



Code of Conduct and Contract of Services with your Bolivian Family

The best way to learn the culture is by living with local people. We believe that people learn the culture and the language by communicating and living with people in a natural environment. In our role to serve as a bridge between the student and our people, we want our students to be immersed in the culture. Therefore, we provide a safe place, carefully organized and prepared for them. This is the foundation to establish future relationships with local people and in combination with the communicative language program we have, we hope students will make the most of their time, resources, and their experience abroad.

Each house has been visited and trained personally by our staff to receive our students. Families are encouraged to try to not to change their habits or their food as much as possible. It is important to experience Bolivian life as it is.

The service includes:

- One bedroom with a bed, wardrobe, a table or desk, which will be cleaned thoroughly once a week.
- Sheets changed every week.
- Note that personal hygiene supplies are not provided by the family.
- Three meals a day:
 - Breakfast (bread, jam, butter, tea, coffee)
 - Lunch: soup, a main course with two or three starches, some meat, salad or vegetables sometimes.
 - Dinner: sometimes like breakfast, other times maybe ham or a hamburger or eggs. It is a lot smaller than lunch. It varies from family to family.
- The family will (do your laundry) or they will teach you how to do your laundry

You are expected to:

- Be present at the main meal of the day, if possible to all of them. Hours may change from family to family.
- Tell the family ahead of time if you are going to miss a meal, so no food gets spoiled. Wasting food is considered really rude in our culture. Also, if you go out at night it is wise to let them know when you are planning to return.
- Tell the family ahead of time if you have classes or if you'll work at noon so they can send lunch with you or save it for later on.
- Try to use your Spanish with the family as much as possible.
- Treat the family as family, not as a hotel service. The value of what you'll get is more invisible than material things. Offer to help with the dishes or clearing the table, or helping mom when she is preparing the meals.
- Offer to pay for your meal & drinks when the family takes you out for a meal at a restaurant or the like. Some families make a great effort to go out with you, so it is polite to offer to pay for yourself.
- Communicate to the Language School Director of any problems, concerns, inquiries, cultural misunderstandings, health problems, so the School can deal with the problem as a mediator.

CONEXIONES

entre mundos

- Pay even for the days when you travel. Most of our families expect to have this income for their monthly budget and they will not host anyone else in your absence. So, it is polite to do so.
- Make all payments to the school, even if you return another time in the future, you still need to contact the school first.

We encourage you to:

- Observe and discover patterns in the way family members behave. If you have any doubts, please ask The Director at the School, who would be glad to answer your questions.
- Always greet each member of the family. Use '*Buenos días/tardes/noches*' (good morning/afternoon/evening) for parents and grandparents and '*hola*' (hello) for siblings, or younger family members.
- Never belch at the table or make noises when you eat as it is considered extremely rude.
- Share anything you have to eat with whoever is with you, or eat it privately.
- Family members may try to share food or snacks with you, try them politely and if you are going to refuse them, give a good excuse and thank them kindly. Just saying '*no*' or '*no gracias*' is considered rude and it is a rejection not only to the item, but also the person. You may want to say: '*No, gracias. Acabo de comer, pero muchas gracias por compartir. Muy amable de tu parte.*' (No, thank you. I just ate, but thank you for sharing. Very kind of you)
- Eat everything they give you. If it is too much, make sure you communicate BEFORE food is served how much you want. Blame your body for not being able to receive more food.
- Beware of the tone of voice they use. It is usually low and try not to be louder than them, actually speaking softly is considered polite. Loud voice is an indicator of arrogance or conflict.
- Do not speak in your mother language with expats when there are people who do not understand your language. If you use your mother language or a foreign language, they may think you are criticizing or complaining about them.
- Not to slam doors and be careful with all electronic appliances, chinaware, furniture, etc. Please be EXTRA careful. Things are very connected to people and not looking after them, the way they do, is very offensive.
- Use '*por favor*' (please) and '*gracias*' (thank you) as much as possible and compliment people for helping you.
- Laugh at your mistakes and make jokes with your family.
- Do not assume people don't understand your mother language. Be always positive, not critical either verbally or in the social networks.
- Try to participate in all social events with your family, always offer to help.
- Ask them to teach you something they are good at.
- Surprise your family with something made by you! (food)
- Ask them to show you pictures of all family members. Learn about them.
- Do not interfere with family problems or social issues. i.e. if you think they do not pay their maid well... Please respect their system & when in doubt, ask Mauge.
- Be thankful for extra care they give you. They may 'over' look after you when you are sick, or they may ask where you are going and when you are returning or who you'll be with which is a way of caring for you as they would do with any of their children. Try to remember it is not control, but protection.
- Do not be surprised if your personal space is invaded. Greeting with a kiss on the cheek is normal, and some people can be a bit 'touchy' which may seem an invasion for you, but a demonstration of affection for them. Try to relax, observe and do what is natural for the family



members. They are teaching you how you will relate to other Bolivian people in the future. Developing observation and seeing patterns is essential for culture learning.

- If you need to be alone, it is fine to close your door and be in your room. However, silence and distance communicate offense and conflict in a relationship, so if you need to be alone for a long period of time (especially during meals), please explain to your family why you are doing this. Ex. I need to study or send letters to my family or, I am sick... or something like that. In this way you are saying: I need to be alone for personal reasons, not for any offense you may have caused me.

To be considered:

Conexiones entre Mundos receives a commission for overseeing the exchange of services between the student and the family, therefore all payments must be made to the school. In this way the student, as well as the family, do not need to deal directly with each other when problems or misunderstandings arise, so that the relationship is protected. We would like to keep this system for future students. Therefore, we ask you to contact our families through the School, even if you decide to return a few years later. You can still ask to live with your family and if they agree and have the space, we will be glad to put you in connection with them again.

I, _____ have read all the contents of this document and agree with all its contents.

Signed:

Date: