



WEEKEND GUESTS

Entertaining and Being Entertained

by Linda Reece, Extension Home Furnishings Specialist

Good planning is essential for successfully entertaining overnight or week-end guests in your home. Invite those you really want far ahead of the date. Keep the number of guests limited to the space you have available.

Make two lists — one for yourself and one to send ahead of time to your guests. Your list should include arrival and departure times for each guest, planned menus and notes of special food allergies of each guest, details of parties and activities (including alternative plans in case of bad weather) and any special reservations, sports equipment, transportation or other things needed during the weekend. The schedule for your guest should include approximate hour of expected arrival and departure, a map of directions to your house, information (brief, amusing) about any other houseguests, list of activities that are planned, types of clothing needed and any special items to bring, such as golf clubs or dance shoes.

A good rule of thumb for success in having houseguests is to actually sleep in your guest room before any guest sleeps there. Check to see what is needed and what needs to be changed. You'll quickly discover that there may be no wastebasket, that the light doesn't work or that the mattress is lumpy. The sleeping space should be clean, with an electric fan or air conditioner available for hot nights and an electric heater or extra blankets for very cold nights. Hanging room (and hangers) for clothing will need to be provided. If there is room, also provide some drawer space. If space is cramped, the thoughtful guest will use his suitcase as a bureau and not unpack everything at once. A good light bulb in a working lamp and a clock that works are essential! A radio or television and pencil, pen and paper (plus stamps) are thoughtful additions. It's nice to include something interesting to read, a light snack (fruit, cookies) and a thermos or pitcher of water and a glass.

Welcome additions to the guest bathroom include a toothbrush glass for each guest, an extra roll of toilet paper, box of tissues, shower cap, air freshener, sponge and tub cleaner and (for summer guests) insect repellent. Other

ideas include travel sizes of shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, aspirin, mouthwash, hand lotion and sun block. A fresh razor and blades, new toothbrush, clean comb and brush, hairdryer and curler, hairspray and adhesive bandages help the guest who may have forgotten to pack these items.

HOST'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Plan to enjoy the company of your guests. Get plenty of rest and prepare as much food as possible ahead of time. Since morning people often want to eat early and night people may not eat breakfast at all, you may wish to suggest that breakfast is "on your own," allowing guests to get up when they please and eat what and when they please. Be sure to have food ready to go and easy to find, however.

Be sure that guests know the schedule for the day, so that they will be ready for the events as scheduled. Keep a sense of humor mixed with patience while your guests are there. You may also need to serve as counselor, referee and discipliner as well as show creative talent in coming up with substitute plans due to the unexpected.

GUEST'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Houseguests have responsibilities, too. Arrive with a positive attitude and keep it from start to finish! (If you're not feeling well, cancel out beforehand.) Don't ask to bring children or a pet, but do bring the proper clothing and arrive when you are supposed to. Offer to pitch in and help with everything, but if your assistance is not needed, be prepared to "do your own thing." Accept the planned schedule with a smile, but if left on your own, be a creative self-starter. Play solitaire, take a long walk, try jigsaw or crossword puzzles, read a good book, talk with an elderly parent or entertain the children for a while. Tip: Bring along your own 100-watt light bulb for your room if you plan to read. Keep your space neat, be on time for planned activities, and don't complain about things that go wrong. (You may find that you'll talk yourself into believing that it

really doesn't matter, and your host will think that you're a marvelous person.)

The host makes the weekend happen by being thoughtful enough to invite and prepare for guests, but guests really make the weekend by showing their enjoyment. It's always acceptable to bring a small gift to your host, such as a new family game, a bottle of wine or soft drinks, movie cassettes (and popcorn), gourmet goodies, a basket of fresh fruit, tins of cookies, current magazines to leave behind for the host's enjoyment, flowers or even an inexpensive camera and film for hosts who do not have a camera.

Even if you have brought a present with you or sent it afterward and made an enthusiastic follow-up telephone

call, a written thank-you note is expected. Include the following:

- *Write on behalf of the family members and address it to the wife of the family. It is made clear, however, that the letter is from all family members and is being sent to both the host and hostess.*
- *State what a wonderful time you had during the visit.*
- *Discuss how nice the surroundings were (beautiful mountains, comfortable house, restful lake view).*
- *Mention what fun you had doing the various activities.*
- *Comment on other guests or host's children or pets.*
- *State your thanks again and close.*