

Breaking Bread – NC State Meal Hosting Program
Sponsored by the Office of International Services (OIS)

HOST EXPECTATIONS

Thank you for participating in this new, exciting program where cultural learning and exchange occur over a meal! I hope you will find the experience enriching and will make you “hungry” for more cross-cultural interactions with our international population at NC State! 😊

Please read carefully over these expectations. If you have any questions, please contact the Pam Cook, Programs Coordinator: Pam_Cook@ncsu.edu, 515-2961.

- 1) Fill out an application and return to Programs Coordinator (Pam Cook) to the address/fax at the bottom of the application.
- 2) You have agreed to host only ONE meal (breakfast, lunch, or dinner). You are not expected to continue contact with the student nor continue hosting meals (unless such arrangements are agreed upon between you and the student).
- 3) Make the initial contact with the student/scholar/family via phone or email. Exact date/time of meal is arranged between the host and the student, **not** the Programs Coordinator.
- 4) Confirm if the student has transportation to and from your house. If you are willing to provide the transportation, please make the offer to the student.
- 5) Confirm any dietary restrictions with student (many students are vegetarians and there are various definitions of what is “vegetarian”).
- 6) Confirm the meal date/time with student **via phone** at least one day before meal. (Sometimes email goes unchecked or messages bounce back!)
- 7) Fill out an evaluation form within ONE WEEK after the meal. The form will be emailed or mailed to you. Your feedback is crucial for this new program! Thank you.

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Breaking Bread (Meal Hosting Program)

Thank you for your interest in this new and unique program! Below are a few frequently asked questions about Breaking Bread. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to call 515-2961.

What is the purpose of the Breaking Bread program?

The *sole purpose* of the program is to provide American/community members the opportunity to offer friendship and hospitality to our international population at NC State. Many of our international students, scholars, and their families have never had the opportunity to be invited into an American's home. By participating in this program, you are extending a hand of hospitality to our new or current students/scholar through one of the world's common cultural denominators: food! Participants are requested to *respect* the other's religion, values, culture and beliefs. Please note that one should not under any circumstances befriend international students and scholars for the purpose of changing their religious beliefs or culture. Also, single participants will be matched with participants of the same sex.

What commitment do I make if I participate?

Your commitment is to simply provide ONE meal to the international participant(s). You are not expected to continue contact with your international guest unless such arrangements are agreed upon between you and your guest. All participants are required to fill out an application and to contact the student/scholar to arrange the meal meet together. If the student/scholar does not have transportation, offering to pickup and drop off him/her would be very much appreciated. Such information is indicated on the student/scholar's application. Lastly, by participating in Breaking Bread, you are required to fill out a BRIEF evaluation form, which is critical for the success of this new program. The evaluation will be emailed or mailed to you when you have been initially contacted about your international guest.

Can I host with other people or do I have to host alone?

Yes, you can be a "group host" and host along with your friends! Please indicate on your application who will be hosting with you and how many international students/scholars you are willing to host.

Do all internationals at NC State participate in the program?

No. They must apply to the program just as you do. Over 80% of our internationals are from Asia (India, China, Korea, Japan, etc.) and participants are encouraged to be open-minded in hosting persons from parts of the world in which they may not have knowledge or interest. Learning about an entirely new culture can be very rewarding and broaden your horizons immensely!

How are participants matched with each other?

It's very important that you fill out your application completely since this information is used in matching. During the matching process, transportation needs, gender, and common interests (in hobbies, activities, etc.) are examined. However, it is likely matches will be based on need, depending on how many international students apply. Again, single participants are matched with international participants of the same sex.

Will my international friend have transportation?

Most new students do not have transportation while students who have lived in Raleigh for one year or more *may* have a car. You will be informed if your match will have his/her own transportation when you are initially contacted regarding the match.

Will my international friend be fluent in English?

Some students and scholars have better English than others. That may be one of the reasons he/she wishes to join this program – to practice his/her English with you! Email is often a wonderful way to communicate since internationals' writing/reading skills are often much higher compared to speaking/listening skills. However, PLEASE confirm the invitation via phone (at least via email) the day before! Email is never a guaranteed way to ensure a formal invitation.

What do I do if I have questions regarding dietary restrictions or other cultural questions?

Contact the Office of International Services (515-2961) for assistance with any concern related to your experience in this program. We're here to help you!

Once you are informed of your international guest's country of origin, we encourage you to investigate some facts about that country and culture. It makes you a more conscientious host and can help stimulate interesting conversation!

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU HOST YOUR INTERNATIONAL GUEST!!

This may or may not be the first time you have entertained a guest from another country in your home. However, no matter whom you are hosting, there are always things to consider beforehand so that neither party is uncomfortable by the end of the meal! ☺

Most guests will want an authentic American meal and eagerly look forward to the experience! However, consider some of the following:

- Many foreigners do not use as much ice as Americans in their beverages. Ask his/her preference.
- Many foreigners do not consider it polite to have pets in the same room (or at the table!) as one is eating.
- A nice gesture might be to write the name of the dish on a note card or explaining each dish (ingredients, history, etc.) before the meal begins. You could also write down the recipe of the dish for the student, as a keepsake.
- If your student considers him/herself a vegetarian, ask student to define what he/she does or does not eat (i.e. chicken, fish, eggs, etc). Consider how you season your food. Though this is an obvious point, do not use beef/chicken broth if your student is a vegetarian. Many Americans do not think like a vegetarian when preparing food!

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may find your guest on the quiet side while he/she is in a new environment, especially if English is his/her second language! Inquiring about things important to him/her might encourage conversation: family, studies, hobbies, future goals, etc.

Remember to avoid idiomatic expressions and slang (without explaining the meaning). Speak slower if you think your guest is not understanding (or nodding his/her head a lot but not speaking much).

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

1. What is the most popular sport in your home country? What sports do you like?
2. What activities do families enjoy in their leisure time?
3. What hobbies do you enjoy?
4. Does your family go somewhere on vacation?

FOOD

1. What is the main meal of the day?
2. Is the mealtime a time when your family is together?
3. Can you explain how to make one of your favorite meals?

MISCELLANEOUS

How common is it for a family to have a pet? Where is it kept?

What are some key differences or similarities you've observed between our two cultures?

SCHOOL/PROFESSIONAL LIFE

1. What are you studying/researching/teaching at NC State?
2. Did you have a profession in your home country?
3. What do you want to do after you finish your degree?