

Immersion Through Flating

*Fostering Intercultural Development in
Student Housing*

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Ask your neighbour

What is the first meal you learned to cook for yourself?

How old were you?



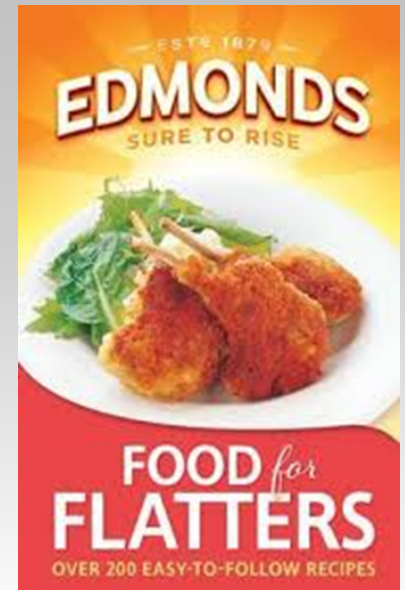
Flatting

Flatting is a slang term used to describe a living arrangement whereby a house or apartment - a "flat" is let out to a group of people. The people who rent the flat are referred to as "flatmates".

Flatting is the dominant living arrangement for university students and young people who no longer wish to live at home. Some people prefer to flat with friends, others prefer to flat with acquaintances and others will quite willingly go in with "randoms" - people they've never met before.

Urban Dictionary Definition found at

<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Flatting>



Flating overview

- Preferred option for students on all IFSA NZ programmes
- Flats can be co-ed, single sex flats can be requested
- Kiwi Host programmes where NZ students apply to live in a flat with international students
- Flats can be stand alone houses, apartment buildings or complexes
- IFSA students generally not permitted to live in the same flat



How does IFSA prepare students for flatting pre-arrival?

▪ IFSA New Zealand Programme Advisors

Hannah Sutton & Emma Robinson

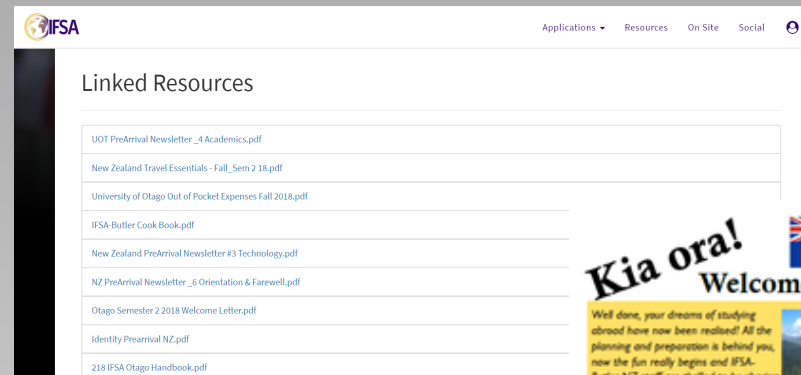
▪ IFSA Student Portal

Out of pocket estimates

Pre-arrival newsletters

▪ IFSA New Zealand Student Services Coordinators

SSCs in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin



How does IFSA support students for flatting onsite?

▪ Orientation briefings

- Kiwi culture
- Budgeting
- Where to shop
- Expectations of flatting

▪ Supermarket visit in first few days in host city

- Cheap brands
- Cooking from scratch meal ideas
- Reasonable price per/kg VS lb for fruit/vege/meat



How does IFSA support students for flatting onsite?

■ Resources in IFSA Student Portal

■ IFSA NZ Student Handbook

- Living 'Kiwi' style and flatting tips
- Housing rules

■ IFSA NZ cookbook

- Budget tips
- Buying basics
- Pantry supplies
- Recipes



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IFSA-Butler New Zealand Cook Book	
CAUTION THINGS COULD GET TASTY!	
Institute of Pacific Studies	
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO	
FUTURE-FOCUSED STUDY ABROAD	
CONTENTS:	
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We are in regular contact with our students about their experiences through IFSA NZ's:

- Weekly emails and FB groups
- On campus weekly catch ups
- Co-curricular activities (monthly)
- Learning plan check ins (3 times per semester)
- Academic Health Check
- 1:1 meetings on request



We know from our IFSA students that for the majority flatting is a positive experience.



We have good relationships with housing providers and can usually sort things quickly if issues come to our attention.

In International Education research the voice of the host is often silent yet they are the dominant culture.

How do the Kiwi Hosts view their experience?



Kiwi Host overview – 2 locations

- Semester students have a kiwi flatmate & live with other international students
- KH go through application & interview process
- Unpaid positions
- KH applicants have to demonstrate interest in an international perspective
- KH asked about attitudes towards & experience of diversity, inclusion & intercultural competency

Some reasons for becoming a Kiwi Host

I lived near international students, they were so inclusive and had such a huge social element to them and they were so open and accepting of everybody.

I'm really interested in learning about new cultures and how people interact, socialise and work with each other.

I went on exchange myself to Vancouver and wanted to come back and keep that international experience going.



Surprising Benefits of Kiwi Hosting

- Greater appreciation of the city they study/live in
- More admiration of natural beauty of New Zealand through a newcomer's lens
- Ability to reflect on and learn more about their own culture (+/- aspects)
- Finding new interests eg outdoors



Some challenges of being a Kiwi Host

- Developing close bonds then starting with a new group
- Students who don't want anything to do with the flat
- The term 'host' can indicate that we will do a lot for them but we're just flatmates not there to tidy up after them
- Competition between flats of who is the best Kiwi Host
- Living with people who seem in 'holiday mode'



Academic Advice from Kiwi Hosts

- Less face to face contact time in class
- More focus on self-directed study & research with infrequent assessment
- Deadlines are not negotiable
- Libraries aren't open all night



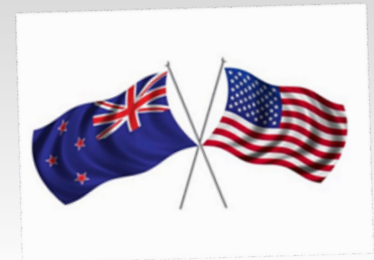
Academic Advice from Kiwi Hosts

- Kiwi students don't talk in class (Tall Poppy Syndrome)
- US students seem to respect and utilise lecturer more than Kiwis
- Final exams are worth a large portion of grade, inflexible timetable, formal environment & spread over 3-4 weeks



Student Culture and Socialising

- Try to make the most of opportunities but it's ok to say no sometimes to focus on study
- Having access to alcohol can be a novelty but some students struggle with the cultural difference around the consumption of alcohol
- Kiwis see (US politics) on the news and want to know what Americans think of it. The majority of US students here have similar views but some feel ganged up on so you have to encourage peaceful discussion.



Intercultural Agility competencies and skills development

- Working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Greater appreciation for difference within cultures
- Able to talk to a wide variety of people without stereotyping them
- More confidence in talking to people who you've never met before and making them feel at ease straight away

Intercultural Agility competencies and skills development

- Creating social groups and enabling them to work together even if it gets tricky
- Student as an individual - it might not seem like a big thing to you but it's significant to them
- Develop communication skills in negotiation, compromise, peace-making and engage in more careful dialogue so people don't feel uncomfortable or attacked

Intercultural Agility competencies and skills development

- Adaptability - if you can be adaptable you can learn and grow a lot
- Learn about yourself and your ability to be compassionate, co-operative, considerate, patient, tolerant and build relationships quickly
- Develop in areas of leadership and people management
- Peer leadership can be hard because you're generally the same age but it is a good skill to learn

Top tips for advising your students

- Be honest in application form about preferences (how social, quiet, tidy they are, also dietary requirements)
- Advise students that flatting can be co-ed
- Ensure students know meal plans are not available
- It would be a great idea for them to come with a few go to recipes to cook in their flat
- Reinforce to students that flatting is a cultural immersion opportunity to learn about other cultures, their own culture and build lifelong relationships & skills in intercultural agility
- **Make use of the plethora of IFSA resources pre-arrival and on site!**

Any Questions?