

code

STYLE

# COUCH SURFING WORLD WIDE

— Couchsurfing has been around since the '70s. The web made it brand new again. —

PRODUCTION — ROOS SMITS



SHIRT: CARHARTT  
SUNGLASSES: HAN KJØBENHAVN

## LONDON

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEFANO GALLI

**NAME:** LAURA JESSETT  
**AGE:** 23  
**HOMETOWN:** LONDON

**What's your occupation?**

I work at Carhartt's head office. I also do freelance graphic design on the side.

**What kind of couchsurfer are you? Do you offer your couch for others, or do you couchsurf at other people's houses?**

So far, I've only surfed at other people's houses. But I'd like to return the favor and have people stay at mine, too.

**What was your best couchsurfing experience?**

In Queens, New York, I stayed with a really sound couple who instantly made me feel at home. Within 10 minutes of meeting them, they had given me keys to their apartment; it was so nice to be trusted by total strangers. Staying with people that know the area definitely has perks: They tipped me to where the best galleries and places to eat were. They introduced me to a Vietnamese sandwich place in Brooklyn, for which I will be eternally grateful — these are the best sandwiches in the world!

**What was your weirdest couchsurfing experience?**

I haven't had one...yet.

**What was your longest couchsurfing trip?**

I had booked a hostel for part of the trip but ended up staying on couches for a couple of weeks instead.

**Finish this sentence: "The art of couchsurfing consists of..."**

having a damn good time and meeting some nice people.

**Why do you travel?**

To have a nice time and meet some damn good people.

## STOCKHOLM

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENS ANDERSSON

**NAME:** GABRIEL ELIASSON  
**AGE:** 23  
**HOMETOWN:** STOCKHOLM

**What's your occupation?**

I work for Greenpeace Nordic and as a carrier. I also try to put as much time as I can into my longboard association; as chairman, there is always a lot to do.

**What kind of couchsurfer are you?**

**Do you offer your couch for others, or do you couchsurf at other people's houses?**

I guess I'm that couchsurfer who surfs much more couches than I host, but I definitely do both. Mostly I couchsurf to find and meet new people; you don't always have to surf a couch to do that.

**What was your best couchsurfing experience?**

Oh, I have a lot of great memories from different couchsurfers around the world. One of the absolute best is when I met my good friend Anton in Australia through couchsurfing. We ended up traveling together for nine months and became really close friends, and we even made a documentary film together called Skate Australia. Without him, my trip to Australia would never have been the same.

**What was your weirdest couchsurfing experience?**

Once I stayed at this place called the Forest in Brisbane, Australia. It was crazy! The house looked like it was going to fall apart any day, and it was chaos inside. Basically it was just rooms with beds, couches and mattresses everywhere. They even had a couch on the roof. When I first got there, they already had about fifteen couchsurfers staying at that place. It was like hanging out at a hostel full with international people from all around the world.

**What was your longest couchsurfing trip?**

I did a lot of couchsurfing when I was traveling in Australia; people are so open and friendly there. I think the longest without a hostel was around two months, when I surfed in Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Byron Bay.

**Finish this sentence: "The art of couchsurfing consists of..."**

being open-minded and never shy!

**Why do you travel?**

I love the people you meet, the food you eat, the cultures, nature and all that other stuff that's different from what you are used to.



SHIRT: SUPERDRY  
SUNGLASSES: SUPERDRY



SHIRT: INSIGHT  
SUNGLASSES: MODEL'S OWN

## SYDNEY

PHOTOGRAPHY: BEN SULLIVAN

NAME: BASTIAN FOX PHELAN  
AGE: 23  
HOMETOWN: SYDNEY

### What's your occupation?

I am an activist for Still Fierce, a grassroots community collective of people who are intersex, transsexual, transgender, gender-queer and other sex- and/or gender-diverse people.

### What kind of couchsurfer are you? Do you offer your couch for others, or do you couchsurf at other people's houses?

I do both, though I have done a lot more surfing than hosting.

### What was your best couchsurfing experience?

Staying in Helsinki with snowboarder Antti Autti for three nights. He took me all around the city, hooked up a lot of free deals for me, facilitated my first sauna experience, encouraged me to order a salmiakki vodka in Finnish and had lots of conversations with me over tea in the kitchen.

### What was your weirdest couchsurfing experience?

My weirdest experience involved sex. I recommend that couchsurfers think carefully before hitting on their host. If it goes well, awesome. But if it doesn't, you have to find another place to sleep!

### What was your longest couchsurfing trip?

I traveled for six months in North America and Europe and only stayed in hostels a couple of times, though I did have a home base in the Czech Republic for about three of those six months.

### Finish this sentence: "The art of couchsurfing consists of..."

being a respectful human being, who is open to connecting with others, having fun and learning.

### Why do you travel?

To learn how to let go and be free.



SHIRT: LANVIN  
SUNGLASSES: KAREN WALKER

## TEL AVIV

PHOTOGRAPHY: AMIT BERLOWITZ  
STYLING: MAYAAN GOLDMAN

NAME: OSNAT ITA SKOBLINSKI  
AGE: 26  
HOMETOWN: TEL AVIV

### What's your occupation?

I'm an artist, activist and hedonist—sometimes at the same time.

### What kind of couchsurfer are you? Do you offer your couch for others, or do you couchsurf at other people's houses?

I do both. I travel a lot, and I couchsurf quite often. It's harder for me to host since I moved to a studio apartment, but I used to host once a month.

### What was your best couchsurfing experience?

I had the worst and best experience at the same time. My second couchsurfing host ever was a crazy guy from Berlin who hosted ten other couchsurfers at the same time. I was shocked to find out I was going to spend the night with ten strangers in a room full of mattresses. On the other hand, the host connected me to a very edgy, alternative Berlin tour, and I got to be

very good friends with the host's roommate. I spent the second night at the roommate's room.

### What was your weirdest couchsurfing experience?

I hosted a couchsurfer during a weekend in which I organized a big house party. We both spent all our time together completely drunk or hungover.

### What was your longest couchsurfing trip?

A wave of couchsurfing requires organizing the trip and the dates in advance, and that's not my style of traveling. I usually look for last-minute couches. I couchsurfed Washington D.C., Philadelphia and New York for a week.

### Finish this sentence: "The art of couchsurfing consists of..."

treating your couchsurfers as friends staying over.

### Why do you travel?

It's an endless search for excitement.



SHIRT: ZOË KARSSSEN  
LEGGINGS: MONKI  
SUNGLASSES: BERNARD WILHELM BY MYKITA

## AMSTERDAM

PHOTOGRAPHY: ELZA JO VAN REENEN  
STYLING: MIRJAM DE RUITER

NAME: DIENEKE MOOIMAN  
AGE: 21  
HOMETOWN: AMSTERDAM

### What's your occupation?

I'm a student — European studies at the University of Amsterdam.

### What kind of couchsurfer are you? Do you offer your couch for others, or do you couchsurf at other people's houses?

I mostly surfed other people's couches during trips, though I would not consider myself only as a visitor. People are welcome here as well, but only if I have some spare time because I want to show them around and get to know them. Otherwise, you will end up like a lousy hostel. If I'm too busy to host, I'm up for coffee or a drink most of the time.

### What was your best couchsurfing experience?

I went with a friend to Milano and stayed there with two very friendly Italian guys. They showed us around for more than three days. Although the weather was crappy and it was freezing, we had a great time with the four of us. It seemed like we'd already known each other for a long time.

### What was your weirdest couchsurfing experience?

I've actually never had very bad experiences — only one time when the host was a little too anxious to meet us. Directly from the start, we were her new best friends. That was kind of awkward but, at the same time, a little sad as well. At the end, we got along great.

### What was your longest couchsurfing trip?

It was the first time I ever couchsurfed. It was a big trip in Spain; me and a friend of mine were traveling by train for more than five weeks in a row, and by the end, we'd only stayed with couchsurfers. Maybe it was because we both speak quite good Spanish and it wasn't that hard to communicate. Every host welcomed us with open arms — astonishing!

### Finish this sentence: "The art of couchsurfing consists of..."

not merely the free place to crash for the night, but more the dive into a real-life experience and getting to know the people living in the city and country you're visiting.

### Why do you travel?

I guess I am—like everybody that travels—curious. If you are only visiting the tourist attractions, you will never get to know the real side of the city. By staying at other people's houses, you're in the middle of the society. I'm also interested in other people's daily lives. You get to break the pattern, get out of your comfort zone. One thing I always fear the most is getting narrow-minded. Traveling—and especially couchsurfing—made me realize that people are more hospitable and less restricted than you think.

CODE THANKS VICTOR EEKHOF FOR HIS INPUT AND ENTHUSIASM ON COUCHSURFING. VICTOR WILL BE COUCHSURFING FROM ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, TILL THE SOUTH POLE. GO BUY A SQUARE ON HIS VAN.  
WWW.POLE2POLE4CHARITY.COM

## GRAVIS

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