

Dinner Diplomacy

What to Expect as a Volunteer Host...



Before meeting your guests

- We send you the professional biographies and other information about the visitors you will host.
- We coordinate the visitors' transportation arrangements to and from your home. Generally, the visitors take Uber or ride share.

Preparing to host your visitors

- Research the visitors' countries before the dinner; they may be curious about what you already know.
- Invite friends and neighbors if you'd like! They can help prepare the meal and entertain visitors.

Engaging your guests

- Start the evening by asking them if it's their first visit to the U.S., what they think of Seattle, or about their families.
- Much of the visitors' time is spent in professional meetings. This is a chance for them to discuss their personal lives and U.S. culture.
- You may want to walk around the neighborhood, or show the guests your favorite local spots.

Preparing the meal

- We let you know in advance if any of the visitors have allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Serve a favorite meal of yours or a dish you specialize in.
- Don't worry about preparing a gourmet meal; the conversation and interaction are what your visitors will remember most.

After Hosting

- Exchange contact information or connect on social media to stay in touch with your international guests after they leave Seattle.
- Share some pictures of the dinner with us and any comments or suggestions you may have: glx@world-affairs.org



Remember to take a group photo to commemorate the evening!

Volunteer Dinner Hosting: FAQs



What does the World Affairs Council provide?

- Expect communication from the World Affairs Council to discuss the logistics of the evening such as time and day, expected number of visitors, and transportation.
- Your guests' names, nationalities, and professional biographies will be provided early on.
- Any pertinent personal or medical information about the visitors and any accompanying interpreter (e.g. allergies, dietary restrictions, pet concerns) will be sent to you around one week before the dinner.
- We are available day-of in case any issues arise.

How can I make the visitors feel welcome?

- Research the visitors' countries and cultures before the dinner; they may be curious what you already know.
- Feel free to invite family, friends, and neighbors to join and help host!
- Show the visitors around your home; they often love seeing the inside of an American home, and may even want to take pictures.
- Ask about their experience in Seattle and the United States or about their families.
- Invite them for a brief walk around the neighborhood.
- When an interpreter is accompanying the visitors, please be patient, kind, and flexible; interpreters have a hard job. Ask them if they plan on eating during the dinner or if they would prefer to eat after everyone else so they can focus on interpreting during the meal.
- Be aware that the visitors have a very busy program, so the meal should only last about two hours. Alternatively, feel free to end the evening if it's getting late or after the meal has finished.
- Visitors will sometimes bring small gifts for their host; you are not expected to give them gifts in return.

Do I need to dress up?

- There is no need to worry about dressing up; visitors usually come in casual attire though sometimes they might wear more traditional clothing.

Are pets ok?

- Definitely! We do our best to place visitors with pet allergies or concerns with hosts who do not have pets. If any of your guests have any pet issues, we will let you know well in advanced and help work out a plan.
- Otherwise, be forthcoming about your pet's behavior and how you treat your pet. Some visitors may find it strange that Americans treat their pets like members of the family. Some visitors may still feel uncomfortable around pets, so please keep that in mind when introducing your pets to the visitors.

What should I cook?

- Serving a meal that you specialize in, or a local dish, is a great way to share your culture with your visitors.
- Don't worry so much about preparing a gourmet meal; the food you serve is less important than engaging with your guests.
- Preparing most of the meal ahead of time is often ideal, so you can spend more time with your guests.
- Alternatively, you can involve the visitors in the meal preparation. Just keep in mind that cultural expectations differ and visitors may be unaccustomed to guests helping with the work.

How should I prepare for dietary restrictions and preferences?

- We will send you visitors' allergy and dietary restrictions ahead of time.
- Be prepared to list the ingredients of the meal in case of dietary preference or allergy.
- If visitors observe a halal diet, vegetarian or fish is the safest option; however, there are halal grocery stores around Seattle that sell halal meat, and we can provide guidance as well.
- Some visitors may not drink alcohol, but others might; feel free to ask your guests. Visitors who do not drink alcohol may not mind if you or others drink during the dinner. Please keep in mind whether your guests drink alcohol or not when preparing any sauces. Making non-alcoholic cocktails can be a fun activity and way to include all your guests!

After the Dinner...

- Feel free to exchange contact information or connect on social media with your international guests to stay connected with them after they leave Seattle.
- Please share with us any feedback about the evening, suggestions for how we could improve the experience, and photos: glx@world-affairs.org

