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Swap Your Way Around the World

by: **Arden Jobling-Hey** in: **Editor's Desk**

Houses, apartments and student digs for swap: a new generation of travel

When it comes to attending some of the biggest events happening around the world, from the World Cup to the Olympic Games, the biggest turn off can be splurging on accommodation. With swarms of people flying in from around the world, prices soar to extraordinary heights making every occasion an exclusive event. It doesn't seem fair really, does it? Thankfully, today, more than ever, alternative accommodation is making travel accessible to everyone, even during peak travel times. From spending the night at the airport to couch surfing your way from one place to the next, there are tons of ways to skip overseas without having to check in to an expensive hotel. Looking for a change of scenery? It may be time to for a swap.

Whether it's getting out of town or getting into town for a special event, participating in a house swap is the best kept secret in the travel world. While the house swap got some PR thanks to makers of *The Holiday*, a Hollywood movie starring Jude Law, Kate Winslet and Cameron Diaz, this type of exchange remains underrated as a convenient and affordable way to move around. Granted, swapping houses has its limitations. For instance, you can't swap houses with someone who has no house, making it nearly impossible to travel anywhere off the grid. Secondly, the person wanting to partake in the swap needs to be able to afford the flight to and from their destination to yours, narrowing the pool of swap candidates – cross developing countries off your list (chances are good that those who could afford the plane tickets from these countries – diplomats, politicians and other members of the upper crust – would rather engage in traditional travel). If however, you're looking to embark on a holiday somewhere a little more traditional, considering a house swap may be well worth your time.

Having long been associated with a means of travel reserved for the retiree or older couple looking to spice things up without emptying the savings account, house swapping has a bad reputation among the under 30 crowd. This may well be due to the fact that "home owners" are normally people of a certain age who have established themselves, had a family and are beyond the backpack so-to-speak. Today however, it's not just about swapping "homes". Sites like homeswapholidays.com/index.html also promote apartment swaps and casaswap.com urges students all over the world to connect in an effort to bridge the gap of exclusivity when it comes to travel.

Why choose a house swap over other means of affordable accommodation? For Daniele Abecassis, who recently swapped her Paris flat for a New York apartment, it's the cultural integration that makes house swapping the way to go. In an article from the Guardian.uk, Abecassis tells readers: "If I rent a hotel room, I am a tourist. I prefer to exchange flats, because that way, not only can you travel two or three times a year, but you can live in exactly the same way as a person from a different country." Swapping houses allows you to live like a local and slip quietly into a routine life other than your own. Looking for a new perspective? Stepping into someone else's shoes may be just what the doctor ordered.

Remember, house swaps aren't just about people wanting in. Many people have just as much

reason to want out, like Samantha Glass, a 38 year old mother living in London who, according to the [Guardian.uk](#), is eager to escape the crowds as the Olympics hit London this summer, leaving room for many a visitor to fill the void. She's put her house up on the swap exchange and I guarantee you, she won't be the only one.

Below are some (not all) links to sites that offer hundreds of houses, apartments and student digs waiting to welcome you through open doors. Happy swapping!

- [homeexchange.com](#)
- [homebase-hols.com](#)
- [geenee.com](#)
- [homelink.org.uk](#)
- [www.swapnfly.com](#)

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Originally from Toronto, Arden has studied, volunteered and worked her way around the world. From promoting HIV/AIDS awareness as an international volunteer in Tanzania and teaching business English in Germany, to exploring hidden treasures of the Turkish bazaar. Arden believes that as long as there are unknown lands to discover, the adventure never ends!

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