

Delaware Saengerbund and Library Assn., Inc.

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PREPARATION FOR A VISIT TO THE DELAWARE SAENGERBUND

Visitors from other countries have been hosted in the homes of members of the Delaware Saengerbund for many years. The visitors have been of all ages, from school students to groups of retired people. Many of them have been from Germany but some have come from other countries. It is our pleasure to have you as our guest. We hope that we will come to know and understand each other.

Travel experiences such as these show that there are differences in daily life between countries. Americans would experience them going to another country.

To help prepare visitors coming to stay with us, especially those coming for the first time, we have collected some observations to share. We do this with the wish that it will help to make your visit more enjoyable - that there are no big "surprises" when you arrive. One important factor is transportation

GETTING AROUND

America is a society designed around the automobile. Don't expect to walk most places as you can in Germany. Americans move mostly by car, and the members of the DSB live as much as 50 miles (80 km) from the club, or each other. There is no public transportation between these places. Visiting between host family locations is not easily done. Any special arrangements for housing needs must be planned in advance. Homes are far apart, shops are organized in Shopping Centers, downtown is increasingly for the worker only, public transportation is minimal and it is dangerous for pedestrians to attempt to cross some roads. Visiting students must be driven to each site they wish to visit. Walking is done for exercise, not to get from place to place.

Before you leave the home of your host, verify that you have their right phone number with you. Taxis in Delaware must be ordered by phone and are relatively expensive.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

By Delaware Law, a person must be 21 years old to buy or consume alcohol in any form. A person must be 18 to buy cigarettes or other tobacco products. Please, don't expect your hosts to provide these products for you. In stores and restaurants, you must show identification that includes your birthdate. Your passport or a driver's license would be appropriate. Without the ID they can refuse to serve you, even if you are legally of age. All restaurants have Non-smoking areas. More and more places are becoming "Smoke free", including many homes.

HOLIDAYS and FREE TIME

Americans have many fewer holidays than do Germans. German industrial employees receive an average of 30 paid vacation days per year. The average for the United States is only 12 days. Many traditional American families place a high value on spending "private time" together with their families and friend during a Holiday.

Because American families often are scattered around the US, relatives will often travel one or more days to visit other family members. It is inadvisable for numerous non-family guests to try to visit an American family during a national holiday. Americans take many fewer vacations and travel much less than Germans

INSIDE the AMERICAN and GERMAN HOME

In both the US and Germany it is considered polite to bring a small gift when invited to a person's house for the first time as a guest. In Germany a bouquet of flowers is the traditional gift of introduction. In America a bottle of wine is acceptable as a gift from an adult and flowers are always appropriate.

Breakfast in an American home can be a substantial meal of eggs, toast and sausage or bacon, pancakes and french toast. A quick breakfast may be a bowl of cereal and fruit. The major meal is dinner served in the evening. Lunch at noon is often a sandwich and chips. Most German families have their main meal in the middle of the day, with a lighter supper in the evening.

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An invitation to an American home party may include the hour the party begins, but also the hour the host plans for the party to end. When Germans enter a room they make sure to shake hands with everyone before entering into the festivities. Americans often shake hands but a wave from a distance with a "Hi" is acceptable. Germans are careful to call people by title, such as Doctor or Professor. Americans quickly become casual and call most people by first name. In the German home privacy is observed much more than in the American home. American homes may not have doors that open and close between rooms and many times doors may be left open. In a German home doors between all rooms are usually closed.

STORE HOURS and SHOPPING

American stores are open 7 days a week. Many open at 9 AM, but more often not until 10 AM. Very few stores are family owned so once open, they usually stay open until 9 PM. Delaware is famous for its Tax Free Shopping. Outlets sell name brand merchandise at a lower rate than in Department Stores. The selection will not be as great but the prices are low. They are found near major tourist areas, such as our beach area, or near the Pennsylvania Amish country. Most museums have lovely shops selling items around the theme of the museum. There are also very large single purpose stores, such as Bookstores, Sporting Goods stores, etc.

Come with a sense of adventure. Expect the United States to be different, and you won't be disappointed. We hope you return home full of joyful memories already planning your return trip.