



TRAVELS & TANTRUMS

On Housesitting



Guide to Housesitting

- Our Tips & Tricks to getting the most out of Housesitting -



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to look for FREE housesits!

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On Housesitting

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About us...

We are a family of 4 from the UK with 2 home educated children aged 7 & 8. Last year we sold everything we owned and left our rented house of 7 years to live and travel in the van we had spent a year converting. Although the van was incredible, after 3 months, we realised life in a van with 2 kids was neither as fun or as low cost as we had hoped! So... not wanting to return to rented accommodation, we embarked on an experiment to see how long we could live for FREE by housesitting.

Whenever I have thought about saving hard, it has always been with a the bitter taste of sacrifice in my mouth. When we discovered housesitting, it became clear that you actually can travel, home educate, save money and just generally have a nice time together, if you just think outside of the box a little.

We are now 11 months in and have so far visited Switzerland, The French Alps, Paris, The Netherlands, The Scottish Highlands (favourite!) and numerous locations in the UK.

We could have travelled much further but our end goal is to see how much money we can save in 1 year by doing this so we have spent much of our time exploring the UK.



Housesitting has changed our lives and opened up opportunities for us that we never would have thought were possible, we only wish we had done it sooner!

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What is Housesitting?

When people go on holiday and would rather have someone come to stay in their home in their absence than put their pets into kennels & catteries, they invite housesitters to step in to keep things running smoothly.

This not only saves them money but allows for stability for their pets and security for their home.

Most house sits therefore, run in conjunction with holidays and can be anywhere from a few days to a few weeks but there are some that can be much longer.

The site we use ([this one](#)) is based on the mutual exchange of free accommodation for free pet/home care and no money is exchanged. A win/win for everyone!

We have lived like this with back to back housesits for almost a year and haven't paid for rent, utilities or wifi in that time eliminating thousands of

pounds of outgoings and instantly reducing the need to work as much meaning more precious time as a family.

What do we pay for?



Car insurance & Fuel



House Sitting Membership



Food



Outings



Mobile Phones



Scotland December '23



Tips for getting started...

- Take the time to write a great profile, this could be the reason a host chooses you over someone else. Let your personality shine through!
- Apply for more than one housesit at a time if you have specific dates you want to fill.
- It is normal to be declined. We have 16 x 5 star reviews and still get declined so don't take it personally. It's usually just because someone got there before you, not because they didn't like the look of you!
- Start with a short house-sit near your home to get familiar with the process and get a good review.
- If you're travelling with children, ensure you select 'Family Friendly' in the search filter.
- If you have young children, look for houses that have similar aged children as they are set up for them. It makes a world of difference to have a house filled with toys and stair gates and not one laden with delicate ornaments within reaching distance.
- The best time to get incredible housesits is actually in the school holiday because this is when most people go away. It's ideal if you are on a tight budget and cannot afford a holiday during peak times.
- Choose the animals you are offering to care for with consideration. If you are planning to utilise housesitting as a 'holiday' and would like to spend your days out exploring, then you will be more suited to a home with an independent cat that just requires feeding and some evening snuggles. A dog will need much more attention and time so ensure you are either able to take the dog out and about with you or that you are planning to spend enough time at home relaxing to provide & care for it.

Finding a Housesit...

Whether you want to go to the German Christmas markets in December, to a house with a pool in the summer holidays or hop on a plane and head to the US, there are housesits available to turn any usually high cost holiday into an affordable adventure.

The site we use is most popular in the UK & US but also has hundreds (if not thousands) of free housesitting opportunities worldwide.

You can set up an account completely free to have a good look at all the housesits currently available and see where you could be heading without spending a penny on accommodation.

Sits are offered to cover people going away themselves so the duration can range from anywhere between 1 night to 6 months depending on their plans! More often than not they are around 1-2 weeks.



Scotland December '23



Wiltshire June '24

Searching for a sit...

Choose...

 Location

 Dates

 Pets

...and browse!

You also have the option to choose accessibility requirements and other things including selecting 'family friendly' housesits in the 'more filters' section of your search.



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Housesitting with kids...

Yes! You absolutely can do this with children. We have completed 16 back to back housesits and lived full time like this for 1 year... with 2 children!

As I mentioned before, just select 'family friendly' housesits in the search filter to browse all homes open to accepting children (there are a lot).

Our children absolutely LOVE housesitting and are always excited to see where they are going next. Whether you are housesitting short or long term, it opens up opportunities to show them new places, learn more and make new friends that they otherwise may not have met.

Handy hints...



Sleeping arrangements

are there enough beds/bedrooms to suit your family?



Pets

are the pets you are going to look after used to being around children their age?



Toys

pack their favourite bits just as you would for a regular holiday.



Home Comforts

bring their bedding (like a pillowcase/quilt cover) so they feel relaxed at bedtime in their 'own' bed.



Scotland January '24



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Becoming a Host...

Housesitting is not just for housesitters!

If you love to travel but are not able to get away as much as you would like to due to having your own pets at how... getting loving housesitters in to take care of things whilst you are away could be lifechanging!

Save hundreds of pounds on kennels/catteries and let your pet stay in familiar surroundings whilst you are away. As a host, you can find a verified and reviewed sitter who'll keep your pets company and give them all the time, care and attention in the world.

Create your own profile about your home and pets and add dates when you are ready to find a sitter. When people apply, you have the chance to read through their profile, check their reviews and arrange a call so you can choose someone you feel comfortable with.

Join with a 'dual membership' to utilise the benefits of having someone care for your home & pets AND hop off on unlimited housesitting adventures yourself.

Use code **TRAVELS25** to get a 25% discount on Dual Memberships too.



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Full Time Housesitting...

Most people use housesitting for shorter term 'holiday' opportunities however, if you are a little bit like us and want to not only save a huge amount of money quickly but have a nice time along the way, taking the plunge into full time housesitting could be the answer!

This option is ideal for people that have itchy feet, a bit of a 'fuck it' attitude and are fed up of waiting until they have enough money to live 'that life' that will actually make them happy.

I'm not going to lie, there are some negative aspects to housesitting full time but, for us, the positives to it have FAR outweighed the negatives and here we are, almost a full year in to living in other people's homes, with a wealth of new experiences under our belt and a bunch of savings we never thought would be a reality.

If you have a goal (buying a house, paying off all your debts, etc.) and you just can't quite get a grasp on it due to finances, maybe living for FREE for a year could change your life like it has ours!



Scotland, December '13



Paris, September '13



Switzerland, October '13



Scotland, January '14



Full Time Housesitting FAQ's...

What do you do if you have gaps in your dates?

We have entered into this under no illusion that that part may be tricky but, to counteract it, we remain completely flexible on location and look for dates that match within a certain radius only. We did go to mainland Europe for a month, but found the longer travel distances more difficult to manage this with and, with a financial goal in mind, opted to explore the UK only. We book in sits around 2 months in advance (you can do it further in advance if you wish) to give us time to look for a follow on sit starting on the date we need. So far, due to a last minute change of circumstances on our part, we got caught short once with a 4 night gap. To solve this we could have gone to visit family or friends but we actually found a super cheap deal to stay at a caravan park (£99 for 4 nights) which not only solved the problem but was super fun!

How do the kids like it?

They do! Our kids have grown up traveling and are quite used to staying in different places and sleeping in different beds and they adore having new pets to meet every few weeks.

How do you earn money?

Our income currently comes from this small business I started about a year ago www.blossomandstardust.com (if you have any questions about how i started it, or how i have made it work without any start up investment, just message me, happy to share info). The key, in my eyes, to creating an online income is to focus on your own skill set and not try to make quick money selling other people's pointless products... sell your own stuff that will actually help other people and leave you feeling fulfilled.



Do you have a home base?

We don't. If you want to do this full time to travel on a budget or save money and you own your own house, you could rent it out to cover your mortgage or sell up altogether.

What do you do with all of your stuff?

We sold pretty much all of our stuff last summer to move into our van and started full time housesitting in September. The things we wanted to keep, we have stored in a rented garage near to our family so we are able to pop back and get useful things or swap bits over if need be. The genius of this garage is that it has a parking space in front of it in a very busy area that we rent out to fully cover the cost of the garage rent so... FREE STORAGE!

What do you do with all of your stuff?

When we sold the van we, ironically, bought the smallest car we have ever owned so we have to travel light. Suitcases don't fit in our car so we use supermarket 'bags for life' (no joke). We have 1 bag for life each for clothes and shoes go under the seats if they're not on our feet. We take a few toys for the kids (lego, magnet tiles, selection of playmobil people & other small figures, art & craft stuff and a few books), Laptop for work, toiletries and other random stuff and 1-2 bags of food.

Our luxury item is a printer which seems like it takes up an unreasonable amount of space but we use it for work and for printing bits out for the kids 'work'.

Any other questions, no matter how big or small, please send us a message via our [instagram](#) page & I will be happy to answer them!



Other FAQ's...

Do you meet the home owners?

Usually, when you apply for a house sit, the owner responds with a message and will arrange a time to call for a chat. What happens next varies hugely! We have had hosts that have left us a key under the door mat and ones that invited us to stay over night the night before they left (my personal worst nightmare lol), but most common would be to have a very quick half hour handover before they head off on their trip.

Do you get paid to housesit?

The site we use is based on a mutual exchange of free accommodation for pet/house care so no money is paid.

Are you scared your kids will break things?

To be honest, the only things that have been broken and needed replacing, were broken by myself or Ry (burnt oven gloves, ruined frying pan, broken mugs, etc). The kids are not the problem!

Can I take my own dog with us?

It is absolutely possible but will just take a little more effort to find the right sit. Look for animals you know may have a similar temperemant to your dog or with small animals that won't be interacting (chickens, hamsters, etc). Just drop the housesits you are interested in a message and discuss. I know quite a few people that do this with their own dogs in tow. Alternatively, you can join with a 'dual' membership and have someone else housesit your dog so that you can be free to choose where you go.



How much does it cost to join?

For the site we use [\(HERE\)](#) it is completely free to set up an account with your name and email address, to have a good old nose around. This gives you the opportunity to see how the site works and have a look at all the current housesits available... be warned, it is addictive!

If you would like to start applying for housesits, you can join as a member using our 25% discount code TRAVELS25. There are 3 tiers of membership, so you can choose which one suits you best (you can always upgrade at any point if you change your mind) so, with the 25% discount, for a basic membership it's £74 for a year... cheaper than 1 night in a hotel for unlimited accommodation options!

Do I need to be an animal lover?

You do not need to live and breath animals, but you do need to enjoy their company and be kind and caring towards them. You are staying in homes of people that are not only entrusting you with their home, but with their very precious pets.

You can choose in the filter which animals you are interested in caring for. So, if you adore cats but don't enjoy being around dogs for example, simply uncheck 'dogs' on the list and search through houses with all other animals you are happy to look after.

If you have absolutely any other questions at all, no matter how big or small, please send us a message via our [instagram](#) page & I will be happy to answer them!