



International Student and Scholar Services

MEAL with DePaul: Meet, Eat and American Life! STUDENT GUIDE

This is an electronic document. Click on any of the links below to go to the resource information that you want to review. You can return to the list of topics by clicking on any topic heading within the document. If you have any recommendations for future versions of this document or questions about your upcoming event and what to expect, please email iss@depaul.edu.

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Overview:

Thank you for participating in **MEAL with DePaul!** This program is intended to help international students learn more about U.S. food and culture by dining with a DePaul faculty or staff member at their home. Please view this program as an opportunity to have a cross-cultural adventure in Chicago. You will likely get to see a new part of the Chicagoland area, meet people you wouldn't normally get to meet, and try food you have not had before. Below are some helpful hints to help your **MEAL with DePaul** experience go smoothly. Have fun!

Planning Your Travel:

- Use <http://maps.google.com> to look up directions and travel time using public transportation to your host.

- Contact your host! Tell them you are looking forward to coming to their home; thank them for hosting you; this is a good chance to explain any dietary restrictions you have or ask any questions you have about how to travel to their home.
- Email the students in your dining group! Suggest that you all travel together to your host's home.

[What Time Should I Arrive?](#)

Arrive on-time! Let your host know in advance if you are unable to do so. In U.S. culture, it is most polite to arrive at the time that your host has asked you to arrive. If you will be late (more than 10 minutes) then contact your host directly by phone and let them know. This sometimes impacts the hosts' plans for serving food.

[Should I Bring A Gift?](#)

Gifts for your host are not expected or required, but some students do choose to bring something small to say thank you to the host. You can read more about common U.S. etiquette online about host gifts [here](#) and [here](#).

[Emergencies:](#)

If you have an emergency (any issue concerning your health or safety), please 911 and Public Safety: 312-362-8400. If you need to reach an ISS staff person, Public Safety will contact the ISS staff member on call. For issues concerning travel, you should contact your hosts directly. We suggest you add your host's telephone number into your cell phone.

[Mentoring vs. Advising:](#)

If you make a connection with hosts, we encourage you to continue your relationship after **MEAL with DePaul** has ended. Please keep in mind that you should **never** take advice on academic advisement, financial resources, housing, immigration information or job information from your host. If you have questions about these topics, you should contact International Student & Scholar Services or your advisor.

[What Happens During the MEAL?](#)

Just like any dinner party, anything can happen! The food may be wonderful or you might not like it. The conversation may be interesting and fun, but it might also be awkward at times. This is an adventure! Get ready for anything!

- Remember that what you think of as normal behavior may only be cultural. Do not be offended if someone is acting differently than what you consider normal.

- Do not assume that what you meant was understood. Check for signs that your hosts and the other students understand you. When in doubt, ask questions!
- Be open, be yourself and feel free to ask questions.
- Hosts are just as interested in telling their story as they are in learning yours. Plan to ask questions about their experience growing up, work, life in Chicago...etc.

Getting the Conversation Going:

Here are some questions you can use to start conversations with your hosts and the other students at your MEAL.

Family:

- Where did you live when you were growing up?
- How does your family celebrate special holidays? What do these holidays celebrate/represent?
- Describe your extended family?
- Does your family ever go on vacations?

Work:

- What is your job at DePaul?
- How long have you worked in your field?
- Where did you go to college? How was that different than DePaul?

Food:

- What is your favorite meal, and how do you prepare it?
- Do you often prepare meals at home?

Daily Life:

- Do you like to travel? Where is the most interesting place you have visited?
- What do you do to relax after work? Do you have any hobbies?
- Do you enjoy/follow any sports? Do you play any sports?

U.S. Students Participating in MEAL with DePaul:

Some of you may have a U.S. student included in your group. This is not a mistake! We include our Global DePaul [EDGE](#) team (10 undergraduate freshmen American students) into the MEAL with DePaul program to support their intercultural learning as they learn about international students and their experiences at DePaul.

We also hope that incorporating a small number of interested U.S. students into this program will allow some personal connections that may help foster ongoing relationships between international and U.S. students.

In the future, we hope to expand U.S. student participation, so that there is one U.S. student in each MEAL event.

Highlights from Past MEAL Events

- Everything was excellent, enjoyable and mainly made new friends.
- The wonderful hosts and having such a friendly group of people
- New friends and to know a new place
- Meeting new people
- Sharing culture from language, food to music and entertainment. It was a great experience.
- Getting to know American family and making friends
- To know American's family, faculty members, and new friends. The warm welcome atmosphere and hospitality of host family. Travelling to new place far from university area.
- The Family, The Food, The Hospitality, The Talks, The Everything.
- The host is so nice. I enjoyed talking with them. I got an opportunity to visit the different neighborhood. I really like there.
- I can know more American people's life and their meal and I ate some very delicious American foods.
- The host families are very kind and hospitality, and providing us a great opportunity to know about America.
- The hosts provided with us many information we are interested in, like restaurant, travel and sports.
- This quarter I went to a Jewish family. I learnt a lot of Jewish culture.
- The company, the students that I met, the host was very nice, and the food was great!
- Getting to know a new neighborhood and faculty member that I can turn to as a resource.
- Trying food from different cultures and having great discussions with the students and the families. Very fun experience 😊👉
- Play with little baby
- The inclusive atmosphere
- The suburban was a nice change and I took the chance to go to the botanical gardens after that with my friends.
- We had a great time with host's kid and the family was VERY nice.
- Get to know more the US culture
- Sharing stories and food
- I enjoyed the communication with new friends who were so friendly, and I felt comfortable spending time with them who listened to you, shared their thoughts with you.