



Rotary Friendship Exchange



ROTARY FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE HANDBOOK



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL®

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INTRODUCTION

The Rotary Friendship Exchange program gives Rotarians and their families the opportunity to host and visit Rotarians around the world. In addition to experiencing other cultures and making lasting friendships, an exchange provides a strong foundation for carrying out other international activities and service projects.

Goals

The primary goal of a Friendship Exchange is to build greater international understanding and goodwill among Rotarians and their families. In addition, exchange participants can:

- Learn how their vocations are practiced in other parts of the world
- Observe new customs and cultures
- Promote an appreciation of cultural diversity worldwide

Types of Exchanges

There are two main types of Friendship Exchanges: the visitor exchange and the team exchange. In both types, the participating districts agree upon the number of people or couples participating, length of stay, and other details. Rotary Friendship Exchanges are expected to be reciprocal.

Visitor exchange

The visitor exchange gives individual Rotarians, who may be accompanied by family members, the opportunity to spend a few days in the home of a Rotarian in another country. The typical visitor exchange lasts from three to seven days.

Team exchange

The team exchange allows several Rotarians or Rotary couples to travel to different communities in a host district for a period of up to one month.

Univocational exchange

A unique aspect to incorporate into either the team or the visitor exchange is the univocational exchange, where both the guest and host Rotarians are members of the same profession. A univocational exchange gives participants the opportunity to explore a common interest.

Volunteer/service exchange

Volunteer or service exchanges include opportunities for visiting Rotarians to participate in the service activities of a host club during an exchange.

District Rotary Friendship Exchange Committee Chair

Each year, the district governor appoints a district Rotary Friendship Exchange chair to coordinate the district's exchange program. In planning an exchange, the district chair may delegate the duties outlined in this handbook to another member of the district Rotary Friendship Exchange committee or to a Rotarian who will be participating in the exchange.

GETTING STARTED

Each Friendship Exchange has a different starting point. It may begin with a general interest in the program or a desire to visit a specific country, or it may evolve from an existing project or partnership. Depending on your starting point, you may need to locate a partner, identify participants, or both.

Locating International Exchange Partners

Many districts are interested in participating. The following resources can help you locate an exchange partner:

Rotary Friendship Exchange Matching Board

Districts can publicize exchange opportunities and locate exchange partners using this online forum available on the RI Web site, www.rotary.org. The RFE Matching Board is updated quarterly using information provided by district chairs.

To send information about your district, including a brief description of tourist attractions, activities, and preferences for exchanges, complete the form at the back of this handbook. To request additional forms, please write to friendshipexchange@rotary.org.

District chair directory

Each quarter, Rotary International sends district Friendship Exchange chairs a directory with contact information for their counterparts around the world. Use this information to contact potential partner districts.

If your contact information changes, please write to friendshipexchange@rotary.org.

Rotary contacts

Exchanges often develop through personal or business contacts with fellow Rotarians or when making up a Rotary club meeting in another country. You might also make contacts through other international projects or programs that your district is involved in, such as:

- Group Study Exchange
- Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars
- Rotary Foundation Humanitarian Grants
- Rotary Volunteers
- Rotary Youth Exchange
- World Community Service
- Twin club relationships

International meetings

One of the best places to initiate contacts with other districts is at the International Assembly, the annual training meeting for governors-elect. Ask your governor-elect to inquire about possible exchange partners while at the meeting. Obtaining the governor-elect's support can help you develop relationships with potential partner districts.

Other Rotary meetings, including the RI Convention and presidential conferences, can offer opportunities for identifying international exchange partners.

Finding Exchange Participants

Team exchanges are the core of the Rotary Friendship Exchange program. Sometimes a district governor will ask a district chair to promote and organize this type of exchange. Other times, a request for a team exchange will come from an interested Rotarian. Once the request is initiated, please consider the following criteria when selecting team participants:

- Number of team members
- Composition of the team (individual Rotarians, couples, or both). Will other family members be included? How many clubs in the district will be represented?
- Vocational requirements (for univocational exchange only)
- Language skills needed

Rotarians interested in a visitor exchange can ask the district chair for assistance. The chair will contact the district chair in the region of interest to help find an exchange partner. Once a partner is found, the Rotarian and the hosting club are responsible for organizing the exchange. Please refer to the information in this handbook to help plan your exchange.

Funding

The district chair may wish to develop a modest funding plan within the district to cover costs associated with arranging the exchange, such as postage and fax and international phone charges.

Publicizing Exchange Opportunities

Make sure to publicize the program before, during, and after an exchange. Good advance publicity makes your guests feel welcome in your community and also raises awareness of the program, which in turn makes organizing future exchanges easier. The more Rotarians in your district know about the program, the more likely they will be to volunteer as hosts or guests for a Friendship Exchange.

Club and district Web sites and newsletters

Send an article to club presidents, assistant governors, and the district webmaster that explains the Rotary Friendship Exchange program and publicizes upcoming exchanges. Include success stories about recent exchanges to help generate interest. If you organize a send-off party, be sure to send photographs and information about it as well. Encourage exchange teams to create a Web site or blog to share their experiences, stories, and photos during the exchange.

Club meetings

District Friendship Exchange chairs and participants are encouraged to give presentations about the program to area clubs. Ask Rotarians to announce current and upcoming district exchange opportunities during club meetings.

District meetings

Give a presentation on Rotary Friendship Exchange at your district conference or assembly.

To learn more about how to promote your exchange, visit the public relations section of the RI Web site, www.rotary.org, or consult *Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs* (257-EN) available at shop.rotary.org.

WORKING WITH A PARTNER DISTRICT

A well-designed Friendship Exchange relies on a successful partnership between both districts. Because of the reciprocal nature of the program, both districts should be equally involved in all aspects of planning the exchange. Regular communication and careful preparation can help you avoid any difficulties or disappointments along the way.

Establishing Guidelines for an Exchange

After you have identified a partner, determine who is responsible for planning activities, making lodging and travel arrangements, and covering various expenses. You should also agree to a set of guidelines that visitors and hosts will abide by.

Both teams should agree to the following:

- Size of exchange team, including whether each district's group will have the same number of team members
- Composition of team (individual Rotarians, couples, other family members or children)
- Length of visit
- Time of year for visit
- Language proficiency expected of team members
- Estimated per diem costs for visitors in each country
- Number of nights spent as house guests of Rotarians and number of nights spent in hotels

Additional criteria to consider:

- Are there any specific goals you would like the exchange to achieve?
- Is there an opportunity for hosts and guests who share a common occupation to observe their vocation?
- Can team members participate in a Rotary service project, club activity, or district meeting?
- Can you accommodate special requests or needs, such as participants with limited mobility or dietary requirements?

Finalizing Arrangements

Before leaving for an exchange, confirm the following details with your exchange partner:

- Specific arrival and departure dates and times
- Itineraries and programs
- Lodging for home and hotel stays
- Financial arrangements and an estimate of local costs
- Any other expectations for the exchange

VISITING AN EXCHANGE PARTNER

Taking part in an exchange is a rewarding experience but requires careful planning and preparation. Before your exchange participants leave, work with them to ensure they're ready for their exchange.

Preparing Exchange Participants

Once the dates of the exchange are set, the district chair (or person responsible for organizing the exchange) should secure commitments from the participants. Some districts ask for a letter of intent or a small monetary deposit to help cover costs.

Participants should be asked for information about their personal preferences and needs to share with their exchange partners. Biographical information can also help organizers plan itineraries, match visitors to hosts, and identify cultural or religious differences that may affect activities or living arrangements. Be sure to obtain emergency contact information that can be used during the exchange.

The district chair should ensure that all participants are adequately prepared for the exchange by either organizing an orientation meeting or sending them written materials. Be sure to discuss the participants' role as Rotary ambassadors while on a Friendship Exchange. Encourage participants to be positive and open-minded and to remember to expect an adjustment period when visiting another country, even for a short visit. In addition, each participant should have the items noted on the following checklist:

Traveler's Checklist

- ☐ A copy of the proposed itinerary (see sample itinerary on page 15)
- ☐ Tourist information or a community profile
- ☐ Climate and weather information
- ☐ Recommended attire for planned events, such as formalwear, business attire, hiking boots, or swimwear
- ☐ Tips on cultural norms and etiquette in the host country
- ☐ Travel documents, including airplane tickets, passports, and visas
- ☐ Photocopies of all important documents, including any medical prescriptions they might need

Consider arranging a predeparture meeting to allow participants to meet one another, ask questions, and discuss any concerns about the trip.

Expenses

Rotary Friendship Exchanges are funded entirely by program participants. Specific details about expenses should be agreed upon by both exchange partners before finalizing plans for an exchange. Guests are responsible for their own travel expenses and personal spending money. In addition, they should be prepared to cover the following expenses:

- Admission to tourist sites
- Any overnight stays in a hotel that may be required by the itinerary
- Gifts for hosts
- Meals at Rotary club meetings
- Meals purchased outside of the host's home
- Passport or visa costs
- Transportation to and from the host district

Health and Well-Being

Before leaving for an exchange, participants should visit their doctor and obtain any medications or vaccinations they might need for travel to a host district. Participants should alert exchange organizers to any medical conditions or dietary issues that might affect travel and home stays. Encourage participants to obtain medical insurance before traveling and to check with their insurance provider to determine what medical services they can expect while traveling in a host district.

Work with your hosts to create a plan and identify medical facilities and other resources that may be needed in the event of an emergency. Share your emergency plan with participants and find out whether any members of your team have skills that could be helpful during a medical emergency, such as first aid or CPR training.

Meeting Your Host

Meeting your host for the first time is an exciting event. Consider bringing a small gift for your host family. However, guests should refrain from giving expensive gifts to avoid embarrassing the host. Be aware that different cultures respond to gift giving in different ways. In some cultures, it is appropriate to open gifts in front of one another, whereas in other cultures, gifts are opened in private. Do some research about your host culture to avoid selecting a gift that may not be culturally appropriate.

To help your host family become better acquainted with you, bring personal items such as business cards; photos of your family, pets, or home; or examples of your hobbies or culture. Arrange for a presentation of your Rotary club banner to the host district and area clubs.

HOSTING AN EXCHANGE

When hosting exchange participants, you are responsible for

- Ensuring that guest accommodations are in order, whether visitors are staying with a host family or in a hotel
- Developing a comprehensive itinerary that includes meals, tours to sites of local interest, Rotary club visits, and service projects (see sample itinerary on page 15)
- Arranging for local transportation
- Learning about guests' culture and providing guests with useful information about your own

Host Planning Checklist

Use the following questions to assist in planning:

☐ General responsibilities

- Who is responsible for organizing host activities, including communicating with visitors before their arrival and during the exchange? Are participants aware of anticipated expenses and who is paying for what?
- Has a complete written itinerary been provided to the visitors?
- Have visitors been told about the climate of the host location and the type of dress required for each occasion?
- Do visitors have any food or animal allergies or any other health concerns that might require special arrangements?
- Do visitors observe any cultural or religious practices that require special arrangements?

☐ Travel documentation

- Have visitors been fully briefed on the need for passports, visas, and other travel documents?
- Have they been advised to make photocopies of all important documents, including any medical prescriptions they might need?
- Are any immunizations required? Have these requirements been communicated to exchange participants?

☐ Emergencies

- Have provisions been made for medical emergencies? Is suitable treatment available in case of illness or injury?
- Has emergency contact information for each visitor been shared with the host club, district, and families?

☐ **Insurance**

- What club or district liability matters need to be investigated before arranging an exchange?
- Should “hold harmless” or waiver of responsibility statements be required?
- What arrangements, if any, have been made for health insurance or accidental death and dismemberment insurance? What other kinds of insurance might be needed?
- Do insurance arrangements affect the transportation mode or supplier? For example, using a common carrier versus a private plane or car, or determining the advisability of having visitors operate a motorized vehicle?
- Should trip cancellation insurance, provided by some commercial tours, be considered?
- Who is responsible for obtaining insurance, if deemed necessary?

☐ **Accommodations and meals**

- Have comfortable overnight accommodations been arranged for every night of the visit?
- If the visitors must stay in a hotel for any portion of the visit, who is responsible for reservations and payment?
- What meals will host families be expected to provide?
- Will guests be required to pay for their meals during Rotary club functions?
- Have host families been identified? Have you matched hosts with visitors who share common interests? Have you considered special needs, such as allergies, medical conditions, or smoking preferences?

☐ **Transportation**

- Are all travel arrangements within the host area complete? Have these arrangements been communicated to exchange participants?
- Will visitors be expected to pay for any local transportation? Have these expenses been communicated to exchange participants?
- Will buses, trains, or taxis be needed? What transportation will be provided and who will provide it? Will an international driver’s license be required at any point?

☐ **Incidental expenses**

- What incidental expenses (entertainment, laundry, meals, museum admission, souvenirs, tours, etc.) should visitors expect during their stay?

Clarifying these questions in advance will prevent misunderstandings and help your exchange run smoothly.

Planning an Itinerary and Host Events

An itinerary is a day-by-day, hour-by-hour guide of planned activities prepared by the hosts for their guests. Each Friendship Exchange is a unique experience and will have a unique itinerary. The key to developing a successful itinerary is good communication between the host and visitor teams.

When developing an itinerary, focus on balance and flexibility, and be sure to include:

- Local tourist activities, such as historical sites and scenic areas
- Visits to banks, bazaars, businesses, civic institutions, malls, restaurants, schools and colleges, and zoos
- Cultural attractions, such as art galleries, houses of worship, and museums
- Concerts, nightlife activities, and sporting events
- Social gatherings and Rotary events, especially club meetings
- Community service projects
- Time alone with host families
- Free time for rest, shopping, laundry, and exploration
- Special requests from guests, when feasible

An important component of any itinerary is adequate time for guests to rest and pursue their own interests. For example, activities held on the day of arrival or the following morning may be overwhelming, especially following an overseas flight. When guests first arrive, they may need time to change currency, unpack, or acclimate to a time change or new surroundings.

Remember that in most cases, your guests have not visited your community before. Activities and sites that you take for granted may be of great interest to them. Shopping, cooking meals, talking with people in your community, and wandering around your town or city can be memorable experiences for someone unaccustomed to your culture. Encourage all committee members to contribute to the itinerary and request input from your guests as well.

Consider your guests' age and health when planning activities. Strenuous activities may prove too much for some guests, especially activities that involve much physical exertion or exposure to extreme weather or high altitudes. Serving certain foods may also cause problems. For example, vegetarians might not participate in an event where only meat is served. Use your best judgment and be prepared to provide alternatives for your guests.

Dos and Don'ts for Hosts

Do . . .

- Familiarize yourself with some basic phrases in your guests' native language. Use a phrase book or dictionary, if necessary.
- Welcome guests at the airport.
- Transport your guests to your home and provide a tour of your house, including the location of their sleeping quarters, bathroom, kitchen, and essential appliances.
- Give your guests a map of the area and an information sheet listing your name, phone number, address, and directions to your home and other important locations in case they get lost or need help while they are out on their own.
- Make time to become acquainted with your guests. Share stories about yourself and your family, and encourage them to do the same.

Don't . . .

- Plan too many activities for the first day; guests should use this time to get settled in and become acquainted with their hosts.
- Assume that your guests understand everything about your lifestyle and culture. Encourage them to ask you questions and make them feel comfortable.
- Presume that your perceptions about your guests' lifestyle and culture are correct. Remember, this is a learning experience for you as well! Keep an open mind.

AFTER AN EXCHANGE

Following a successful Friendship Exchange, coordinate activities that will improve and extend the reach of your district's program.

Evaluation

Both guests and hosts should have the opportunity to provide feedback to exchange organizers. The evaluation can be a formal questionnaire or a brief account of the positive aspects of the exchange and areas that need improvement. Consider the following topics:

- Overall exchange experience
- Preparation of exchange participants
- Travel arrangements, food, and accommodations
- Itinerary and exchange activities
- Ideas for improving future exchanges

Sharing Your Exchange

Former Rotary Friendship Exchange participants are valuable assets. They can help publicize the program and offer advice on organizing future exchanges. Upon their return, ask participants to share their experiences at club meetings throughout the district. They might also write an article on the exchange for district or club newsletters and Web sites.

Also consider writing a press release about your exchange and sending it to your local media. To learn how, refer to *Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs* (257-EN) available at shop.rotary.org.

We want to hear about your exchange! The information you provide will help us publicize successful exchanges in Rotary's publications and improve resources for the Rotary Friendship Exchange program. Please send your exchange stories to friendshipexchange@rotary.org.

Maintaining Exchange Relationships

Rotary Friendship Exchange can become a valuable part of your district's activities. Many international projects and programs have been carried out between districts and clubs as a result of exchanges. More important, Rotary Friendship Exchange offers a life-enriching experience for participants. The long-lasting friendships that result from the exchanges play an important role in Rotary's efforts to promote peace and international understanding.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Rotary Friendship Exchange District 5550 (Canada) to District 2202 (Spain)

17 February-4 March 2009

Barcelona

Tuesday, 17 February

- 09:00 Arrive at Barcelona airport
- 10:00 Transfer to Rotarian homes
- 13:00 Lunch at Rotarian homes
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- Receive general information about Barcelona and the planned events. Meet host families, unpack, and settle into new surroundings.
- 21:00 Dine at Rotarian homes

Wednesday, 18 February

- 11:00 Visit the Cathedral
- 11:30 Walk through the Gothic Quarter, Roman city, Plaça de Ramon Berenguer, Plaça del Rei, Saló del Tinell, Santa Chapel Àgueda, Roman Temple, and Casa Arcediano
- 12:30 Snack at Plaça del Pino
- 14:00 Lunch at the Rotary Club of Barcelona-Mediterráneo
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- 21:00 Dine at Rotarian homes

Thursday, 19 February

- 10:00 Meet at the Estadi Olímpic de Montjuïc
- 10:15 Walk through the Palau Sant Jordi and Montjuïc Mountain. Have coffee at Miramar to see the view of Barcelona (weather permitting).
- 11:00 Visit Fundació Joan Miró
- 12:30 Visit Poble Espanyol to view typical Spanish architecture
- 14:00 Lunch at the Rotary Club of Barcelona-Pedralbes
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- 20:00 Dine at Rotarian homes

Friday, 20 February

- 10:00 Meet at Santa Maria del Mar to view the church
- 10:15 Walk along Carrer Montcada toward the Museu Picasso
- 10:30 Visit Museu Picasso
- 12:30 Snack at Museu de l'Indumentaria, located on Carrer Montcada
- 14:00 Lunch on your own or at Rotarian homes
- 15:00 Free afternoon (possible shopping at authentic local shops, such as Vinçon and BCN design)

Saturday, 21 February

- 10:00 Sightsee at Monestir de Poblet and Calçotada at Castillo de Monferri with members of Rotary Club of Barcelona-Mediterráneo
- 20:00 Dine at Rotarian homes

Sunday, 22 February

- 10:00 Visit Sitges, Museu Cau Ferrat, and Maricel
- 14:00 Lunch at Cal Pinxo
- 15:00 Free afternoon

Monday, 23 February

- 10:00 Meet at La Pedrera
- 11:00 Visit Güell Park
- 11:30 Refreshments at Güell Park
- 12:00 Visit La Sagrada Família
- 14:00 Lunch at Rotary Club of Barcelona-Diagonal
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- 20:45 Dine at Barcelona 92 Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I

Tuesday, 24 February

- 10:00 Visit MNAC (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya)
- 15:00 Free afternoon

Wednesday, 25 February

- 09:00 Walk through Plaça de Catalunya, La Rambla, Antic Hospital Santa Creu, Casa de La Caritat, Iglesia del Pino, Plaza Reial, and Mercat de la Boqueria
- 11:00 Refreshments at Schilling Street Fernando 23
- 14:00 Lunch at Rotary Club of Barcelona Les Corts
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- 21:00 Dine at Rotarian homes or on your own

Thursday, 26 February

- 10:00 Meet at Museu Monestir de Pedralbes for tour of monastery and Thyssen collection
- 12:00 Visit Palau de Pedralbes and pottery museum
- 14:00 Lunch
- 15:00 Free afternoon
- 21:00 Dine at the Rotary Club of Barcelona Centre

Friday, 27 February

- 10:00 Visit and walk along Port Vell and Port Olímpic
- 14:00 Lunch at Rotary Club of Barcelona in the Avenida Palace Hotel
- 15:00 Free afternoon

Saturday, 28 February

- 10:00 Journey to Figueras
- 11:30 Visit the Museu Dalí
- 14:00 Lunch near the sea at Costa-Brava

Sunday, 1 March

- 16:00 Host families organize a party typical of the Spanish culture

Monday, 2 March

- 10:00 Visit Cavas Torres
- 20:30 Attend concert at Palau de la Música Catalana

Tuesday, 3 March

10:00 Free day

Wednesday, 4 March

12:00 Farewell at airport

Other places of interest:

Barcelona diseño Diagonal

B.D. Mallorca 291

Camila Hamm Calle Rec 30

Fundació Tàpies

Galeria Montcada (young artist sculptures)

Insolít Barcelona

Museu d'Art Modern

Museu Marés

Reales Atarazanas

Tibidabo

Torre Foster

Velvet Bar Balmes, between Rosellon and Provenza

Zsa Zsa Rosellón 156

MATCHING BOARD INFORMATION FORM

The Rotary Friendship Exchange Matching Board allows districts to publicize exchange opportunities in their region. The information you provide about your district will be shared with other Rotary districts interested in participating in the program.

Please print or type your answers.

1. Tell us why other Rotarians should visit your district. You may wish to describe major events and points of interest, such as cultural celebrations, museums, parks, and other major tourist attractions.
2. Which of the following types of Friendship Exchange would clubs in your district prefer to participate in? *(Please mark all that apply)*
 - ☐ Individual visitor exchanges
 - ☐ Team exchanges
 - ☐ Univocational exchanges
 - ☐ Volunteer/service exchanges
 - ☐ Other *(please explain)*:
3. Identify the areas where clubs in your district would prefer to conduct exchanges. *(Please mark all that apply)*
 - ☐ Africa and parts of Europe
 - ☐ Asia (Japan, Korea, and Taiwan)
 - ☐ Europe
 - ☐ North America
 - ☐ South America and the Caribbean
 - ☐ South Pacific and southern Asia
 - ☐ No preference
4. Describe any additional preferences that clubs in your district have for Friendship Exchanges.
5. Does your district have a Friendship Exchange Web site?
 - ☐ Yes. The Web address is: _____
 - ☐ No

Contact Information

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Rotary club: _____

Address: _____

City, state/province, postal code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

I hereby authorize Rotary International to use the information contained in this form, including the above contact information, in Rotary publications and on the RI Web site.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please send your completed form to:

Programs Division (PD210)
Rotary International
One Rotary Center
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Evanston, IL 60201-3698 USA
Fax: 847-556-2182
E-mail: friendshipexchange@rotary.org