

Vietnam Homestay *Operations Manual*



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INTRODUCTION

Tourism and homestays in Vietnam

Tourism forms an important part of Vietnam's economy, directly contributing 4.5 percent to the country's gross domestic production and directly supporting 1.8 million jobs or 3.8 percent of the total workforce in 2012.¹

Often found in the mountains north and central regions of Vietnam where many traditional ethnic minority people live, the homestay experience normally combines basic family hosted accommodation in a traditional house village with meals, a cultural performance, local tours and the purchase of handicrafts.

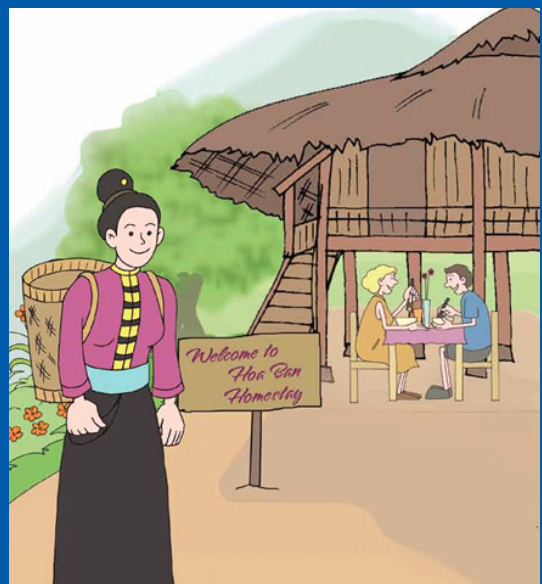
While homestays are a niche within the broader accommodation sector in Vietnam, if developed according to a market-based approach, homestays can be a viable livelihood option / supplement to rural community members whose other accessible livelihood options may be limited.

The ESRT programme

The European Union (EU) funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ESRT) is a sector capacity-building programme for stakeholders in the Vietnam tourism sector. The *Vietnam Homestay Operations Manual* aims to help strengthen capacity of homestay operators living in the remote and rural areas of Vietnam in order to enhance their standard of homestay operation enhancing employment and income at the local level.

INTENDED USE OF THE MANUAL

The *Vietnam Homestay Operations Manual* has been designed as a compendium to the homestay operator training material developed by the EU-funded High Impact Tourism Training Programme for the Informal Sector (HITT) Vietnam supported by the EU-funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Programme (ESRT). The manual provides an overview of the key topics from the HITT homestay operator training course including basic hospitality skills such as customer service, housekeeping and food and beverage service, through to small business management skills such as basic marketing and accounting. The manual may be of interest to existing or potential homestay operators and staff as well as practitioners and trainers working in the field community based tourism and homestay management.



¹ World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) 2013, *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2013: Vietnam*, WTTTC, London, UK

TOURISM AND HOMESTAYS IN VIETNAM



In order to be able to successfully operate your business it is important to understand the nature of the business you are in (the goods and services you produce), your customers (people who buy your products), the dynamics of the industry within which you work (external organisations that affect the operation of your business) and understand the potential positive and negative impacts of your business.

What is tourism?

Tourism is the travel of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.

The tourism industry is all businesses that directly provide the goods or services to facilitate the business, pleasure and leisure activities that take place away from the home environment.

According to the Vietnam National Statistics Office, in 2012 most international tourists came from within the region, with China, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan being the most significant sources. Most Western tourists to Vietnam come from the US, Australia and France.²

International visitors to Vietnam come mainly for holidays and leisure in order to take a break from work or study. Visiting friends and family and business purposes is also a popular option.

Key requirements for operating homestays in Vietnam

The Vietnam government's national standards (TCVN) for homestays advise that homestays should provide certain standards in the provision of facilities and services to ensure tourists obtain a satisfactory homestay experience. Key homestay facilities and standards include:

- **Sleeping facilities** – A bedroom / guestroom (8-10 m² in size), good ventilation, electricity, lighting, a fan, single bed/s (0.9m x 2m in size) or double bed/s (1.5m

Tourists who visit a homestay are interested in experiencing village life - culture and traditions of local people, and enjoying the surrounding natural environment that almost all tourists visiting homestays have in common.

Tourists' need a range of services while they are on holiday such as:

- Transportation to get around
- Accommodation for overnight stays
- Food & drink for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks
- Things to see and do for relaxation, recreation and entertainment

Banks, telecommunications, and safety and security are also important.

x 2m in size).

- **Washroom facilities** – A bathroom / shower and toilet (3m² in size, servicing a maximum of 5 guests each), ceramic tiled walls and floor, lighting, shower with hot water, wash basin, and toilet.
- **Skills and training** – Management staff should have attended a training course in homestay management except for people certified by an authorized tourism training institution.

² Vietnam General Statistics Office 2012, *International visitors to Vietnam in December and 12 months of 2012*, Available [online]: www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php?cat=012041&itemid=6308, Accessed 27/08/2013



HYGIENE AND CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Visitors have a basic expectation of hygienic and cleanliness. Within the homestay hygiene refers to cleanliness of the house and garden as well as the cleanliness of the homestay family or service staff.

Homestay facility

A clean and tidy homestay makes a good first impression. Tourists also place great importance on the hygiene of both service staff as well as the home living environment. Good hygiene also reduces incidences of accidents, and discourages pests and the spread of disease. In order to keep your homestay clean and tidy:

- Put clothes and personal items away once they have been used
- Regularly maintain / fix anything broken
- Clear away unnecessary clutter
- Keep pets and animals out of the way
- Clean daily, particularly when guests are staying
- Keep bedding dry and clean
- Clean kitchen area every day
- Provide rubbish bins and empty the rubbish daily

Garden and grounds

Present a clean and inviting environment. Key requirements include:

- Keep paths, walkways and drainage systems clean and free from leaves and standing water
- Keep gardens tidy and free from weeds
- Clean up rubbish and animal droppings
- Keep water tanks clean and covered to prevent insects, pests, and dead leaves from contaminating the water

Surrounding environment

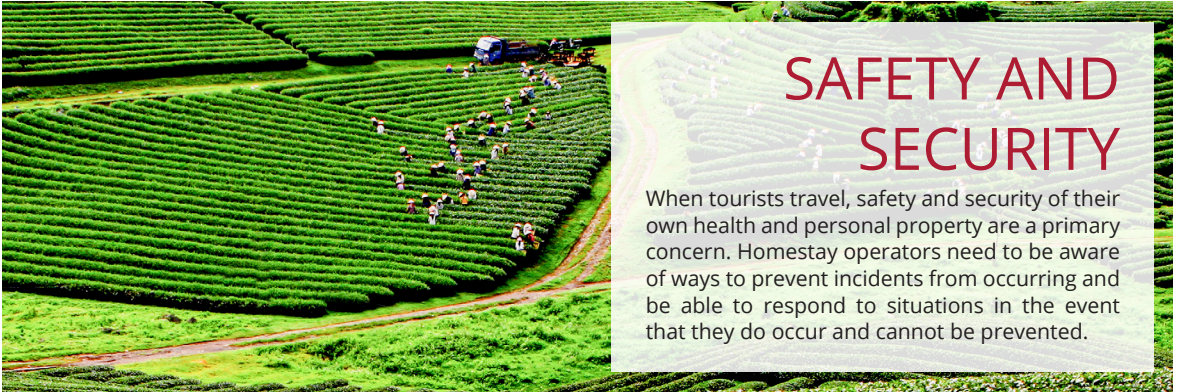
Most homestay visitors are also interested in seeing the surrounding natural environment and want to know homestay operators are doing their bit to look after it. The following basic principles should therefore be followed:

- Use dustbins and follow good waste management principles
- Do not litter, especially along trails, in villages and surrounding areas
- Keep local village clean and tidy
- Inform villagers about the importance of looking after the environment
- Limit use of chemical fertilisers and harmful pesticides

Waste, water and energy

Be a responsible homestay operator and minimise waste, water and energy use:

- Employ good waste management principles and only buy what you need, reuse and recycle waste where possible, and dispose of anything remaining through proper waste management processes.
- Save water by turning off taps immediately after use, fixing leaking taps and water pipes as soon as a leak is identified and asking guests to use water wisely.
- Save electricity by switching off lights and electrical appliances when they're not in use and using low wattage energy efficient lights.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

When tourists travel, safety and security of their own health and personal property are a primary concern. Homestay operators need to be aware of ways to prevent incidents from occurring and be able to respond to situations in the event that they do occur and cannot be prevented.

Managing security issues

Make plans to safeguard your own personal security and safety as well as that of your guests from theft of property, personal robbery, and incidents involving violence. Some simple principles include:

- Provide a place to lock up personal belongings
- Provide good lighting inside and outside your homestay
- Help guests out of if they find themselves in trouble and the action does not pose any safety threat to yourself
- Assist guests report serious security incidents to the local authorities so they can make an insurance claim

Managing safety issues

Injuries that compromise personal safety can be caused by animals, insects and plants or result from accidents interacting with the built environment, for example falling through a broken stair. Reduce safety incidents by:

- Alerting guests to known safety risks
- Restrain pets or animals
- Keep house, garden and grounds well maintained, tidy and free from clutter
- Provide guests with mosquito nets
- Keep electrical appliances and sockets well maintained
- Serve and consume alcohol responsibly
- Keep furniture well maintained

Responding to emergencies

It is normally possible to attend to simple guest injuries such as minor cuts and scratches yourself, however if a guest is badly hurt or injured they must go to a doctor as quickly as possible. The key steps in emergency response include:

- Determine the level of danger of the injury. Can the injury be easily treated or is a nurse or doctor required?
- Secure the guest and remove from the source of injury (e.g. away from an electricity supply or dangerous animal)
- Notify someone else of the situation and get further assistance if required
- Call the emergency number
- Apply basic first-aid treatment
- Take the patient to the doctor or hospital if necessary

The response to a number of common emergency situations in homestay environments is outlined below.



INJURY	EMERGENCY RESPONSE
Burn	Cool with ice or cold running water. Do not break blisters. Bandage loosely.
Dog bite	Clean the wound with antiseptic, and cover with a band-aid or plaster. Take the victim to doctor for a tetanus injection if needed.
Electrical shock	Turn off the power quickly. If needed, apply cardiopulmonary revival technique (blowing air into the mouth and pressing on the chest). Send the victim to a nearby medical centre once the heartbeat is restored and the victim is breathing again.
Insect sting	Remove the sting by scraping it away from the skin with the blade of a knife. Do not hold it between the fingers to pull it out. Apply antihistamine ointment.
Snake bite	If on a leg or arm, restrict the movement of that leg or arm by putting arm in sling or tying one leg to the other. Get the victim to doctor immediately.
Sprain	Bandage the sprained area to immobilise it. Elevate the leg if an ankle sprain. Apply ice to the injury to reduce swelling.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer services are actions or activities provided to meet customer expectations and produce customer satisfaction. Homestay customer service activities can be grouped into four key areas: preparing for guests, welcoming guests, interacting with guests, and farewelling guests.



Preparing for your guests

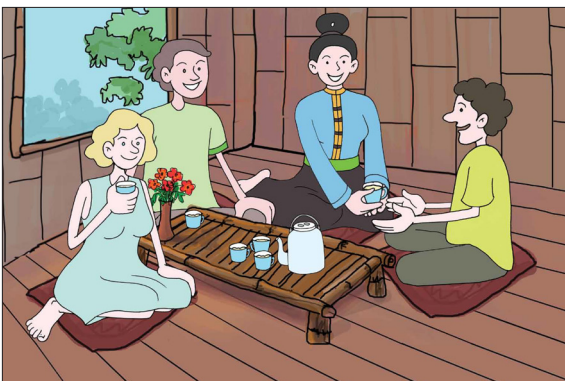
If you do not know why a tourist has decided to visit your homestay then it will be difficult to provide the necessary requirements to meet his or her expectations and needs. Whilst all tourists are unique, some common expectations held by all are to be able to stay overnight in affordable, clean, comfortable and secure accommodation, to experience the traditional Vietnamese way of life, to taste traditional Vietnamese food and drinks, to learn about Vietnam by talking to a local, watching a cultural performance, or viewing local arts and crafts, and to experience Vietnam's natural environment.

When an advanced booking is made it is important to understand a little about your guests so you can prepare your homestay bedding, food, and staffing accordingly. Where possible find out:

- How many people are coming
- Gender and age group
- Nationalities
- Length of stay
- Additional services required (e.g. tours, cultural performance, etc)

When setting up your homestay for guests the following general standards apply:

- **Garden and grounds** – Kept neat and tidy, free of rubbish, weeds and overgrown bushes or trees.
- **Living room** – Neat and tidy. Free of rubbish. Furniture such as tables, chairs, sitting cushions and cupboards should be well maintained and well laid out. Floors should be swept or mopped. Household items not needed by the guests should be stored out of sight.
- **Sleeping area** – Neat and tidy, free of rubbish. Floors should be swept or mopped and all surfaces dusted. Bedding should be neatly laid out. Mosquito nets should be provided. A place to store luggage and a rubbish bin should be provided. Rooms should be ventilated.
- **Kitchen** – Neat and tidy and free of rubbish. Floors should be swept or mopped and all surfaces dusted. Food, equipment and utensils should be clean and neatly stored away. Provide a rubbish bin with a lid. The room should be well ventilated.
- **Toilet & bathroom** – Neat and tidy and free of rubbish. Personal family toiletry items should be removed. Floors should not be slippery. Provide a rubbish bin, sufficient toilet paper, and a water bucket and scoop for non-Western toilets.



Welcoming your guests

A good welcome is where expectations are created. This provides the opportunity to showcase your warm hospitality, is when you can introduce your staff and family, and is the perfect time to orient your guests with your homestay facilities and services. It is also at this time that any other issues can be raised with the guest that they might need to know about (e.g. restricted lighting,

hot water operation, meal times, etc). The steps to welcome guests are:

- Provide a warm and genuine welcome
- Show guests where to place their luggage
- Offer a welcome drink
- Provide an orientation of your homestay
- Process guests' travel documents

Interacting with your guests

Maintaining good interaction with your guests generates a warm atmosphere in which your guest can feel at home. It is also the best way for your guest to experience and learn about your culture. Through guest interaction you can ensure you are delivering a service that satisfies your guests' needs, obtain feedback on ways to improve your services, handle complaints and seek to turn a problem into an opportunity. It is also opens up opportunities to promote some of the other activities or services on offer.

Interaction

Some general tips for good interaction include:

- Be friendly and smile
- Think about what a guest might want or need and show initiative by offering assistance before they ask for it
- Share stories about your community, customs and culture
- Inform guests about your services or those offered by the local community (e.g. music or dance performances, souvenirs, etc)

- Resolve complaints quickly and in full by showing concern and understanding, offering potential solution and delivering immediately

Communication

Interact with your guests through all forms of communication. Use verbal communication where possible. Speak clearly and listen carefully. Use body language if verbal communication is not possible. Symbols, signs and pictures are also a good way to communicate.

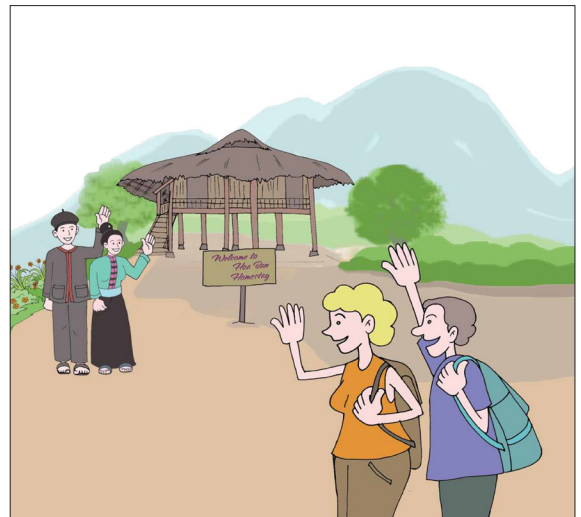
Handling complaints

Because operating a homestay is part of the services sector and managing different people and differing expectations, complaints are likely to arise at some point. When dealing with a complaint listen attentively, show empathy, and help try to solve the problem. When handled well, a problem can turn into a positive experience for a guest and lead to positive referrals and repeat business.

Farewelling your guests

The farewell of your guests is the last chance you have to rectify any problems that may have occurred during the stay and the final opportunity you have to demonstrate your hospitality and care for guests by wishing them a safe onward journey. When farewelling your guests:

- Have the bill or guest account logbook pre-prepared (plus supporting information)
- Double check information of services used is accounted for and calculate total bill
- Provide guests with the opportunity to check the bill and ask for clarification (if any). Ask for the tour guide's assistance if necessary
- Finalise payment
- Thank guests for their stay. Providing a homestay business card can be a good way to generate word of mouth business.
- Offer to assist the guest to carry their luggage
- Ask guests to complete the guest book (if available)



MAXIMISING SALES

A key to the success of any business is being able to make a profit and reinvest in the maintenance, improvement or expansion of the business. While accommodation and meals are the core products of any homestay business other opportunities exist to increase income, for example through the sale of snacks, beverages and souvenirs or the provision of local tours. Providing free of charge activities such as handicraft or farming demonstrations can also be a great way to create an educational and cultural experiences for your guests, increasing their overall satisfaction, and potentially resulting in a tip later on.

Snack, beverage and souvenir sales

The sale of additional products represent opportunities to increase income:

- **Snacks:** nuts, crackers, biscuits, chocolates, chips, local fruit
- **Drinks:** bottled water, beer, soft drinks, tea, coffee, milo. Strong alcoholic beverages should be restricted to avoid unexpected problems.
- **Toiletries:** towels, razors, shampoo sachets, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, washing powder, toilet paper.
- **Souvenirs:** handicraft items (clothing, adornments, etc), traditional or specialty food and drink (e.g. dried fruits, fish and meat, etc).

Items should be arranged in an attractive display that is nicely decorated, well lit, indicates product prices and is well stocked.

Making the sale

When selling your products it is important to have some product knowledge:

- What products are available (and in stock)
- What your products are made from (e.g. materials, ingredients)
- Price of products in both VND and USD
- Whether products are locally made or imported
- What the traditional use of handicraft products are



Taking payments

Because it is often not possible to attend to the display table at all times, managing sales and taking payments can be difficult. Some options to handle payments include:

- Have a tin on the display table for guests to deposit their money into
- Have a log book for guests to write down items purchased for payment at checkout



Village tours and other services

Providing local tours of your village and natural and cultural attractions at a set price, or giving your guests the opportunity to participate in - or observe - how you go about your daily work can be a great learning experience for your guests.

Types of tours should consider the features of the surrounding environment (e.g. mountains, bays, lakes, rivers, beaches, fields, waterfalls, caves, etc), built infrastructure (e.g. houses, roads and trails, historical or cultural sites such as temples, pagodas or colonial buildings), and other places of potential interest (e.g. hospitals, market places and stores). Some ideas for tours might include:

- Short village cultural tour
- Guided walks around the local village and / or natural area
- Bird watching expeditions
- Boat tours along rivers, lakes, coastal areas, etc

The tour difficulty level (for an average person), trip duration and features should be noted and communicated to guests to help them decide on the tour that would suit them best.



Other activities

Providing guests with the opportunity to interact with you in your daily chores or work can be an interesting way for them to learn about your culture and way of life. Potential activities you could offer guests include:

- Guiding a buffalo to plough a rice terrace
- Learning how to make traditional handicrafts (e.g. embroidery)
- Helping to prepare dinner / lunch
- Helping to fish for the evening meal
- Learning to shoot a traditional bow and arrow
- Learning to plant / harvest rice

MANAGING MONEY



Bookkeeping is important because it enables you to identify what your costs are and what brings you income. It helps you to make decisions on how best to expand your business, know how much income can be used for

personal use, and how to best price goods and services. It also provides a record to show to present to a bank or other financial lenders to prove that you can repay a loan if you want to borrow money to expand your business.

Recording income and expenses

Simple costing involves identifying your income and your expenses. Income refers to sales of different goods and services in your homestay that generate you money.

Expenses are all things that cost your homestay money in order for it to operate. Typical homestay income and expenses include:

INCOME	EXPENSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation Meals and snacks Drinks Souvenirs Cultural performances Local tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ingredients for meals Drinks Utilities (e.g. water, electricity) Staff salaries Cleaning materials Equipment and furniture

When undertaking bookkeeping it is important to be consistent and track all business related expenses and income regularly in a dedicated notebook and at the end of the month calculate the total amount of income and

expense for the month. After subtracting the expenses from the income, the profit (if positive) or loss (if negative) can be calculated. An example of a profit/loss statement is provided below.

EXPENSES				INCOME			
Date	Item	Quantity	Value	Date	Item	Quantity	Value
15/12/12	Carrots	500g	25.000	15/12/12	Accommodation	5 beds	750.000
	Chicken	1kg	100.000		Dinners	5 meals	250.000
	Onions	200g	25.000		Crisps	2 packs	20.000
17/12/12	Cleaning fluid	1 bottle	20.000	16/12/12	Village tour	3 pax	600.000
...
Total:			175.000	Total:			1.620.000
Balance: 1.445.000 VND							

Simple pricing

There are various methods for setting a selling price, for example, to cover input costs, to match the prices of competitors, to portray a standard of quality, or to meet government regulations. In general however, the basic principle of setting a selling price is based upon two key elements, input costs plus the amount of profit you want to make. Input costs that relate to pricing commonly include:

- Raw materials or ingredients used to produce products or the price of buying items from other makers / providers (e.g. food, drinks)
- Labour – even if you are not paying any salaries or wages, your own time is a cost that should be considered
- Transport cost when purchasing food or other items related to business
- Utilities such as electricity / power during business period
- Furniture and equipment purchased represented as a proportional depreciation over the expected number of years before it will need to be replaced
- Hire or rental of venue, performance costume or musical instruments

- Fees to contribute to the local community tourism association, entrance fees to protected areas for tours etc.
- Maintenance costs including purchase of cleaning materials
- Other business costs such as guest soap, candles, toilet paper, etc



Keeping guest accounts

Keeping a guest account ensures nothing is forgotten and reduces confusion during settlement of the bill. It also allows for detailed billing that assures the guest of a level of professionalism and honesty, and can assist you with your regular account keeping, recording and re-ordering of stock. When keeping a guest account and preparing bills:

- Use a guest account notebook template and invoice template
- Record what every guest orders or uses as soon as

possible when it happens. Use this to prepare the bill.

- List items according to date with the number of units (quantity) and values (VND per unit)

Settlement of the bill is normally conducted on the last day just before departure. At this time the guest's bill should already be prepared and presented to the guest for review and payment. Ensure some cash is available to provide change for cash payments. An example of a guest bill is provided below.

GUEST BILL					
Name of guest: Mr John Smith			Arrival date:		20/12/12
			Departure date:		22/12/12
#	Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price (VND)	Amount
1	Accommodation	Night	2	50.000	100.000
2	Breakfast	Pax	2	20.000	40.000
3	Bottles water	Bottle	2	6.000	12.000
4	Music show	Show	1	40.000	40.000
5	Handicraft scarf	Piece	1	100.000	100.000
6	Beers	Can	2	20.000	40.000
7	Tea	Glass	2	7.000	14.000
Total				346.000	

LOW COST MARKETING



Marketing and promoting your homestay is not only critical at the start-up of your business in order to inform potential customers that you are open to business, but should also be maintained for the life of the business to ensure guests continue to come.

Developing partnerships

Successful homestay businesses are generally those that have developed a range of business partnerships. Such partnerships can provide homestay operators with access additional finances for developing the homestay, as well as access to specialist staff who can help manage tourist travel logistics, promote the homestay to broader markets, and even help with training and training. The key partners for homestays in Vietnam and their role include:

- Tour operators: Help advertise, market and sell tours to the homestay and arrange and manage all logistics
- Tourist information centres: Help market, promote and communicate travel information to tourists.

Provide places to display homestay brochure and website listings for accommodation providers

- Tourism associations and clubs provide members with marketing support, represent their members in discussions with government and NGOs, and often implement capacity building programmes.
- Neighbouring homestays or villages provide opportunities to combine resources to undertake joint marketing efforts and cross promote businesses.

Sales calls

Making a sales call to your local tour operators, travel agencies and hotels to up-date them about your homestay and / or other newly developed tourism products and services is a cheap way of promoting your business and the destination in general. Sales calls can be conducted by individual homestay operators or alternatively by representatives of your local community management organisation (if available) on behalf of all members.

SERVICE AGREEMENTS

In order to ensure a business partnership meets the needs and expectations of both parties, a service agreement should be developed and signed. The service agreement should clarify such things as:

- Representatives of the homestay and the business partner
- Main roles and duties of each party
- Implementation of the contract
- Duration of the contract
- Rules and conditions for breaking contract
- Prices, commissions, payment terms and other conditions



Familiarisation trips

Familiarisation trips are simply concerned with inviting travel agents, booking agencies, tour operators and other potential partners to come and stay a night in your homestay to experience your service. While hosting the familiarisation visit, you should follow what you would do for a regular tourist but making particularly sure the clients are treated to the very best that your homestay has to offer (e.g. from food through to tours and performances etc) because if successful, the client may be impressed enough to sign a service contract with you and deliver on-going business.

Marketing material

There are a number of simple marketing materials that you can develop that will assist you to generate sales:

- Brochures that feature your facilities, services, attractions, things to see and do, prices, location, and contact details
- Business cards for distribution to potential partners and to guests
- Guest welcome card that provides a brief background to your family, the history and culture of the people, and an outline (promotion) of the facilities, services, and activities available
- Guest book to collect comments and obtain feedback on guest satisfaction to direct improvement of the homestay
- Signage to let passing traffic know you are there (with the authorisation of your local authority)



Homestay:

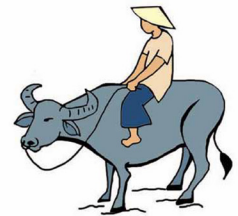
Tel:.....

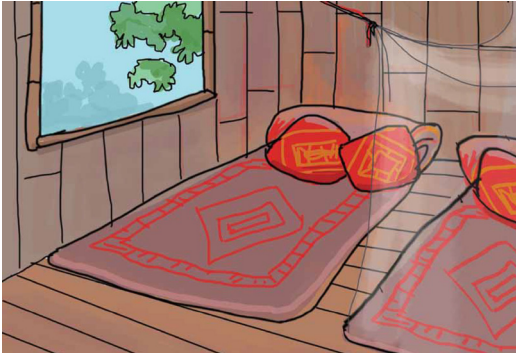
Address:.....

.....

.....

Please pass this card on!





HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping is the activity of maintaining a clean, comfortable and safe house. In homestays, housekeeping refers to cleaning and maintaining guestrooms or sleeping area, bathroom and toilet and outdoor and common areas. A clean, hygienic and well-maintained house is a basic expectation of just about every guest.

Sleeping area

The key steps to preparing the sleeping area before a check-in, clearing the sleeping area after a check-out and servicing a sleeping area for multiple night stays include the following:

CHECK-IN	CHECK-OUT	SERVICE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dust the room 2. Clean the floor 3. Lay down the mattresses / beds 4. Fit the sheets 5. Place the blankets / duvets 6. Place the pillows 7. Hang the mosquito nets 8. Conduct a final check 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove the mosquito nets 2. Check for forgotten guest belongings 3. Strip the beds 4. Collect the rubbish 5. Remove the floor mattresses 6. Dust the room 7. Clean the floor 8. Clean the blankets / duvets & linen 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Air the room 2. Collect the rubbish 3. Tidy the mosquito nets 4. Make the bed 5. Dust the room 6. Clean the floor 7. Conduct a final check

Bathroom and toilet

The steps to cleaning the bathroom and toilet include the following:

- Air the room
- Collect the rubbish
- Clean the shower
- Clean the walls
- Clean the hand basin
- Clean the mirror and other accessories
- Clean the toilet
- Clean the floor
- Replace the bath linen
- Conduct a final check

General areas and non-routine cleaning

Housekeeping general areas relates not only to cleaning but also making the room attractive and welcoming.

Decorations	General cleaning	Outdoor areas
<p>Simple decorations that reflect the local culture and period of the house can be a great way to create a cultural experience for your guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide furniture (tables, chairs) using natural materials such as stone or wood • Decorate bed- and living room with pictures of local places or hang handicrafts • Display traditional items or musical instruments around the room • Remove objects not consistent with the period of the house or culture during the stay of the visitors to create a more traditional atmosphere 	<p>Undertaking the following activities on a weekly basis or as soon as a problem area arises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dust with a damp cloth all pictures, furniture, tables, display cases, walls, mirrors, cupboards, shelves, ceiling lights, switches and door frames • Sweep and mop hallways and stairs with a warm water and detergent mix • Clear cobwebs from under the roof / ceiling, windows and doors, and outside walls. • Wash pillows with a gentle laundry detergent and warm water mix and leave in the sun to dry. 	<p>The steps to cleaning outdoor areas include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect rubbish • Remove animal droppings • Sweep and rake • Clear drainage systems • Cut lawns, prune bushes and trees • Arrange outdoor furniture • Place rubbish • Develop garden beds



FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE

Food and beverage service refers to the preparation, serving and clearing of food and drinks. Providing food and beverage service that is efficient, attentive and responsive and is based upon the principles of good hygiene and cleanliness will leave your guests happy and passing on positive feedback and recommendations to their family and friends.

Preparing the dining area

It is important to clean the dining area because old food left lying around attracts pests like flies, ants and rodents which can spread disease to humans. A clean, tidy and well-organised eating area is also appealing to guests and provides a good impression of your homestay standards and a better image of your service.

Before meal service:

- Make sure the dining area floor, walls and ceiling are clean
- Place decorations such as flowers or candles
- Clean all dining ware required for the meal service such as chopsticks, cutlery, plates, trays, bowls, glasses, and condiment containers making sure they are free of dust, dirt, marks, smudges, and bits of food.
- Lay out the dining place with either a large mat on the floor with sitting cushions for each guest or a dining table with table cloth and sufficient chairs for the guests
- Set down food trays, condiment items, bowls glasses, etc ready for food service

After meal service:

- Clear all trays, plates, bowls, cups and glasses
- Remove any leftover food and rubbish
- Remove mats / tablecloths
- Sweep and / or mop the dining area floor
- Replace all furniture to correct place

Serving meals

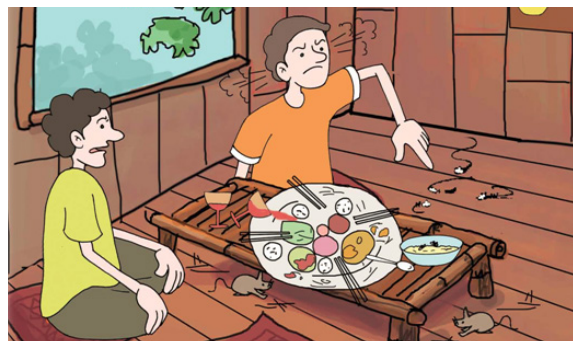
Good meal service involves being efficient in meal delivery, courteous in attitude, and attentive and responsive to guests' dining needs. Key elements in the serving of meals includes:

- Preparing of the food tray with all dishes in the kitchen
- Assisting guests to be seated
- Serving drinks before food service
- Serving meals, explaining the name or each dish as it is laid on the dining place
- Observing and attending to diners during meal service (e.g. be ready to offer refill drinks, remove communal dishes as they are completed, replace with new dishes, etc)
- Clearing of dining place after all guests have stopped eating
- Serving after dinner drinks and / or dessert

Serving drinks

Serving beverages follows a similar set of components as serving meals:

- Preparing the beverages tray in the kitchen
- Serving of beverages by placing each on the dining place in front of each guest
- Offering ice cubes and straws
- Observing and attending to diners and offer to refill drinks or bring new one as necessary
- Clearing glasses after all guests have finished their drinks



COOKERY



Cookery is the process of preparing and cooking and serving food to your guests. Sampling the local cuisine is an important reason why tourists visit a homestay. Therefore, when planning a menu it is important to have a good understanding of the expectations of your guests and their culinary differences so that you can deliver a meal that they will find not only tasty, but also a positive cultural experience. Equally important is knowing how to choose and store food wisely, as well as how to practice good food and kitchen hygiene.

Creating a culinary experience

Vietnamese cuisine is considered unique and tourists are often excited about having the opportunity to eat food that they may not be able to get anywhere else. Many tourists are also interested in learning about different cooking techniques, and new ingredients and flavours. Because of the importance of culture and cuisine in the tourist's homestay experience, it is important to:

- Offer food that is authentic to your local culture and traditions
- Eat in a traditional way (e.g. with chopsticks or even hands)
- Create a dining place that is reflective of your culture and traditions
- Use ingredients that are in season and from the local area

Selecting and storing food

Choose the best quality and most nutritious food that is available within the budget that you have set for providing meals. Ensure foods are fresh by ensuring correct colour, smell, and condition.

Minimising food storage problems and waste

The best strategy to reduce food storage and manage waste is to:

- Buy food only when guests are booked and confirmed to stay, the number of guests are known, and their dining needs are confirmed
- Limit the menu to just enough dishes
- Store food properly (or cook) as soon as possible after purchase
- Grow your own vegetables, fruit and herbs

Storing food

With all food that needs to be stored general principles can be applied:

- Store food in clean, closed containers
- Keep cooked food above raw food to prevent drips and cross contamination
- Keep different types of food separate
- Keep uncooked fresh foods as cold as possible
- Store food off the floor away from animals, pests and damp
- Cover foods with a clean cloth or store in a traditional wooden food safe

FOOD TYPE	STORAGE METHOD
Meat, chicken & fish	Closed containers, cool place, if not refrigerated, use on the same day. In the event of keeping dishes for many hours before serving, dishes can be marinated or half cooked, and then cooked as needed
Vegetables	Root vegetables must be stored away from other foods as they carry bacteria from the soil. Other vegetables should be washed in clean water before use. Root vegetables can be stored in 3-5 days, other vegetables can be stored for only 1-2 days.
Fruit	Fruit can be stored for 1-3 days, to avoid damage do not cover too tightly
Rice	Closed containers, off the floor to prevent pest damage and damp
Spices	Closed containers, separate different types of spices to avoid losing specific aroma
Cooked food	Closed containers, cool place, if not refrigerated, use on the same day

Food and kitchen hygiene

Food handlers have to practice very careful hygiene when preparing food to prevent unwanted contamination and potential associated illness.

Food hygiene

The principles of good food hygiene are shown in the table below:

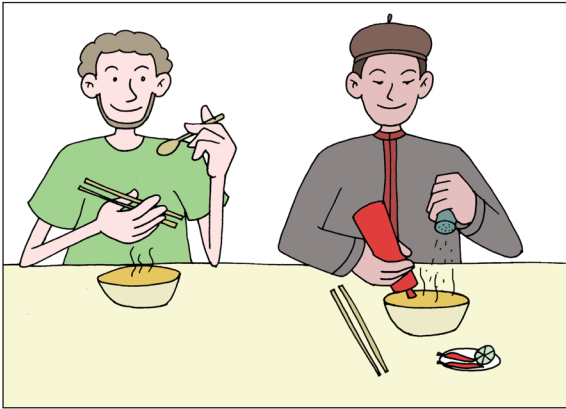
PRINCIPLE	ACTION
Prevent cross contamination	Wash hands after touching raw foods or dirty items, after using toilet, etc.
Keep food cold	Keep out of sun, keep in container not more than 3-5 hours
Keep food covered	Use covered containers such as plastic boxes with lids
Heat food quickly	Use microwave oven or heater if possible or alternatively cookers
Manage waste	See principles on next page
Wash food	Wash fruits and vegetables in clean water
Store food separately	Store fresh and cooked foods apart. Don't let blood from meat, chicken or fish get onto any cooked foods. Store cooked food above raw food so that raw food does not drip into cooked food and contaminate it.
Manage children & pests	Keep out of children's reach, use food containers to avoid being eaten by pets or pests
Use food quickly	Do not keep fresh food more than a day if unrefrigerated
Keep clean food utensils	Keep clean, especially after working with raw meat, poultry or fish

Kitchen hygiene

Kitchen hygiene refers to keeping a clean and safe kitchen to prevent food poisoning. The key principles for practicing good kitchen hygiene include:

- Clean dishes, cooking utensils and equipment as soon as possible after use to prevent attracting flies, cockroaches and other pest
- Put kitchen waste not appropriate to farm animals or pets into a container with a tight fitting lid and empty once or twice a day
- Keep the kitchen tidy by putting away all things where they belong after use





Breakfast

Most homestays in Vietnam will include breakfast with overnight accommodation. Because most of your guests are interested in experiencing Vietnamese culture and cuisine, serving a typical Vietnamese breakfast will normally be a good choice. Possible breakfast dishes can include:

- “Pho” or rice noodles
- Soups
- Rice porridge
- Rice pancakes
- Boiled eggs, omelettes

If your guests are not comfortable eating a Vietnamese style breakfast, you could offer them a simple version of a Western breakfast such as:

- Fresh fruit bowl
- Eggs and toast / fresh bread
- Toast / bread with condiments such as jam or honey
- Pancakes with fruit, jam or honey



Lunch and dinner

For most tourists, lunch and dinner are the most special and anticipated meals of the day. As with breakfast, offer your guests a meal that is traditional to your local culture. Possible types of lunch and dinner dishes include:

- Soup – Chicken soup with mushroom, minced beef soup with vegetables, sweet and sour fish soup
- Rice – Steamed rice with meat and vegetables, steamed coconut rice, fried rice with sausages and egg, fried rice with beef and sour pickle
- Noodle dish – Fried egg noodle with beef and vegetables, fried egg noodle with seafood, fried glass noodle with chicken
- Meat dish – Grilled chicken leg with lemon leaves, grilled pork with chilli and lemongrass, deep fried fish in sweet and sour sauce, sautéed beef with leek and celery

It is often a good idea to also provide some “fusion” dishes that combine traditional Vietnamese and Western ingredients as it might be more recognisable to tourists. Some examples might include:

- Fried pork and vegetables with a local honey sauce
- Rice pancakes rather than wheat pancakes with local fruits and honey
- French fries using fried banana or other local root vegetables
- Chicken with a Vietnamese salad (of local herbs and vegetables in Vietnamese style dressing of fish sauce / vinegar / sugar)





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