructions but don't expect your exchange partners to do much more than add water.

#### **Bedrooms:**

- ❑ Mattresses - use HomeExchange as an excuse to upgrade your mattress.
- ❑ Sheets - a set of "guest sheets" will make you and your exchange partners feel more comfortable.
- ❑ Pillows - many folks are allergic to down. It's a good idea to provide alternative options.

### **Closets and Drawers:**

- Drawers - Two drawers per room should be more than enough. Let your exchange partner to unpack.
- Closets - Clear a space and leave some extra hangers, if you can't make space, consider using this as an opportunity to get rid of those old clothes you don't use and go shopping while on exchange.
- Hanger rack - if closet is so full that you can't make room, this is a cheap option that will allow exchange partners
- Coat closets - especially during winter/wet months, be sure to leave some room to hang coats and rain-gear.
- Foldable luggage rack - make it easy for exchange partners to turn their own luggage into usable space.

### **Bathroom:**

- Unclog drains - nothing fancy here. Just make sure all drains are in working order.
- Toilets - "Jiggle the handle" is not the most inviting way to let people know how to use your toilet. It's often resolved by tightening some bolts, but if not, consider replacing the flush mechanism.
- Countertops - Clear the clutter especially things like toothbrushes, you'll feel better and so will your exchange partner.
- Towels - a nice set of soft and very CLEAN "guest" towels goes a long way in welcoming friends.
- Shampoo and Soap - Chances are your exchange partner won't want to travel with these. Chose neutral aromas, and fragrance-free items.

### **Kitchen:**

- Coffee makers and electric kettles - first, remember to have one of these, even if you don't drink coffee, secondly, clean and descale your coffee maker or electric kettle.
- Make Space - Just like clothes drawers, one cupboard or shelf should be made available to your exchange partner.
- Appliances - home exchangers don't expect to have a top-of-the-line industrial cooktop, but one that in proper working order is usually expected.
- Dishwashers - look for any signs of rust on dishwasher racks, replacements can be easily ordered and installed. Also run a dishwasher cleaner through a few cycles to ensure smells and food residue are eliminated.
- Drinking water - depending on where you live, your tap water may be cleaner than Evian, however, many people prefer to have filtered water available. A filter pitcher goes a long way and so does bottled water (especially in countries and areas where water quality is questionable).
- Toaster - make a point to clear out the crumbs as they can be fire hazard.

- Overfilled cupboards - you don't want things falling on your exchange partner's head when they go to open a cupboard.
- Refrigerator - take some time to toss out leftovers and things that may spoil.
- Groceries - experienced HomeExchangers leave 5 basic groceries for their exchange partners (as well as nice note letting them know to help themselves)
  - Milk
  - Eggs
  - Bread
  - Coffee/Tea
  - Butter

(It's a good idea to check with your exchange partners if they have any allergy/dietary requirements before they arrive)

### **Cleaning Supplies:**

- Broom and Dust Pan
- Dish detergent
- Washer detergent
- Paper Towels
- Mop - preferably simple to use.
- Dishtowels
- Vacuum cleaner - clear out the dust bin/bag and make sure it's in working order.

### **Safety:**

- Wall Anchors - wall-hanging art and other decorations should be secured with adequate wall anchors.
- Fire Extinguishers - if you don't have one, stop what you are doing, and go buy one now.
- Fire Escapes/Emergency Exits - confirm that they are easily accessible, well marked and clean of clutter or obstructions. It is nice to include a layout in your welcome packet.
- Baking Soda near stoves
- Electrical outlets - check that they are all in working order. If some are prone to sparking, get them checked by an electrician.
- Electrical cords - we learn to avoid certain obstacles in our homes, if there are cords running across walking paths make sure to either tape them down or cover them in some way.
- Anything with a heating element - toasters, space heaters, even hair dryers should be checked frequently to ensure they are free of debris (like hair).
- Gas Lines - inspect for any leaks and ensure all connections are tight. If you detect a leak. Turn gas off immediately and call your provider.
- Furnaces and heaters - Gas furnaces and heaters should be inspected to ensure the pilot lights and spark-plugs/starters are working correctly.

- ❑ Water and gas main lines - If your home will be empty for some time before your exchange partners arrive, turn off the water and gas entering your house, and leave detailed instructions (preferably with photographs) on how to turn them back on again. Better yet, ask a neighbour/friend/family member to help, and train them on how to turn these off and on.
- ❑ First aid kit - chances are, your exchange partners will not know where to look for items like bandages, and you don't want the rummaging through your stuff in the unfortunate event of a minor accident. Pre-made first aid kits are available for purchase but you can build your own. The Red Cross has a great list as a reference, [click here to review it](#).
- ❑ Flash lights - check the batteries and place them in easy to find locations.

**Garage** (If you give exchange partners access):

- ❑ Organize - check and secure boxes and other items that may fall over.
- ❑ Sporting equipment and toys - many exchangers love to share their toys. If you choose to share, make these items easily accessible
- ❑ Designated areas - Clearly mark-off what is off limits by using a system like colored tape or roping-off certain areas.
- ❑ Pests - Deal with pests like insects and rodents, not just for your exchange partners, but for you.
- ❑ Automatic Garage Door - ensure the door opens and shuts correctly and remember to replace batteries in door openers.