

'Tis the season for houseguests

Fremde und Freunde samt Kind, Kegel und Köter im Haus aufzunehmen, kann schnell zur Belastungsprobe werden. Doch von den unliebsamen Gästen kann man auch viel lernen. **medium**

When I was growing up, my parents were happy to welcome guests into our home for a short stay. If any of them ever thought about settling in for a longer time, the sign in our guestroom was enough to make them think again. It read: "Guests, like fish, tend to stink after three days." You can't get much clearer than that!

Because I live on a lake, I attract a lot of houseguests. Over the years, I've seen many types. My favorites are those who make themselves at home. When they're thirsty, they go to the fridge and get a drink. In the morning, they don't wait for me to wake up, but instead just make the coffee. If we're running low on milk, they go to the store. They don't ask what they can do to help; they simply do it.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who need to be waited on hand and foot. They take care to tell you, of course, that they don't want

My heating bill is high and I really could use some sun. Time to be someone's houseguest!



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you to work too hard. Then they stand around and wait for you to do exactly that. Or how about guests who think it's OK to bring along extra people? For example, some think that it would be great to bring their mother-in-law so she can enjoy some time with her grandchildren.

Once I had a couple visiting from Europe who told me they wanted to meet up with a cousin who had moved to the United States years ago. "Great idea!" I said, happy that they would be moving on to their next destination. However, "meeting up" meant inviting this cousin to my house. After all, they were certain he'd enjoy my place as much as they did.

Guests who bring their animals along are another pet peeve (no pun intended). I have nothing against pets, as long as they're well-behaved and the owner understands that they need to be kept in their place. Does Fido really need to sit on the sofa to watch TV with us, or sleep in bed, or eat his dinner at our table? The simple answer is no.

Not long ago, when my friend Rob came to visit, I discovered a whole new guest-related problem. Rob, it seems, had become a champion of energy-efficient lighting. He had brought along a stash of energy-saving light bulbs and secretly put them into my lamps. I didn't really mind. However, when we were invited to my friend Victoria's house for dinner and Rob disappeared during the meal, I started to worry. As we were discussing where he could be, the room went dark. It turned out that Rob had gone to the basement to replace some of Victoria's bulbs. But because the house had older electrical circuits, he had blown a fuse. Perhaps he was simply proving that there's more than one way to save electricity.

At this time of year, it's cold here, and the lakeshore is covered with snow. My heating bill is exorbitant, and I really could use some sun. What a perfect time it would be to visit my friends in Florida. After all, I know just how to be the perfect guest! •



basement ['beɪsmənt]	Keller
blow a fuse [ˌbləʊ ə 'fjuːz]	eine Sicherung durchbrennen
champion ['tʃæmpjən]	Verfechter
destination [ˌdestɪ'neɪʃən]	(Reise)Ziel
electrical circuit [iˌlektɹɪkəl 'sɜːkət]	Stromkreis
hand and foot: wait on sb. ~ [ˌhænd ənd 'fot]	jmdn. von vorne bis hinten bedienen
(light) bulb ['laɪt bʌlb]	Glühbirne
mother-in-law ['mʌðər ən ˌlɔː]	Schwiegermutter
pet peeve [ˌpet 'piːv]	(persönliches) Lieblingsärgernis
(pet)	Haustier, Lieblings(-)
place: keep sb./sth. in their ~ [ˌpleɪs]	jmdn./etw. in seine Schranken weisen
pun [pʌn]	Wortspiel
read [riːd]	lauten
run low on sth. [ˌrʌn ˈləʊ ə:n]	von etw. immer weniger haben
settle in [ˌsetl ˈɪn]	einziehen
stash [stæʃ]	Vorrat