

PRESS INFORMATION

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The travel dictionary

If you and your family like to pay for expensive hotels or crowded resorts, spend your holiday with people you see all year round, complain about local language and food, or you confuse travel with holiday destinations, then it's unlikely this article will be of any interest.

But if you like to pay little or nothing for accommodation, meet new and interesting people who welcome you into their homes, avoid language problems, learn about a country's culture and see places only the locals know about, then read on.

Pasporta Servo is a hospitality network, currently consisting of some 1350 hosts in more than 85 countries.

To join the network as a guest, you only have to buy the address list, which is updated each year, and then you can use the service. Each host has specified some conditions, for example on the number of guests or days, or notification in advance.

Hosts won't charge you anything, many will even offer you breakfast or a perfect dinner, but if, as say a family of four, you visit for a week, you'll understand that some hosts might ask for a small contribution.

But surely there's no such thing as a free lunch, nor breakfast and dinner come to that?

What's the catch? Well, there is one important condition. You'll have to learn Esperanto because the application form is in Esperanto, the address list is in Esperanto, and all hosts speak Esperanto.

But in fact, that's easier than you might think. Esperanto is an easy language to learn, especially for families to learn together. It is said to be five times as easy to learn as Spanish or French, 10 times as easy as Russian, and 20 times easier than Arabic or Chinese.



The grammar is easy: there are no exceptions; words are easily recognised; and you can learn it in six months, in fact one month for a bright student to learn basic conversational Esperanto. So, armed with an Esperanto dictionary, the world's at your family's feet.

Esperanto was conceived in 1887 by Ludovic Zamenhof, a Jewish doctor living in Poland. He hoped to create a universal second language that people could use whilst still retaining their national identities.

Whilst no country has officially adopted the language, there's been a community of up to two million speakers in 90 countries for the past century, and there are more than 25,000 books written in Esperanto in circulation today.

Esperanto speakers say that as the global village becomes smaller and communication becomes faster and easier, it's vital that we can communicate with each other on an equal playing field. A universal second language is essential, both in terms of business and social networking.

Speakers of Esperanto were recently surprised by a Littlewoods advert in which dialogue was spoken in the language. Advertising bosses liked the flow and the sound of Esperanto and said it went well with the style of their clothes.

There has been an Esperanto organisation in Britain for more than 100 years, and the latest incarnation, the EAB, was set up in 1976.

It works with partners, including academic institutions, to raise awareness of the language to young people, teachers, pupils, academic institutions and relevant government bodies.

More information can be obtained from www.esperanto-gb.org, or by calling Esperanto House on 0845 230 1887.

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Notes for editors:

- 1 The Esperanto Association of Britain (EAB) is a registered charity dedicated to the promotion of the international language, Esperanto.
- 2 There has been an Esperanto organisation in Britain for more than 100 years, and the latest incarnation, the EAB, was set up in 1976. It works with partners, including academic institutions, to raise awareness of the language to young people, teachers, pupils, academic institutions and relevant government bodies.
- 3 The language is made up of five vowels and 23 consonants and is based on the western Indo-European languages, although its structure has a lot in common with oriental tongues. Its grammatical rules are logical, its verb endings regular and the spelling is phonetic.

4 More information can be obtained from www.esperanto-gb.org, or by calling Esperanto House on 0845 230 1887.

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