

# The Absent Host: The Complete Visit Wizard's Guide for Guests

From "The Art of the Visit: Being the Perfect Host; Becoming the Perfect Guest"  
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**A Map of the Immediate Area:** I have maps that are in clear page protectors so the guest can take them out of the binder and travel with them in the car. High light the route in yellow highlighter and add approximate driving times. Make sure to include instructions from and back to the house, if necessary. If your property is large you may want to include a property map in case your guests will be out on the property. You may find it easier to do one map with things of interest pointed out on the map. It is time consuming but so nice for the guests! I also put the phone number to the house or my cell phone at the bottom of the map along with the address. Just in case...

**House Opening and Operational Instructions:** Make sure your guest has your contact information—and that you are reachable—should they not understand or are not able to perform these functions:

The location of the heat and/or air conditioner and instructions if necessary

The water pump and hot water heater with instructions

Turning the refrigerator up if you had turned it down

Turning the ice maker on if you had turned it off (don't laugh. I once ran out for a bag of ice certain the ice maker was broken.)

Where necessary household items are located if not easily found such as sheets  
for the guest rooms

Location of the key to the car, boat, guest house, or the garage

Alarm codes

**Directions and phone numbers where applicable, to important places, like:**

The Grocery, Liquor, and Drug store

Churches and Synagogues

The Spa and Salon

Recreational Places: the Beach, Lake, Hiking Trails, etc.

Farmer's market

Golf and tennis club for tee times and court reservations

**Phone numbers and Account numbers.** Account numbers and the name in which the service is listed are important for things like the power and television companies, as most service providers (at least in the US) ask for that information before they can assist.

Emergency Services: Hospital, Fire, Police, etc.

Local Doctor

Veterinarian

Television and Internet Service Provider

Power and Utility Companies

Telephone Company

Caretaker, Handyman, Gardener, Maid, Pool Service

Gatehouse

Club House

Known Baby Sitter

House Keeper or Cleaning Service and cost

**Things to Do:** Include a map and/or written directions.

Skiing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, swimming, tennis, fishing, golf course,  
and driving range

River, lake and boating activities

Unusual places of interest

Parks

Farmer's market

Activities for the kids: miniature golf, water parks, etc.

Restaurants, nightclubs, movie theater, movie rentals, real theaters

Closest lake and marina

Shopping District

Health Club

Library

## **Operating instructions for:**

Television, the remote control, DVD player and other games, Internet, heat and a/c, the gas or log fireplace (don't assume!), all other major appliances like the clothes washer and dryer, the skeet machine, the gas grill, the patio heater, the pool or hot tub

A list of TV channels

## **House Rules**

What the guests can and can't use or do (refer back to the above "do" and "don't" list). This is a crucial part of the Guide, so I want to comment further. There is nothing that will make an absent host hotter than having a guest do something the host thinks they should not have, and rightly the same for the guest. How can they be blamed if they did not know?

How to properly dispose of trash and recyclables

Where to walk the dogs, if applicable

Smoking rules

No ski boots or golf shoes in the house

What equipment they can or cannot use

**House Closing Instructions:** This is one of the most important parts of the Guide. If you are not going to be going to the house anytime soon after your guest's departure, and don't have someone who can go check on it (which you should get, by the way), this becomes critical for all obvious reasons.

What should the heat or a/c be set to when your guests leave?

What to do with the fireplace ashes

Alarm setting instructions

Refrigerator setting/leaving any items in frig.

Water shut-off

Any unusual instructions like putting plastic wrap over toilets

Leaving on any interior or exterior lights

Where to leave any keys or equipment

What to do with dirty towels and sheets: they clean, you clean, or the maid cleans

How/where to dispose of the final trash

**Extras:** Write a few sentences about the restaurants you like and the price. Include their menus and take out menus from restaurants and the nearest pizza delivery place.

Include the times for religious services

Include local history

Include a list of recreational equipment rental prices

What the clubhouse might offer

Any certain people you deal with at any of these places

Put hours of operation for things like the Farmer's Market

These lists could be more extensive or less depending on your particular situation. Add whatever is applicable to your home and your area. If there is anything at all that you are squeamish about including in the Guide, go ahead and do it and just blame the Visit Wizard. I can take it.

Please feel free to email me with any questions or comments.

Happy visiting!

Kathy Bertone, a.k.a., the Visit Wizard