

FAQ WWOOF France 2011

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1 What are the requirements to join?

For joining what is required, above all, is motivation, the desire to discover, to be useful, to serve the bio movement, to learn healthier habits for a planet based on organic agriculture... A respect for our Earth and our fellow human beings, an ability to listen, an attentiveness with a commitment to active participation, these are all elements essential to making your WWOOFing a passionate and unforgettable experience.

2 How do I register to become a member of the organization?

To join the association and thus obtain a list of hosts ready to welcome you, you must register at: <http://www.woof.fr/woofer2.htm> and choose the membership category that best suits you (individual or dual membership, by internet or internet + paper).

3 Is there a minimum (or maximum) age for WWOOFing?

The WWOOFing can be practiced by anyone provided they are of age (**18 years or more under current legislation in the country of residence of the participant**), without age limit. Note: Until April 2010, it was possible to join at 16 years by providing a mandatory parental consent. This is no longer possible today. And even within a family WWOOFing (that is, accompanied only by his legal representatives) a minor cannot participate in activities.

4 I would like to do WWOOFing abroad. Should I join WWOOF France or WWOOF in the country of destination?

By joining WWOOF France, you will have access only to the list of hosts in France. WWOOF is organized by country (for links to existing national organizations see <http://www.woof.fr/monde.htm>). However some countries may not yet have a national organization. In this case, WWOOFing opportunities in the country are managed by WWOOF Independent or by WWOOF International. The best procedure is to consult the respective national sites (or the portal of www.woofinternational.org and/or www.woof.org) to acquaint yourself with a specific country, its organization...

5 Who are the hosts and how do I choose them?

You usually choose your host based on the announcement or by region. If, for example, you like animals, you would seek out hosts with animals, or if you want to discover how to make cheeses, a host who makes cheese. If for example you intend to create your own vegetable garden in the future, you would probably seek a host who grows vegetables. The listings include hosts in all areas (market gardening «maraîchage», horticulture, beekeeping, etc.), as well as hosts who make bio bread, syrups, preserves, essential oils, etc. Some hosts offer artistic or sporting activities. Members have access to a search engine by activities, by regions and other search criteria.

6 Where are the hosts located?

They are almost everywhere in France. For further information in link, see our preview (report to question # 9)

7 How many hosts are there in France?

We list approximately 650 hosts.

8 Are there hosts in the DOM-TOM?

Two, currently! They are situated on the islands of: New Caledonia and Reunion.

9 Can I browse the farms belonging to the network to get an idea of what WWOOFing is about?

Yes, you may go directly to «farms preview» and click on the departments that interest you. Each host describes his activities, needs, languages spoken, etc.

10 How do I contact a host to introduce myself?

DO NOT EVER SHOW UP WITHOUT FIRST INFORMING A HOST. Depending on the type of host, you may make contact by telephone, e-mail or post. Introduce yourself candidly, emphasizing your motivations for joining the movement and explain your choice: why him or her?

11 How far in advance should I organize my stay?

That varies a lot according to the season, but if you arrange at least a month in advance, you are most likely to find that your preferred host is available.

12 What is a typical day of WOOFing like?

There is no general rule. This depends on the host whom you have chosen and what you have agreed PRIOR TO YOUR ARRIVAL. As a rough guideline, you can expect to participate in activities for about half of the day five days a week. But please consult directly with your host and discuss.

13 Is there a minimum or maximum length for a stay?

No, that depends on the host and on you. Nevertheless, experience has shown us that a week seems to be the minimum time needed to discover your host and his activities.

14 At what time of year can I do WWOOFing?

The broad variety of hosts registered in the movement permits you to WWOOF all year (according to the regions, seasons, activities, etc.).

15 Can one do WWOOFing with family and children? Must they also become members?

WWOOFing can be done as a family. Certain hosts accept children while others do not. Those who welcome children generally have their own children. Of course, it is not allowed to take a membership for a child under 18 years old, because they cannot be WWOOFers. We recommend not taking very young children, because a house that is not yours presents many dangers for small children, more the all on a farm. But these questions remain to be discussed directly with the host.

16 Can I bring pets?

Only with the permission of the host.

17 Can I WWOOF several times in the course of a year?

Yes, you are not limited with respect to the number of stays, but you must renew your membership at the end of each year.

18 If I am French, can I still participate in WWOOF?

Yes, WWOOFing is intended for persons of all nationalities including French.

19 Do hosts also speak English?

Yes, most of the hosts speak English. The languages spoken are usually specified within each listing.

20 Can WWOOFing be considered as a «job»?

No, WWOOFing is an exchange, an act of solidarity, a commitment to discover. There is no obligation of profitability, no relationship of subordination or hierarchy. You are not remunerated. You are there to discover, to learn, and to participate in the activities of someone who wishes to share with you another way of life.

21 Can WWOOFing be considered as «holidays»?

Yes and no. What «vacation» means is relative and personal. The answer is no if one regards vacation as meaning rest, at least all day. The idea is to participate meaningfully in the activities of your host. The answer is yes in the sense that you have chosen a vacation of solidarity, a «green» and useful vacation. If this is only rarely idleness, the change of scene, wealth of discoveries, good humour, simplicity, candor...these all combine to create a palpable new reality.

22 Will I be lodged and provided with meals?

Yes, this is part of the «exchange» at the heart of the concept. If during your first encounter with your host a genuine connection is made, if there are common interests and passions, or simply a strong desire to discover and to understand the other and his or her culture, your host will welcome you as a friend and member of the family.

23 Will I be paid by my host or must I pay money to my host?

NO, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES. Neither you nor your host may receive any remuneration. WWOOFing is an exchange, an act of solidarity and discovery.

24 What is the difference between an membership for one person and a membership for two people?

An individual membership is intended for only one person and allows his or her participation in WWOOFing. The dual membership for two people is intended for two WWOOFers and offers a discount compared to two individual memberships. WWOOFers with a dual membership share the same membership and associated number. They must travel together, although each may travel on their own but not simultaneously.

25 If I join online, when can I access the host listings and when do I receive my membership?

If you have also chosen the paper membership, you must wait for one or two weeks to receive your card.

26 If I register by post, when can I consult the host listings and when will I receive my membership?

If you register by mail, you must wait for one or two weeks (depending on your country) to receive your membership card and personal access code.

27 What is the advantage of having a paper membership in addition to an online membership?

We also offer a paper membership because not everyone has access to an internet connection (travelers, persons from isolated regions...).

28 For how long is my membership valid?

The membership is valid for exactly one year, starting from the day you get your IDs.

29 How do I pay my membership fee?

You can pay for your membership either online with secure payment by Paypal, by post by sending a check (made out to WWOOF France), by cash (wrapped in aluminum foil to prevent theft), or by bank transfer (with bank account details available on request to hello@wwoof.fr).

30 As a member, am I insured in case of problems?

Our organization does not provide insurance neither to WWOOFers nor to hosts. You must at a minimum have civil liability insurance and should find out whether your insurance covers WWOOFing activities. If necessary, explain what WWOOFing is (i.e., a form of volunteering) or refer them to our website. Otherwise, there exists independent of our organization a special insurance for WWOOFing pour l'Europe (with a premium of 25 euros/year in 2009). For more information, consult: www.oveuropa.com. They can also advise regarding visas, authorizations, health care in Europe, etc.

31 What is my status with respect to Pôle Emploi, Sécurité Sociale and other similar entities?

We do not know (because of lack of a response to our inquiries) how these organizations regard us. Unfortunately, WWOOFing has not yet become an officially recognized activity.

32 Is there a forum where I can read accounts of other peoples experiences...?

There isn't any forum on our site because a forum is time consuming to manage and we presently lack the resources. Nevertheless, you can easily find such information using the usual search engines (Google, Yahoo...).

33 Is there a WWOOFing charter?

Yes, the charter applies likewise to WWOOFERS and hosts and is available at: <http://www.wwoof.fr/pdf/CharteduWWOOFing.pdf>

34 Will I receive a membership card?

No, we strive to minimize the use of paper. Your card number is your passport WWOOF to arrive to your host. Your host will verify your membership in advance by means of this number.

35 What type of visa do I need for WWOOFing?

We are not qualified to respond to this question because it depends on your country of residence. Nevertheless please never request a work visa, because WWOOFing is not work but rather an exchange, an act of solidarity and discovery....not to be confused with a job.

36 As a member of WWOOF France, can I WWOOF abroad?

No, presently this is not possible.

37 Can I tell about my WWOOFing experiences?

Of course, we reply to everyone, even if this occasionally takes some time.

38 What do I do in case of problems with my host or another WWOOFer?

Please contact us. Our program is based on trust and we will do whatever we can to resolve your problems. We have an internal system for managing difficulties.

39 I would like to become a host and welcome WWOOFers on my farm. What is the procedure for registering?

Please contact us by e-mail (alexandra@wwoof.fr) or by mail at (WWOOF France - La Beunaz – 74500 Saint Paul en Chablais -- France) and describe to us your activities, your needs, etc.