



Top Ten 'Best House Swap Destinations' Announced

London heads the Top Ten list of "Best House Swap Destinations" according to RoofSwap.com. The results were based on several criteria: places where there are large numbers of eager swappers; places where lodging costs are prohibitive; and interesting, esthetically pleasing places to visit.

New York, NY (PRWEB) October 29, 2009 -- London heads the Top Ten list of "Best House Swap Destinations" according to prominent home exchange blogger Nicole Frank, an Advice Columnist for RoofSwap.com, a recently launched website that already has over 14,000 listings. The results were ranked according to several criteria: places where there are large numbers of eager swappers; places where lodging costs are prohibitive; and interesting, esthetically pleasing places to visit.

London's strong pound makes getting the hotel bill an unpleasant experience, but home exchange ensures larger, more comfortable accommodations for free. As a bonus, travelers can cook their meals in the home exchanger's kitchen in a city that has a rather uneven, expensive restaurant scene. Also, London's historic environs are comprised of culturally rich and diverse regions which afford exchangers the opportunity to experience the country from a unique perspective should they opt to exchange on the outskirts of the city.

As vacationers seek less expensive ways to travel, while at the same time not sacrificing quality, the concept of the "hotel free" vacation has been gaining popularity throughout the world, according to Frank.

"Thirty-seven percent of travelers surveyed said they will vacation at a rental property in the coming year, up from 34 percent last year," says Frank. "And although only one percent of respondents has experienced a house swap vacation, 43 percent would if given the right opportunity."

First introduced to the mainstream public in 2006 by the movie "The Holiday", where Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet exchange houses in Los Angeles and England, home exchanges are expected to increase in dramatic fashion for several reasons, according to Frank.

"Even in the current challenging economic environment, people still want to travel and take vacations whenever possible," she says. "A home exchange offers a viable alternative to expensive hotels, and usually provides a more complete vacation since there are many more amenities at your disposal. Also, home exchanges are often located off the beaten path of the selected city, thus giving vacationers the opportunity to experience the distinct culture of each destination."

The remaining Top Ten List includes:

2) Manhattan: Not only does the average Manhattan hotel room cost \$400, it can be quite cramped. New Yorkers have smaller homes than other Americans, but even the tiniest Manhattan home exchange apartment is twice the size of a Times Square hotel room. Plus, money saved by not paying an expensive hotel bill can be put to better use, such as seeing Manhattan's famous sights.

3) Paris: The "City of Lights" is fascinating in any season and the French are avid home exchangers with a minimum of six weeks vacation each year. The vast majority of home exchangers have been "extremely satisfied" with exchanges they've made in Paris and contend they will only visit France through this method of travel.

4) Sydney: When it comes to home exchange, no one comes close to Australians. Travel from Australia to anywhere else is expensive and time-consuming so Australians tend to take long trips. Only home exchange makes an extended vacation affordable and pleasant, so Australians are always looking to trade homes.

- 5) San Francisco: This compact city has plenty of sophisticated home exchangers and few "bad" neighborhoods. Make sure to consider up-scale Marin County, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from the City by the Bay, as well as almost any swap home outside of San Francisco city limits but within walking distance of the efficient BART train.
- 6) Montreal: A trip to Montreal feels a lot like a getaway to Europe. Quebec winters can be brutal so the summer season is chock-full of free festivals and events. Lots of folks in Quebec are veteran home exchangers and will eagerly swap with you.
- 7) Tuscany: Italians shy away from home exchange when compared to their neighbors in France and Spain. But thousands of ex-pats have purchased vacation homes in Tuscany and nearby Umbria, both of which are exquisitely beautiful with wonderful restaurants and fascinating sites to visit.
- 8) Barcelona: Celebrated architecture makes Barcelona a must-see destination. There are plentiful home exchange offerings in Barcelona, including some in historic buildings.
- 9) Vancouver: Another beautiful North American city with a European feel, Vancouver is full of interesting little neighborhoods that home exchangers love to share.
- 10) Netherlands (Anywhere but Amsterdam): While Amsterdam gets all the tourists, it can be hectic and crowded. Luckily, the Netherlands is an extremely compact country. Visitors can take the ultra-convenient national train system from almost anywhere in the Netherlands to Amsterdam within 90 minutes, and can then return home to their swap house in a more authentically Dutch city nearby.

With over 46 years of house swapping experience, along with thousands of listings in 128 countries throughout the world, officials at RoofSwap understand that home exchangers want to be part of a large, proactive network that allows them diverse travel options. "As such, we've combined the power of several sites and developed the web's most user-friendly and intuitive interface to make house swapping simple, fun and secure," says Chris Santini, RoofSwap's COO. "We help new exchangers with a step-by-step guide to home exchanging and provide numerous tips and insights from experienced swappers."

RoofSwap also donates 10 percent of all its proceeds to Habitat for Humanity to help create homes for the underprivileged so they, too, can fulfill their travel dreams.