Your Money's Worth
By SYLVIA PORTER

Vacation Home Exchange

You're starting to plan your summer vacation, you may know a getaway spot that intrigues you, but while your budget can manage the plane fares, how can you stretch your dollars to cover the accommodations?

What you really would like is a vacation retreat in which you can meet the local people and learn about the area in depth. But how?

Perhaps the Vacation Exchange Club is the answer you search for. This is the unique organization that arranges for home exchanges in the U.S. and around the world for its members.

You list your own home for short-term occupancy by a member of the club. In turn, the organization's World Home Exchange Service supplies you with a directory listing homes on a temporary swap basis in such appealing vacation areas as Colorado, New England, the Northwest, Mexico, Canada, Europe and the Caribbean, among others.

A typical listing: "Switzerland: New chalet in village near Geneva; quiet, panoramic view, four bedrooms; three baths; skiing; riding; indoor tennis close by available during the summer and Christmas holidays. Owner prefers exchange in Europe, the Mediterranean, or the Caribbean..." Or: "Washington state. Ranch. Farming country. Haul hay, feed cows, hike..."

In addition to the comfort and economy of living in a home, the program has added advantages. There are no caretaker expenses for the home or garden. Members may even elect to exchange automobiles as part of their home-and-home stay, thereby eliminating car rental fees. Frequently, pets can be taken for the duration of the trip.

Since the kitchen facilities of the home are available, your only vacation outlays could turn out to be transportation costs.

Also, many subscribers exchange country-club privileges, boats, second homes, household help, babysitting services. If you are retired on a limited budget, the program may open new vistas to travel - as well as an opportunity to check out a retirement area before making any commitments.

If you want to visit friends and relatives in another city without being house guests, you could find an exchange in a town nearby the perfect solution.

If you want to learn about a foreign country by being a part of a neighborhood in which you can absorb every-day events of a different culture and place your children elbow-to-elbow with the different culture, what could be a better, less expensive method?

Was a member, you can rent to another subscriber, too. But the organization's experience shows that subscribers take better care of borrowed homes when they exchange. And if you are two related or friendly families from one area, you can find homes for your two families in another area.

Here's how the program works:

The Club publishes two issues of the Exchange Book a year - a directory and a supplement. Published since 1960, these books describe your home and its particulars along with details of thousands of other homes offered for exchange during the year - one third of them listings in countries outside the U.S. Copies of both are sent to all subscribers who can study the possible exchange.

All exchanges are personal and are arranged by the subscribers through their personal correspondence. The subscriber may write to one or many listings.

The Club emphasizes that its service is simply to publish the lists of interested parties. It is not responsible for the houses or the actions of the individual subscribers, or the accuracy of the listings. Nor does it guarantee an exchange will be arranged.

Subscription fees are $15 for listing in either the directory or the supplement. If you do not want your home listed in either book, you can receive the directories for $12. For an extra $5, the Vacation Exchange Club will print a photograph of your house.

For more facts on exchanging homes and how to go about it, write the Vacation Exchange Club, Inc., 350 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013. Phone (212) 966-2576.