



friendship force  
PERTH

*Explore • Understand • Serve*®

## **A GUIDE FOR AMBASSADORS**

### ***FRIENDSHIP FORCE MISSION***

*To promote global understanding across  
the barriers that separate people.*

**CHANGING THE WAY YOU  
SEE THE WORLD**

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# THE AMBASSADOR

## What does it mean to be Friendship Force Ambassador?

*A Friendship Force Ambassador, travelling to another country, takes on three distinct roles: A Guest, An Ambassador, and A Traveller.*

### Guest

The ambassador becomes part of the host family, sharing everyday responsibilities around the home while learning first-hand about the host culture. The ambassador should be physically able to meet the requirements of the host community. Lodging and meals in the home are provided by the host, and group activities such as welcome parties and local sightseeing are usually included in the basic Friendship Force fee you pay to the Host club.

All other expenses are the responsibility of the ambassador.

Being a good guest also means expressing gratitude in appropriate ways such as taking the host out to a meal and selecting an appropriate gift for your hosts.

## Ambassador

As a Friendship Force (FF) Ambassador you go, not just for your own personal goals, but also to represent your home community and your country. You not only learn about the host culture but you can share about your own. As you make friends in the host community you can provide a very personal and unique connection on behalf of your country.

## Traveller

A Friendship Force experience is a great way to experience the world from a new and unique perspective. With local citizens as guides the ambassador is introduced to the best attractions of the region.

Travelling as a FF ambassador is enjoyable and enriching, but it also requires special dedication and preparation. A spirit of adventure, flexibility, and being open to new experiences are all essentials for a successful Ambassador experience

## **FITNESS TO BE AN AMBASSADOR**

Somewhere on the other side of the world, someone is waiting for you with open arms.

Most people who genuinely support the goals of Friendship Force will make wonderful ambassadors or hosts.

*As a Friendship Force Ambassador, you have an awesome responsibility.*

Your Host's opinion of our country may be formed on the basis of their relationship with you.

*If you would like to be an ambassador be aware that you need to meet the criteria for being an Ambassador.*

## **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN AMBASSADOR**

### **Characteristics for a Worthy Ambassador.**

**An Open Mind:** The ability to keep one's opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli.

**A Sense of Humour:** The ability to laugh and find humour in things helps to guard against disappointment and frustration.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** The ability to cope with new situations as well as keeping options open and judgmental behaviour to a minimum.

**Positive Regard for Others:** The ability to express warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for others with a willingness to communicate both verbally and non-verbally.

Understanding is one thing an Ambassador must have. Participating in an exchange is an experience for the intellect as well and there will be times when things do not make sense to you or are ambiguous in meaning. Let it be! Be willing to do without definitive answers. Be willing to feel foolish at times. Be quick to overlook and slow to lose your sense of humour.

**A successful Ambassador above all is a good guest.**

***This takes preparation.*** Diplomacy begins at home with workshops scheduled by your Exchange Director (ED). It is most important that you attend all these informative workshops which will be arranged by your ED to learn about the customs, history and an understanding of the worldview of your Host country. As you participate in an exchange keep an open mind. Leave your negative thoughts at home. The fewer expectations and pre-conceptions you have, the more successful your experience will be. Do not expect to find your country in another country. After all, the joy of discovery is in

Punctuality is a must for all activities. When moving in a large group, one person's tardiness can make the whole group late. Be patient if lines are long and service is slow. Expect plans to be delayed and changed sometimes.  
*Travel like Gandhi —with simple clothes, open eyes and an uncluttered mind.*

## **Your Hosts**

It is possible that your new friends will share your occupation or interests, which will give you a common ground. However, they may not speak our language. This should not be a barrier to communication as a smile is a universal expression of friendship.

Remember to speak slowly, and clearly but you don't need to speak louder than normal. Your new friends may tell you they do not speak our language but they may understand some of your remarks, or interpret your expressions, motions and nuances. Do not say anything you would not wish them to hear. It is worth learning at least a few words in your Host's language too. It will help them to feel more comfortable knowing that you too are trying another language.

Learn to be independent. Enjoy the activities your HOSTS and the host club have planned but be able to amuse yourself part of the time.

You may want to take along non-verbal communication aids. Showing them an album of family photographs or a book showing pictures about your own community will be useful to show them about your life without too many words.

Allow your hosts to be hospitable according to their culture. Be open to their attentiveness and the ways they express it. People from some cultures are much more expressive than Australians.

Be considerate and understanding of limited resources. For example, your Host's hot water supply may be very expensive and limited and very different from what you are accustomed to at home. Adjust your shower times!!

## **Mobility and Health Requirements**

Outbound Exchange Directors are responsible for accepting only ambassadors who can comply with the physical requirements of the exchange program.

Ambassadors must be able to keep up with the typical daily activities of their hosts.

Normal activities within any exchanges include: Walking for extended periods of time, carrying one's own personal luggage, riding public transportation, and climbing stairs. Ambassadors must be alert, capable of following directions, and able to fulfil The Friendship Force Mission.

*It is most important for each Ambassador to disclose all information about their personal limitations regarding health and mobility when completing the **Friendship Force Ambassador Application Form** and the **FFI Health and Mobility Checklist**<sup>1</sup>.*

*All information is relevant to Exchange Directors of both the Outgoing F.F. Club and the Host Club.*

*Ambassadors must recognise, acknowledge and reveal any details of their personal health and mobility aspects. Your honest and relevant information will be so valuable when decisions are being made by both of the Exchange Directors for the Exchange Program Activities.*

If problems do arise during the exchange because mobility or mental limitations are not disclosed, then the Ambassador can be asked to leave the program and/or the Exchange.

<sup>1</sup> Available online at [www.friendshipforce-australia.org](http://www.friendshipforce-australia.org)

## Health and Medical Tips

Even if your destination is a first world country check any current travel warnings for health or danger at: *The Australian Government **Department of Foreign and Trade (DFAT)** Website*. Put your personal information on [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) site too.

Have your Doctor write a summary of your medical conditions (if any) and a list of your current medications. It is valuable in case of loss and will avoid hassles with customs, immigration and health authorities. Scan the document and email it to yourself!

### Personal Medical Kit

Ambassadors should travel with a small medicine kit including your own prescription medicines.

#### Consider the following

Anti-nausea medication, Electrolyte powder, Band-Aids, aspirin, stomach remedies, preferred cold/cough remedy, Antibiotics: *it is very important to be familiar with the intended purpose of the different antibiotics*. A letter from your doctor stating your prescribed medication - but remember, Australian prescriptions cannot be filled overseas.

## Recommendations to reduce jet lag

Stay well rested prior to the exchange

Stay well hydrated during travel; drink a lot of water

When travelling east, go to sleep later than usual in the days prior to the trip. When travelling west, go to sleep earlier than usual in the days prior to the trip.

On arrival, try to get sunlight and exercise during the first part of the day. Work into the new time zone as quickly as possible (avoid daytime naps) Eat protein meals at breakfast and lunch to stimulate the body's active cycle. Eat carbohydrates meals in the evening to stimulate sleep.

## **PREPARING FOR THE EXCHANGE**

### **WORKSHOPS**

As mentioned previously, it is mandatory to attend workshops arranged by your Exchange Director as you prepare for your exchange experience. The initial workshop will be soon after "It's a Match" has been agreed between the two clubs. Dates and possible travel itineraries will be discussed with all ambassadors at this first meeting. So, it's well worth you being involved at the first stage of planning. Regular workshops are also a great way to get to know your fellow Ambassadors as you plan the itinerary and share the excitement as you prepare for your journey.

During the workshops you will also gain lots of information about differences of other countries and about crossing the cultural barriers without the baggage of prejudice, condescension and fear.

Becoming a good ambassador starts at home. A same kind and thoughtful manner in which you treat your Exchange Director and your fellow exchange Ambassadors will prepare you for leaving a lasting impression upon your Hosts. Take photographs of your home, your family and city to share with your hosts so they will have a better understanding of you and where you live.

## LUGGAGE TIPS

Do your homework about Security and Custom's regulations and restrictions for what can be carried on flights and into the various countries you will visit. In particular check the current regulations regarding carrying liquids in your hand luggage. Rules vary for different countries but Australian and New Zealand Custom and Quarantine rules are very strict.

Remember the Australian Customs and Quarantine rules for your return journey.

Choose your luggage wisely. Your suitcase should be easily managed by you. It's better and safer to have only 1 or 2 pieces to manage.

Remember that you may need to use public transport with your luggage or your host may have only a small car for transporting your luggage.

Don't forget to check all the Airlines you will be using on your trip for their luggage allowance. Weight allowances and costs vary especially with smaller aircraft and different fares.

Your Carry-on luggage should also meet airline requirements in dimension and weight.

Pack items in your carry-on luggage that are essential to you for 24 hours in case your stowed luggage is misplaced or delayed.

Carry medication and all important documentation with you at all times. Use money belts/pouches.

For couples it is a good idea to split the belongings between the two cases. If one case goes astray then neither person is left without a change of clothes and necessities.

When packing, use the rule 'if in doubt, leave it out'.

Take a small day bag/backpack. When in crowds any bags should be worn in front of you.

## **DOCUMENT TIPS**

Always carry your documents (passport, insurance, credit cards etc), in your hand luggage or on you personally - never in your suitcase. Try to keep credit cards and important papers eg, passport and tickets in different places in case of loss. Have handy the name and address of the first place you will be staying overnight for when you arrive in a country. You will need to state this to immigration as you arrive.

Carry extra copies of your passport and passport photos for unexpected visas, for identification or for a lost passport. A good idea to scan them and email them to yourself.

Leave a copy of your credit cards and other important documents with a trusted person at home. Take contact details of your bank, insurance company, family and friends with you.

## **FINANCIAL AND SECURITY TIPS**

It's a good idea to consider taking different ways of using your money. That will mean you can purchase what you want when you want.

For example: Take a small amount of cash in the currency of the country you will visit for tipping at airport and hotels.

Cash can be in Euros or US dollars or Australian dollars BUT this will depend on the country/ies you are visiting Take Debit/Travel/Credit cards which can be used in Automatic Teller Machines which dispense the local currency. Check with your bank about charges incurred using all the cards overseas. Remember your pin number. Remember that on the third try the ATM will keep your card.

When using your cards always check the amount being charged before signing or entering your pin code and before leaving the shop/business.

Have someone at home paying the minimum amounts on your monthly credit card statements if you're to be overseas for a long time. Perhaps arrange direct debit to ensure your Credit Card is not frozen.

Security pouches for waist or inside jackets are a good idea. Keep your passport number handy. You are often asked to quote it.

Locked luggage will often be opened by Customs. Check out a Transport Security Administration (TSA) approved lock, which can be opened without damage or removal. It is useful to carry spare keys and padlocks but keep them in a different place.

When leaving a hotel for the day in a foreign country take a 'Hotel Address Card' with you. Works well with taxi drivers if you are in a non-English speaking country.

Beware of thieves and pickpockets anywhere you travel. When staying in a hotel it is recommended that you use the hotel safe to store your valuables. Don't take anything with you that will create a financial or emotional hardship if it is lost or stolen.

## **WHAT TO TAKE**

### **CLOTHING**

Consider and respect the local customs of countries you may visit. (Try to find out some information before you pack.)

In some areas Shorts are not generally worn in the cities. Some churches and museums require moderate clothing and head covering for women. Generally restrictions are about bare shoulders and legs. Some holy or religious sites ban slacks for women.

Some suggestions: Slacks/Trousers, Shorts, Skirts, Underwear, Shirts /blouses, good walking shoes, extra pair of shoes/sandals, socks, stockings, light rain-coat, warm jacket, hat (sun and/or warm) night wear, scarves, gloves, something to wear for a more formal occasion. Toiletries (decant into small plastic bottles).

Take out small amounts from bottles and tubes to save leakage and/or place in a plastic bag.

Try to take clothing that you can wash out in a hand basin and will dry easily overnight.

## PERSONAL TOILETRIES, MEDICATION

- Cosmetics (for women)
- Reading glasses & spare pair or prescription in case of loss
- Hairdryer
- Contact lenses
- Hand sanitizer
- Face washer (not always supplied)
- GPs letter (outlining your medications) Vaccination card
- Personal medication either in original containers or with their prescriptions
- Insect repellent/sun screen
- Ear plugs for use on flights
- Small mirror or in share situations
- Disinfectant wipes

The following items are very important but a Guide only. Make your own decision about what to take.

- Passport & Visas
- Tickets or Booking Number for E-Ticket and access to Flight bookings.
- Accommodation vouchers
- 2 copies of all documents packed in different suitcases
- Camera & equipment
- Tablet, IPAD or Laptop computer
- Leave a copy of all information at home with a trusted person
- Inexpensive jewellery, which can change your outfits (For women!!)
- An inflatable neck pillow
- Itinerary
- Money: debit/travel/credit cards & small amounts of cash
- Insurance contact details
- Send an electronic copy of your documents to your email account
- Mobile phone & ear plugs
- Calculator (for converting different exchange rates)
- Extra fold up bag for extra purchases
- Washing soap/detergent, portable clothes line, plastic/zip lock bags for keeping clothes separate in luggage.
- International electricity

for long journeys

- Torch and extra batteries
- Extra luggage tags, padlocks & keys
- First Aid Kit
- Photos of family, home & home town in a plastic folder or on your phone or tablet.
- Reading material, puzzles etc
- Wrapping paper, sticky tape, gifts for hosts, including day hosts, dinner hosts.
- Tea/coffee/sugar sachets

adapter plugs

- Travel clock
- Sewing kit, name badge, umbrella
- Playing cards
- Address & phone numbers of all hosts or friends you may wish to contact
- Travel diary, notebook, pens,
- Roll of gaffer tape for covering lights in hotel rooms or mending luggage

## **BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME**

### Around the Home Security

- Arrange for someone to feed the pets and to tend the garden.
- Leave details of your itinerary and contact details with neighbours, friends and relatives.
- Contact the Police Department or security firm to inform them of your absence, Cancel newspapers.
- Arrange for mail to be held, redirected or taken from your letter box. Let your neighbours know of your absence and return date and contact information of a trusted person at home in case of an emergency.
- Check refrigerator for perishable food.
- Check all heating units, taps and lights.
- Switch off electrical items at main power outlets.
- Check that all doors and windows are locked.

## **AT THE AIRPORT**

### Some Useful Tips

- You could take a screenshot of your electronic boarding pass on your phone. In a pinch the scanner should work on the photo of the bar code.
- Keep calm, cool and be nice. It is sometimes hard in the heat of the moment, but no matter how stressful the situation, approach the counter with ease, confidence, and appeal to the employee for help, not a fight.
- Don't discard your boarding pass after you've boarded your plane. If a problem arises and you are "de-planed" you will need it later. You may also need it for confirming Frequent Flyer points allocation.
- On the Plane - Set your watch to the local time of your destination.

## ENJOYING THE EXCHANGE

### On arrival

As you let your hosts take over your life for one week embrace the experience as a gift. You may never come this way again so make the most of it.

When you arrive, the lifestyle and accommodations may be completely different from what you know. Be open to changes. Feel free to ask questions when you are confused. Be patient if things are not the way you expect them to be. Treat your new friends with as much courtesy and cooperation as you would like guests in your home to show you.

The Friendship Force experience doesn't offer a deluxe tour with "Five Star" accommodations and meals. You are offered an exciting travel adventure and the opportunity to make new friends of a different culture.

It is normal for anyone visiting a foreign country to be affected by Culture Shock. Recognize it for what it is. Understand how to deal with it.

Culture Shock can manifest itself by a range of symptoms. They could be:

- physical symptoms such as excessive sleeping, head or stomach-aches,
- excessive concern over cleanliness, disease and personal health,
- irritation with delays and other minor frustrations, resistance to trying to communicate when there is a language difference,
- excessive fear of being cheated, robbed or injured
- a desire to be with your own fellow citizens.

The most important things in understanding other cultures are common sense, flexibility and care for the feeling of others.

Remember things are not always RIGHT or WRONG, but only DIFFERENT. Ask questions, ask for help, don't jump to conclusions, don't assume. You are on a good-will exchange where you will make friends by sharing some of their experience. It will be a new experience for them too! Consult with your ED if issues arise.

## **TRAVELLERS' CODE OF ETHICS**

Some thoughtful tips when travelling:

Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country. Be sensitively aware of the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be offensive behaviour on your part. This applies very much to photography.

Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

Realize that often the people in the country you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own, this does not make them inferior, only different so try to adjust.

Instead of looking for that 'far-away paradise,' discover the enrichment of seeing a different way of life.

Acquaint yourself with local customs - people will be happy to help you. Instead of the practice of 'knowing all the answers' cultivate the habit of asking questions.

Remember that you are only one of the thousands of people visiting this country and do not expect special privileges.

If you really want your experience to be a home away from home it is foolish to waste money on travelling.

When you are shopping, remember that "bargain" you obtained was only possible because of the low wages paid to the maker. It has been said, "What enriches you may rob and violate others."

Do not make promises to people in your host country unless you are certain you can carry through.

Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding.

## SOLVING PROBLEMS

In any hosting situation that poses a problem, before reacting, remember that Friendship Force Ambassadors are expected to possess and exercise a great deal of TACT and DIPLOMACY.

If you have any concerns, it's really best to communicate with your Host about anything that may be resolved by minor changes. Always respect your Hosts' situation and decision. If things aren't resolved, follow up with your Exchange Director for help. Do it quietly and in a manner respectful of your Host. Do not cause them to be embarrassed or to "lose face".

## Illness of a minor nature

If you do have a health issue, share your problem with your hosts who may be able to help you're your discomfort. If it is related to food, jet lag or simple exhaustion it should be resolved easily.

## **Major Medical Emergency**

If it is more serious, again your hosts are probably the best immediate source of help. They will know of the nearest hospital or doctor to phone. In an emergency, you or your host should notify your Exchange Director preferably before leaving for the hospital or doctor. Otherwise do it as soon as possible.

Always carry your personal medical insurance information with you. Some medical insurance companies will require you to pay all the bills and then submit copies of them for reimbursement after you return home. Some may also require you to notify them before any medical treatment is started.

**Miscellaneous problems:** Remember that many problems will resolve themselves with time and tact. Many "problem" situations are only a result of jetlag or culture shock and are often the basis for amusing travel

stories when you arrive home and feel more rested and relaxed. What seems like today's crisis may be tomorrow's anecdote!

When we live with other people and share a meal in their home a lot of good things can and will happen.

*YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!*

## **RESOURCES**

A Friendship Force Exchange offers an opportunity for people from different parts of the world to share their lives with each other in the spirit of friendship. The success of the experience depends on the extent to which participants can build friendships, exercise flexibility, adapt to unforeseen difficulties, and promote understanding.

The following information is needed to help Friendship Force Australia and Exchange Directors select Ambassadors who are representative of their community or region. In the event the applicant is not able to meet in person with the exchange director, you will be asked to provide references and other supporting documentation.

Detailed information also helps us match Ambassadors with host families. Each applicant must complete and sign the Application and Agreement. We appreciate your cooperation.

### **Ambassador Application and Agreement Form**

The Ambassador Application and Agreement form is available on the Friendship Force Australia website:

1. Enter the Friendship Force Australia website at <http://www.friendshipforce-australia.org>
2. Click on Forms and then Exchange Application Forms.

## **AMBASSADOR PLEDGE**

*As an Ambassador with The Friendship Force, I agree with the goal of the organisation: to create an environment where personal friendships are established across the barriers that separate people. My main objective as I join this exchange is for cultural understanding and friendship. My health is good enough to keep up with the group activities planned and I know I will be responsible for carrying my own baggage.*

*As an ambassador, I am aware that my actions reflect on the club and the country from which I travel. I promise to conduct myself in an exemplary manner. I understand the Exchange Director of this exchange has been given authority by the Friendship Force headquarters to lead and conduct this exchange for the best interests of all parties concerned. The Exchange Director has the authority to remove any person from a host home who is not in compliance with the goals of Friendship Force International. In case there is need to use hotels as auxiliary housing, or a need for a single room on the add-on part of the exchange, I will bear the expense.*

## ***Friendship Force Pledge***

*As a member of the Friendship Force I recognise that I can make a difference. I recognise that I have a mission. That mission is to be a friend to the people of the world. As I embark upon this adventure I know that others will be watching me. I know that through my example to my own fellow citizens and people of other nations, the cause of friendship, love and peace, will be furthered. I can make a difference.*