

Ten of the best WWOOFing breaks

These European holidays are great for the environment and for your budget - provided you don't mind mucking out on a farm or sticking your hand in a beehive

The concept of a "WWOOFing holiday" is simple, very cheap and 100% above board: volunteers enjoy free [food](#) and accommodation at organic projects throughout the world in return for a number of hours' unpaid work per day. The meaning of the acronym has evolved alongside the movement itself. Founded in the UK in 1971, WWOOFing now involves more than 6,000 hosts in 88 countries. So "Weekend Workers on Organic Farms" has become "Willing Workers on Organic Farms" and in turn has changed to "World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms".

It's no lazy holiday, with volunteer duties ranging from restoring walls and buildings to mucking out animal pens and digging up stoney ground. But WWOOFERS stand to gain a lot, too – many hosts are inspirational for the alternative paths they have taken in life, and provide an insight into local cultures and crafts. "It's a great trade of culture, skill and generosity," says Pen Lynch, an Australian who WWOOFed in [Ireland](#). And what does the host get out of it? "Company, help with their lifestyle and the feeling they are passing something on," according to Annie King, host at [Milbeg Arts](#) in Cork.

As with all volunteer placements, it pays to do your research before you set off. Try to establish a relationship with your host and ask about location, accommodation, food, working hours and access to communications and other facilities that are important to you. You'll also need to join the local national WWOOF organisation and pay a nominal fee to contact current hosts. The usual travel safety advice applies: try not to travel alone and check that your insurance covers your activities. Information on travelling by train or bus is given here, and you can try local WWOOF internet forums to arrange carpooling.

<http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2009/may/08/green-ethical-woofing-holidays-europe>

WWOOF

Volunteer exchange on organic and sustainable properties

Welcome to WWOOF

WWOOF organisations connect people who want to live and learn on organic farms and smallholdings with people who are looking for volunteer help.

WWOOF hosts offer food, accommodation and opportunities to learn about organic lifestyles. **Volunteers** give hands on help in return.

WWOOF is a network of national organizations. To become involved in the WWOOF community explore the drop down menu or list below and connect with the local WWOOF organization. For hosts in countries with no WWOOF organization yet check out [WWOOF in Other Countries](#)

Make a difference! Get involved! Join WWOOF! Think global – act local!

<http://woofinternational.org/>