Keep prepared throughout the year:

* A set of extra sheets
* Extra hygiene items: toothbrushes, travel-size deodorant, disposable razors
* A set of extra, clean towels
* Print instructions for using the remote control and post it near the TV
* Print instructions for using the computer and post it near the computer
* Keep an extra key on hand

A few weeks to a month ahead of time:

* Plan meals
* Send your guests a list of things to do in the area
* Keep an eye out for local coupons for attractions, or services in the area that your guests may enjoy
* Find upcoming concerts, plays, or events and ask if your guests would like to go
* If you’re able, complete any home improvements that need to be done
* Decide if you want to host an event while guests are in town (for instance, if your house guests are family members, you can put together a family reunion)

Two weeks ahead of time:

* Plan an itinerary
* Create a shopping list for food, hygiene products, and household items
* Create a cleaning plan
* Set a transportation plan for your guests – make sure they will be able to get where they need to go

A few days to a week ahead of time:

* Clean the house (or hire a housecleaner)
* Go grocery shopping
* Clean all sheets and towels
* Prepare a welcome basket for your guests
* Plan sleeping arrangements
* Purchase any needed items, taking special considerations for special needs or children
* Get an extra key made if you don’t already have one
* Prepare things for your guests to do at your house: buy and leave out books, magazines, movies, and games
* Make sure you have standard over-the-counter medicine on hand

When guests arrive:

* Give a tour of the house
* Show them where the heat and air conditioning is
* Provide guests with an extra key

Shortly before their trip ends:

* Offer to do their laundry so that they can leave with clean clothes
* Prepare food for their return trip such as snacks for the airplane
* Purchase a thank you souvenir for your guests

A couple days after they depart:

* Send a thank you card
* Do one of the following: include photos with the thank you card or create a photo album to send