



My Homes **away** from Home

Stay calm...Don't lock

To say that home swapping changed my life professionally and personally is an understatement. When I joined HomeExchange in 2010 as a PR expert, I found the concept smart, fun and somewhat intimidating. It took me a bit of professional determination to organise and achieve my first home exchange. I remember scrubbing my Parisian apartment and wondering where I would be able to lock my personal items. I eventually decided against it, primarily because I have no spare room. A “large” apartment in Paris is a relative notion, plus I have a lot of shoes, handbags and clothes for all seasons and occasions and so my closets are more than full. Secondly, it felt a little odd to lock... what? My underwear? Family pictures? Bank reports? Who the hell cares except me? Besides, this whole home exchange thing is based on trust right? So be it. No locks.

My dream home in Cost Rica

I realised it was the right decision when we checked in to ‘our’ vacation home in Tamarindo, Costa Rica - a gorgeous white wooden planked villa by the Pacific ocean, with an infinity pool, monkeys and multi-coloured exotic birds. We were welcomed by Eric, who was our guide, cook and chauffeur. Nothing to compare with our nice, ‘large’ Paris apartment, but our exchange partners were happy with what we had to offer, despite the lack of service - and infinity pool, for that matter.

A strong sense of community

Through home exchange, travelers can benefit from completely free accommodations around the world without any money changing hands. The benefits are many: first, of course, you do not need to pay for accommodation. The roof under which you’ll be staying will not cost you a penny. That alone means hundreds or thousands

of pounds of savings on vacation budget. Also, you’ll save on your restaurant budget as you can cook from home, and in many cases on your car rental budget, as you might be able to borrow the other family’s car.

When travelling with kids, home exchange is really something quite special as you will not need to waste valuable luggage allowances with pushchairs, toys, etc. Your children can simply use the toys in the home, as well as the changing table, high-chair and even the baby monitor. Finally, as a host you will know that someone you trust is keeping the house safe, feeding your cat and watering your garden.

There are no downsides to home exchange, the only thing required is a small leap of faith. First, every single user is equally guest and host. As a result, people behave as guests in their exchange home, exactly the way they expect their home to be treated as hosts. The truly collaborative

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Tips from the home swapping pros (those with the experience.)

- Once you've found a home swap partner expect to be in fairly close contact with them as you finalise the swap.
- Be clear about expectations.
- Agree how you'll handle worst case scenarios with details agreed before the swap.
- Find out local information for your destination, such as closest grocery shops, beforehand.
- Make sure there are instructions for any household appliances and information about the car they'll be driving, if applicable.
- Clear a drawer and make some hanging space in each bedroom.
- Most importantly, be triple sure about where to find the key.
- Home swapping sites include *Lovehomeswap.com*, *homelink.org*, *Intervac.com*, *homexchange.com*, *guesttogoest.com*

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experience creates a radically different dynamic between peers than what you would expect on rental platforms. The sense of community is pivotal and unique.

In addition to that, it is the mission of home swapping companies, to make sure home exchange is safe, including secured messaging system, ID verification and vetting of listings.

I'm happy to say I have done many successful exchanges since 2010: three times in Hermosa Beach, West Los Angeles; Santa Barbara, California; Saint-Malo in Brittany; Rennes, France; Rome.... I have vivid memories of each of my temporary homes and of their permanent occupants. In Rennes, we took care of a placid golden

Labrador with the most gentle brown eyes. In Rome, Moustique the cat was our mascot for the weekend, getting more treats and pats than she could handle from her temporary caregivers.

Are you ready for a home exchange?

A game changing alternative to vacation rental?

For the last 25 years there have been many home exchanging companies, most being able to offer up to 65,000 listings in around 150 countries. Often being membership based, it's like a club. It appeals to a large demographic, including families (49% of users travel with kids), active re-



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tires, second home owners, and expats, who want to explore the region or visit their family back home. What about staying in a real home, where you can host your family for dinner, versus sleeping on the sofa of your dear ones?

Alexandra Origet du Cluzeau, is a French expat currently based in Geneva and Global PR at HomeExchange www.homeexchange.com. In 2018, she will relocate to Miami or Los Angeles.
alexandra@homeexchange.com



Shared Experience

‘Non-Doms’: Understand and manage your UK tax affairs.

Are you originally from the UK? If not, are you either coming to (or already in) the UK, looking to invest in the UK or even planning to leave?

If so, we can help you minimise your UK tax burden by guiding you through the very complex but, potentially, very favourable tax regime for ‘non-doms’.

There were significant changes to the ‘non-dom’ tax rules from 6 April 2017 that also materially impacted offshore trust structures. If you are a ‘non-dom’, you will be affected somehow (positively or negatively) so you need to know when, how and what action you may need to take and whether you can use the generous transitional reliefs that have been introduced to sweeten the pill.

Our Private Client team offer tax compliance and bespoke tax planning to help you and any trusts/companies that you are connected to sensibly make the most of the regime and limit your exposure to UK taxes.

If you have US reporting obligations, our specialist Expatriate Tax team will ensure that advice and compliance work in both jurisdictions is aligned to ensure optimum efficiency, working very closely with our Private Client team where required.

If you are a ‘non-dom’ and need help understanding how these new rules could apply to you then please get in touch.

Buzzacott
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

James Walker
Partner, Private Client team
T +44 (0)20 7556 1322
E walkerj@buzzacott.co.uk

Struan Mackenzie
Partner, Expatriate Tax team
T +44 (0)20 7556 1375
E mackenzies@buzzacott.co.uk

www.buzzacott.co.uk

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