**GOING CULTURAL**



**GERMAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. All of the following are good topics for polite getting-to-know-you “chit chat” with a German business counterpart: The scenic German countryside; German soccer; the host’s hobbies; economic progress in former East Germany.  When interacting with Germans, don’t chew gum, use a lot of make-up, dress with a lot of jewelry, talk about your personal finances, or brag about your personal achievements.

2. The tendency of U.S. citizens to precede blunt criticism by first saying something positive is not done in Germany.  Germans do not need or expect compliments.  They just assume everything is satisfactory unless they hear otherwise.

3. German workers get more time off than almost any other laborers in the world.  The law mandates a full 30 days of paid vacation – not to mention paid holidays and generous sick leave.  It costs more to hire a German laborer than a worker in any other country on the planet.

4. In their constant stress on privacy, German executives usually write their signature on letters in an unintelligible manner, placing a code number under the signature for the recipient to respond to. A division executive, as well as an engineer in the division, often add their signatures to letters sent by lower level managers.

5. German business reps assume everything is going fine unless you tell them otherwise.

6. If you make a mistake, Germans will let you know about it in a constructive way to insure quality is maintained.

7. The German codetermination labor/management system mandates that labor must participate in all major managerial decisions via board membership.

8. German companies are very hierarchical and bureaucratic.

9. Germany is the most punctual nation in the world.

10. Germans reserve smiling to show affection, not to express humor in business situations.

11. Use maximum formality when doing business in Germany.  Greatly emphasize the importance of privacy.  Don’t compliment someone unless they did something truly extraordinary.

12. The German boss is generally a very private person sitting alone in large office with the door closed.

13. Germans do not appreciate the use of humor in business discussions.

14. The proper way to address Germans who have a title is to say Herr and then substitute the title for their surname.

15. Germans keep a slightly larger personal space around them than most North Americans.  Stand about 6 inches further back than you would in the U.S.A.  The position of office furniture follows this rule.  Do not move your chair closer; a German executive could find that very insulting. This expanded personal space extends to their automobiles.  Expect a violent outburst from a German driver if you so much as touch his or her car.  Never put a package down on any car except your own.

16. The (now) German (formerly Dutch) city of Aachen is located near Maastricht, the Netherlands (site of the main accord creating the European Union in 1989).   The Van (Dutch for "from") Auken (anglicized version of Aachen ) family migrated from to America from Aachen in the 1700s.

17. The Germans keep the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right hand.  Use the knife to push food onto the fork.  Hold onto the knife even when you’re not using it. Never eat with your fingers.  Even sandwiches are eaten with a knife and fork.

18. The avoidance of public spectacles is reflected in the way Germans will wait until they get quite close to each other before they will offer a greeting.  Only young or impolite people will wave or shout at each other from a distance.

19. The absence of any strong, centralizing power in Germany prevented the development of a unified German nation for six centuries.  The fragmentation of Germany became acute after the Thirty Years War, which ended in 1648.  Until becoming a nation-state in 1871 under Prussian Leader Otto von Bismarck, Germany remained a patchwork of separate principalities.

20. Expect to be hushed if you so much as cough while attending an opera, play or concert.  German audiences remain extraordinarily silent, rarely even shifting in their seats.

21. Everyone in Germany takes at least four weeks of vacation per year.  Many people take long vacations during July, August or December, so check first to see if your counterpart will be available.  Also be aware that little work gets done during regional festivals, such as the Oktoberfest or the three-day Carnival before Lent.

22. At everyday restaurants, people find their own seats.  There is no host to seat customers.  Do not be surprised if someone you do not know joins your table if there is an empty seat.  Additionally, you have to get the waiter’s attention since the bill will not be brought to you automatically at the end of the meal.

23. The only article of clothing considered an appropriate gift is a scarf.  Other clothing, or for example, perfume or soap, are considered too personal.

24. **Austria** became an autonomous territory under the control of an aristocratic family, the Babenburgs in 1156.  Vienna was its capital.  In 1273, the Hapsburg dynasty came to power and for 600 years, the Hapsburgs gradually expanded the Austro-Hungarian Empire.  They reached the height of their power in the 19th century when they helped defeat Napoleon.  In 1914, the empire covered present-day Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and parts of Poland and Romania. In 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated by a Serbian revolting against Austrian rule.  This event quickly developed into World War I as the European powers became involved.  The war led to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire, as the new countries of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia (which have since further divided) were created from parts of the old empire. Austrians are not Germans and should not be referred to as such; it can be considered an insult.  While the two peoples speak the same basic language (with important differences in dialect), Austrians and Germans have a different historical and political heritage; they also differ in some customs, values and attitudes. Austrians are generally more religious than people in many other western European countries.

**EUROPEAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. English explorer James Cook sailed around the world twice, made three voyages to the Pacific Ocean and discovered Hawaii, eastern Australia, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia,  Niue, and the Antarctic ice cap.

2. Iceland has only 56,000 people.

3. The Danube River runs through or touches more countries than any other river on earth, including Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany. 4. Germany has the largest population in Europe.

4. Through the centuries, Eastern Europe has been dominated by numerous empires:  Slavic, Germanic, Turkish, Hungarian, Romanian, and Albanian.

5. Multicultural Brussels has become a favorite locale for test marketing. There are few European cultures more different than the Dutch and the French, and both are represented in Brussels. A product that can appeal to both is likely to be a winner.

6. The 3 regions of France most famous for producing world-class wine are Burgundy, Champagne, and Bordeaux.

7. Sweden was recently connected to the European continent by a trans-ocean bridge in Denmark.

8. Germany did not form as a European nation until 1871.  Germany is bordered by ten countries (France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland).

9. The population of Belgium is largely split between the Flemish and the Walloons. The Flemish speak a dialect of Dutch.  The Walloons speak French.

10. Population density in Iceland is 7 people per square mile

11.Each of the firms below has been controlled by Sweden’s Wallenberg family. The Wallenberg group controls more than 35% of the capitalization on the Swedish stock market.  This is the largest share controlled by one family in any industrialized country in the world: Stora-Great (the world’s oldest company); Electrolux (the world’s biggest manufacturer of household appliances); ASEA Brown Boveri (the world’s biggest electrical engineering company); SKF (the world’s biggest maker of ball bearings); Ericsson (the telecommunications giant;) Saab-Scandia (the automotive and aerospace manufacturer).

12. The Swedish language has three letters that do not appear in English, two versions of “a” and one of “o,” all with diacritical marks. In Swedish telephone books, they are listed at the end of the alphabet, after the letter “z.”

13. Coca-Cola tried to introduce the two-liter plastic bottle in Spain, but market entry was difficult.  The company soon discovered that few Spaniards had refrigerator doors with compartments large enough to accommodate the large-size bottle.

14. The correct name of the Netherlands is the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands received its nickname “Holland” from two of its provinces: North Holland and South Holland.  People from other provinces may object to this name. Therefore, you should refer to people as “Netherlanders” or “Dutch.” If a Dutch person taps the thumbnails together (as if applauding), it is a signal that the person does not appreciate what has just transpired (e.g., a joke or comment).

15. In Britain, a bonnet is the hood of a car; a vest is an man’s undershirt; a panda is a police car; a counter jumper is a salesman; “trouble and strive” is your wife.

16. Coffee is served mainly after meals in most European cultures.

17. In the 1990s one in five doctors and one in three mathematicians left Poland.

18. Continental dining etiquette requires the fork to be held in the left hand, the knife in the right hand.  When through with your meal, you should place silverware at a 6:30 clock position (versus. 5:25 for the USA).

19. Europeans and South Americans write the date with the day first and year last.

20. Amsterdam has over 1000 bridges.

21. Denmark controls Greenland.

22. The 2 most northern capitals in the world are Helsinki, Finland and Reykjavik, Iceland.

23. France is the largest European nation geographically.

24. The Mediterranean is the world’s largest inland sea.

25. Switzerland and Austria are the 2 most mountainous nations in Europe.

26. Ireland ’s longest river is the Shannon .

27. Belgium and the Netherlands have the highest population density in Europe.

28. The Berlin Wall stood 29 years (1961-1990).

29. The most heavily used waterway in Europe is the Rhine River.

30. Switzerland has the highest per capita income.

31. France is the largest agricultural producer in Europe.

32. France and Portugal are the #1 and #2 wine producers in Europe.

33. A third of the land in the Netherlands has been reclaimed from the sea.

34. England has 82 lawyers per 100,000 people and Japan has 11/100,000. The U.S. has 290 per 100,000 Americans.

35. Four ways of serving food internationally:

**A la l’anglaise**:  A waiter serves each guest from a platter.

**A la francaise**:  Serve yourself from the platter held by a waiter.

**A la russe**:  The main course is carved on a cart by the table, each guest’s plate is filled and then served by a waiter.

**American style:**  The waiter serves each guest’s food prepared in the kitchen

36. For the Swiss people, membership in one of the 26 Swiss cantons, or communes, is more important than national identity.  Switzerland has resisted the worldwide trend toward government centralization.  In 1978, a proposal to create a federal police force was rejected.  Swiss presidents are inconspicuous to the point that most Swiss are unable to name their own president in any given year. Youth protests, particularly in Zurich and Basel, were a significant problem in the 1980s, they have diminished significantly. The Swiss economy, one of the most efficient and prosperous, relies almost entirely on imports to meet its energy and food needs.  To compensate, Switzerland has become highly industrialized and a great trading center.  It has been one of world’s major banking centers since the 16th century, though lately it is lagging behind New York, Tokyo and London.  IN the 1990s, Switzerland has endured such problems as political scandals, money laundering and rising drug use.  While this has prompted some national introspection, the economic future is bright, with industry being well equipped to handle the increasingly intense world trade competition.  The political situation is also stable; the 1995 parliamentary elections produced no significant changes. Swiss society is tri-cultural and trilingual—French, Italian and German. Although there is a common Swiss culture, there are elements of French, Italian, and German culture that can be detected in social and business etiquette. The specific situation, the region and the individuals with whom you are dealing define the appropriate variations in customs and etiquette.

37. Various nationalities of Slavic background: Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovens, Croats, Bulgars, Macedonians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Latvians, Lithuaians, Bylo-Russians, Ukrainains, and Russians.

38. Ireland has the lowest rate of marriage per capita in the European Union yet the highest fertility rate (2.1 children per woman), plus an 18% illegitimacy rate.

39. Belgium has three official languages:  French, Dutch and German. Legal lines divide the different linguistic areas.  According to a new federal structure, policy-making is divided between authorities—the central state, the regions (Flanders, Walloon, and Brussels) and local communities. The majority of Belgian people are Flemings.  Most Flemish live in Flanders (the northern part of Belgium) and speak a dialect similar to Dutch.  A sizeable minority, the Walloons speak French and most live in Wallonia (the southern part of Belgium).  A small German-speaking community lives in the far eastern part of Belgium.  French and Flemish dominate the capital, Brussels. Most Belgians speak three languages as well as English.  Specific social and eating customs vary among the different regions. The Walloons and the Flemish can be distinguished by their manner in personal relations.  The Flemish are more reserved, while the Walloons exhibit great personal warmth.  However, both have a love for life and live it to the fullest, enjoying both hard work and good entertainment.

40. The people of Luxembourg are descendants of different nationalities and speak several different languages.  Luxembourgish, which comes from a Franco-Moselle dialect mixed with many German and French words, is the mother tongue in Luxembourg, French and German also have official status.  Belgium, Germany and France have influenced Luxembourgers.  However they maintain a strong feeling of national pride and consider their independence and separate identity in Europe important.

41. In a typical European home, the host and hostess will seat everyone for dinner. Husbands and wives are never seated together.  The host and hostess usually sit at either end of the table, with the male guest of honor to the right of the hostess and the female guest of honor to the right of the host. Wrists should be kept on the table during the meal.  You should not put your hands on your lap. When dining out, never order tea or coffee during a meal.  Rather, wait until the meal has ended. When finished eating, place your fork and knife horizontally across the top of the plate, with the tines of the fork and the knife facing left.  It is impolite to cross your knife and fork. The specialties of each region differ.  In Alsace an Lorraine try choucroute garnie (sauerkraut with sausage and pork), pâté de foiegras (goose liver paste) and quiche Lorraine (pastry filled with bacon, cheese, eggs and cream).  In Brittany, crepes (with jam or Grand Marnier and sugar) are an area specialty.  Boeuf bourguinonne (beef stew with wine, carrots, onion and mushrooms) is a specialty of the Burgundy region.  In Provence, near the Mediterranean, try bouillabaisse (seafood soup) and ratatouille (a mixture of zucchini, tomatoes, eggplant, onions and peppers).

43. Under the rule of Alexander the Great, ancient Greece developed an empire that covered much of what is now the Middle East.  However, after Alexander’s death in 323 B.C., the empire began to decline, and, by 146 BC., it became part of the Roman Empire. During World War II, the country was occupied by German and Italian forces and lost one-eighth of its population due to the war.  After the war ended and Greece was liberated, a civil war between the government and communist guerillas cost another 120,000 lives.  With aid from the U.S., the Greek government was victorious in 1949. Greeks like to “pass” time, not “use” time.  They may not be prompt in keeping appointments and consider it foolish to set a specific length of time for a meeting.  Foreigners are expected to arrive on time, but don’t be surprised if a Greek is a half-hour or more late.  This may partly be due to their temperament and the horrendous Athenian traffic and parking conditions.

44. In America, about 20 percent of adults are living in poverty at any given time. In France, the comparable figure is 7.5 percent; it is 7.6 percent for Germany and 6.5 percent in Italy. Britain, with a somewhat leaner benefit system than its continental neighbors, has about 14.6 percent of its adults in poverty.

45. Thomas Lynn, did a study of the language used in hallway conversations. The conclusion: about 80 percent of all conversations are in English now. Companies operating across borders in Europe routinely require their employees to converse in English. On MTV Europe, about 80 percent of the DJs use English; the songs are primarily in English—

46. English is the language of European baseball caps, backpacks, T-shirts, and tattoos. English is the language of almost every new song performed at Eurovision.

47. Twenty-first-century Europe has “one of the least religious populations in the world.” In Britain, France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium, fewer than 10 percent of the population attend church as often as once a month. Only 12 percent of Britons describe themselves as “active” members of the Anglican Church. In Scandinavia, the handsome high-steepled churches that mark every city and village attract less than 3 percent of the people, and governments no longer subsidize the disestablished Lutheran Church. In Amsterdam, the Dutch Reformed hierarchy is converting cathedrals into luxury apartments to pay its bills.

48. More and more Europeans tend to act out what faith they have outside the official structure. They pray at home—or in the car during the morning commute. They flock to carol services at Christmas and buy CDs of religious music, which perhaps explains why records of Gregorian chant have been best-sellers in several European countries. In the same cities where churches stand empty, Islamic immigrants are building immense new mosques. The United States has more Jews than all of Europe combined.

49. The wealthy nations of Europe—have the world’s highest rates of children born out of wedlock. Americans who are disturbed that some 30 percent of babies in the United States are born to single mothers should perhaps be relieved they don’t live in Norway (49 percent of all births to unwed parents), Sweden (48 percent), France (41 percent), Britain (38 percent), or Ireland (31 percent). On the other hand, most of the “out-of-wedlock” children in Europe are actually living with both parents—a significant difference from the untied States, where the typical single mom doesn’t have the father around the house.

50. Belgium and the Netherlands both offer full legal recognition of gay marriages, and most other European countries have authorized civil ceremonies that give gay couples all the legal benefits that their heterosexual neighbors are entitled to.

51. It is hard to argue that twenty-first-century Europe is a less moral or caring society than the church-going United States. Yes, Americans put up huge billboards reading “Love Thy Neighbor,” but they murder and rape their neighbors at rates that would shock any European nation. Corruption in business and government

**ITALIAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. When eating spaghetti, don’t cut or twirl against the spoon.  Twirl against the side of the dish.

2. Italy has one of the world’s highest percentages of small family (mainly artisan) businesses.  Italians don’t have a lot of use for big institutions—especially government.

3. No lady should dine alone in Italy unless she is open to the arrival of a male to keep her company.

4. When dealing with Italians, strive to use animated body language to indicate your sincerity.

5. The Italians, and their ancestors, the Romans, invented many of the business practices we use today.  Their innovations included banking, insurance, and even double-entry bookkeeping.

6. Old world charm is appreciated in Italy:  opening doors for women, saying “con permesso” when you leave the room, standing up when women enter a room, etc.

7. Italian corporations typically have a horizontal chain of command (called a cordata) based on reciprocal personal relationships.

8. Italians consider it common sense to find ways to beat the official system.  They view law-abiding approaches to business as naïve and old fashioned.

9. Italian business professionals carry two business cards—one for formal introductions and the other for social occasions.

10. When Italians get together, everyone tends to speak at once.

11. Italians add numerous gestures to their speech because the Italian language is fractured into many different dialects, and the gestures assist comprehension.  The regional dialect of Tuscany has been selected as the national dialect and is taught in schools.

**FRENCH CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. French managers shake hands twice a day with every other worker in the office.

2. Professional appearance in France must be elegant and impeccable.

3. French negotiators intellectualize at length as a way of probing for weaknesses in their counterparts.

4. The French are formal in business, disliking the use of first names, removing coats, or discussing aspects of personal life.

5. When dealing with the French, appear humble but sophisticated.  Do not attempt to find common ground, because the French do not want to relate to you.  Generally, the French don’t care to know anything about you.

6. As you are greeting and exchanging handshakes with the executive members of a French delegation, don't take the initiative in greeting the  French CEO--wait for him to greet you.

**IRELAND** **UP CLOSE**

1. Gaelic is an official language in both Ireland and Brussels, even though fewer than 100,000 people can speak it.

2. Ireland did not become a fully independent republic until 1949.  Dublin is the only major city in Ireland.

3. The colonial presence of British culture has produced an elaborate class system in Ireland based on education, wealth, and professional status.

4. The predominate unifying force in Ireland is the Roman Catholic Church, to which over 90% of the population belongs.

5. An economic boom during the 1960's and 1970's led to the development of a welfare state in Ireland that quickly evaporated due to an economic downturn in the 1980's.   During the 1970's over 100,000 mainly young people emigrated from Ireland constituting nearly 10% of the work force.

6. As the British economy goes, so goes the Irish economy.

**AUSTRALIA** **AND NEW ZEALAND** **UP CLOSE**

1. If an Australian refers to you as a “hard case,” they mean friend.

2. Australians put the billie on to make tea and might talk about a drongo (the Aboriginal word for tool).  An ocker is a rude, loud person.  A silvertail is a member of “high society,” and tall poppies are the rich.  A pom is an Englishman (taken from convict uniforms in the 19th century labeled P.O.H.M., or prisoners or Her Majesty).  Australian aborigines have contributed a number of words to the English language:  boomerang, kangaroo, wombat, koala, and dingo.

3. Tasmania is a state in the commonwealth of Australia.  Tasmanians are citizens of Australia, travel on Australian passports and vote in federal elections.  In this regard, Tasmania is as much a part of Australia as any other state.  Physically, Tasmania is unique in that it is separated from the Australian mainland by Bass Strait.  Because of the physical status, Tasmania is often known as Australia’s “island state”.  Americans may wish to compare Tasmania’s situation with that of, say, Hawaii.

4. Three Ways in Which Australia Is Different from New Zealand:

A.     The European colonization of Australia began as a penal colony. New Zealand was never a penal colony.

        B. New Zealand is a Nuclear Free Zone and prohibits ships that carry nuclear arms from entering its ports.  Since the U.S. will not confirm which of its ships carry nuclear weapons, a de facto ban on virtually all U.S. military vessels in New Zealand waters was implemented and resulted in the suspension of the ANZUS (Australia/New Zealand/United States) mutual defense treaty.

        C. The indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maoris, have not been as marginalized as the Aborigines of Australia.  Maoris still occupy a substantial amount of the country’s arable land, and Maori words are in common use.  In part, this is because the Maori make up a larger proportion of New Zealand’s population.  About 10% of New Zealanders are Maori, while only about 1.5% of Australians are Aborigines.

5. New Zealanders refer to themselves as Kiwis (after the Kiwi, their national bird).

6. English and Maori are the official languages of New Zealand, although Maori is used primarily for Maori ceremonies and other special occasions. Dinner, called “tea,” is the main meal of the day.  In homes, “tea” is served around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., although when eating out the meal takes place closer to 8:00 p.m. (Note the difference between “tea” and “afternoon tea,” which is served at 3:00 or 4:00 p.m.)  Sometimes a light “supper” is served in the late evening. You should be aware that “napkins are called “serviettes” in New Zealand.  The word “napkin” is used to designate a diaper.  In restaurants, “appetizers” are referred to as “entrees.” It is best to keep your hands but not your elbows above the table.

7. Australia is the least densely populated nation in the world.

8. Australians do not give praise easily.  Whey they do, it is often done in a sarcastic, joking manner.

9. New Zealand has more than 55 million sheep, which amounts to more than 15 times its number of people.  It also leads the world in wool exports.  This small country has almost 5 percent of the world’s sheep and accounts for nearly 40 percent of the world’s total wool exports.

10. Australia’s seven states are:  New South Wales, (Sydney); South Australia; West Australia; Northern Territory; Queenland (Brisbane); and Victoria (Melbourne), and Tasmania.

11. Ayre’s Rock in Australia is the world’s largest freestanding rock not part of a mountain chain.  (1.5 miles around)

12. Don’t give unsolicited advice or comments and avoid any affectation of “airs.”  Australians are suspicious of pretension and status-conscious behavior.  They are critical of affectation.  It is very difficult to impress an Australian.

13. In recent years, New Zealand has taken a strong antinuclear stand, refusing entry to U.S. nuclear-powered ships and condemning French nuclear testing in the Pacific.  As a result, the U.S. dropped New Zealand from the ANZUS treaty agreements and French agents sank a vessel belonging to an antinuclear group in Auckland’s harbor.

**LUXEMBOURG** **'S CULTURE**

1. Luxembourgers base their sense of identity primarily on their unique language, which is Luxembourgisch.

2. The Luxembourg economy is heavily dominated by international banks for global companies who use the nation as a central distribution center for Europe

3. A very unique feature of the Luxembourg work force is that a third of it consists of commuters from Belgium, France, and Germany.  The Luxembourg government can closely regulate unemployment levels and keep out troublemakers through the use of a closely monitored work permit system.

**RUSSIAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. The Nazi’s exacted a horrible toll on the Soviet people.  Some estimates place the Soviet battlefield deaths at more than 13.6 million.  Civilian deaths, including in labor camps and concentrations camps, totaled another 7.7 million.  With more than 21.3 million military and civilian deaths, almost every family in the Soviet Union lost a loved one.

2. Rather than risk the crime, bribery, and out-of-control taxation of Russia, many international companies are setting up shop just outside the Russian border.  Acer built its new plant at Lappeenranta, Finland —less than 13 miles from the Russian border.

3. The following behaviors are considered unacceptable in Russia:

A.     Speaking or laughing loudly in public

        B.  Entering a row of seats at the theater, cinema, or arena, while facing the stage

        C. Standing with your hands in your pockets.

4. Take plenty of business cards when doing business in Russia. Russian phone books are very incomplete, so most Russian companies keep business card directories. The university degree of the business visitor should be included on the card and it should be printed in Cyrillic (the Russian alphabet). At negotiations involving many Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) officials, be sure to give a card to everyone present, in order not to overlook someone who might turn out to be important.

5. When faced with a negotiating deadlock, Russians strive to out sit the other party.  They view compromise as a sign of weakness.

6. When engaged in business entertaining, Russians place 2 bottles on every table.  One is water, the other vodka.  When you open a vodka bottle, it is expected that you will leave it empty.

7. Russians respond much better to personal recommendations than to official directives.

8. If you need to give a business gift, items that appeal to the intellect or aesthetics are particularly prized, such as recordings, art prints, and books.

9. In Moscow, restaurant employees had to be specially trained to smile in the friendly McDonald’s way.  That’s because Russians do not feel comfortable smiling at strangers.

10. Executives from the Commonwealth of Independent States (the ex-satellites of the Soviet Union that still follow Russia’s lead) dislike a quick tempo of business and the U.S. attitude that time is money.  They are able to devote far more time and manpower to negotiations than Westerners ordinarily do and will use the slower tempo to good advantage. One proverb states, “If you travel for a day, take bread for a week,” and another, “Patience and work, and everything will work out.”

11. Break your bread with your hands; do not cut it with a knife. If there is no separate bread plate it is appropriate to put the bread directly on the tablecloth.

12. Cheese and fruit are frequently served at the end of a meal. Help yourself to the cheese only once.  Peel the fruit with a knife and eat it with a fork.

**THE SOCIAL AND BUSINESS CULTURE OF GREECE**

1. Like the Dutch, Greeks excel in global shipping.

2. Greek companies are dominated by large family dynasties.

3. Greek attitudes toward government and business careers are almost identical to the Italian point of view--organizations are seen to exist solely for the benefit of their employees.

4. Greece is a high context culture in which business must be done on a face-to-face basis.

**U.S.** **CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. Honolulu , Hawaii is the southern-most capital city in the U.S.   Juno, Alaska is the western-most.

2. Popular USA foods which many cultures find repulsive: Corn, grits, peanut butter, marshmallows, pecan and apple pie, commercial white bread, blackeye peas.

3. The oldest living thing on earth is the Redwood tree named Methuselah (4700 years old).

4. Fast food chains have been especially quick to modify their offerings.  McDonald’s, for example, adjusts its menu for each foreign market.  It has sold beer in Germany, wine in France, mutton pot pies in Australia, and McSpaghetti in the Philippines.  Burger King in Venezuela does not use sesame seed buns, the milkshakes there are sweeter and creamier, and even the ketchup is much sweeter.  Wendy’s serves shrimp cake sandwiches in Japan.  Shaky’s sells chorizo in Mexico and squid in Japan.  Arby’s dropped its ham sandwiches from its menus in the Middle East.  Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC serves “chips” rather than “fries” in England, and has added rice and smoked chicken to its menus in Japan.  KFC also initiated one of the more unique product modifications; in order to sell its chicken in Israel, it introduced kosher chicken.

5. Most U.S. business people carry business cards.  However, they are not always exchanged automatically on meeting but usually only if there is some reason you want to get in touch later.

6. The U.S. is not particularly rank and status conscious.  Titles are not used when addressing executives.  People in the U.S. usually like to use first names soon after meeting.  Informality tends to be equated with equality.

7. Always make a point to be punctual as business people in the U.S. can be very time conscious.  However, arriving a few minutes late (depending on the circumstances) for a business meeting is usually not frowned upon.  People in the U.S. also tend to conduct business at a fast pace and make quick decisions although the decisions may not be final.

Decisions can be changed quickly if it appears things are not working.  Keep in mind that people in the U.S. want to accomplish the job with a minimum expenditure of time and effort.

8. In an office, accepting or rejecting offers of coffee is perfectly proper.  To most international visitors, the coffee served in the U.S. is a disappointing beverage.

9. **STATISTICS ON AMERICAN WOMEN:**

**56.1**: Percentage of students enrolled in college nationwide who are women.

**12.4**: Percentage of board seats women held at Fortune 500 companies.

**8.9**: Percentage of board seats women held in second-tier companies.

**11**: According to an analysis of Sunday morning talk shows, percentage of on-air guest ‘‘experts’’

 who were women.

**20**: Percentage of top executives at major news networks who are women.

**60**: Number of women in the U.S. House of Representatives (vs. 375 men).

**13**: Number of women in the U.S. Senate (vs. 87 men).

**4**: Number of women in President Bush’s Cabinet.

**1**: Number of female acts whose albums made Billboard’s annual top 10

 (Enya, whose ‘‘A Day Without Rain’’ came in at No. 8).

**18**: Number of women who appear in Premiere’s Power 2001 list of 100 most influential people in entertainment.

**0**: Percentage of the 10 highest-grossing movies that featured stories about women.

**4**: Number of women in The Sporting News’’ list of the 100 Most Powerful Sports People of the Year

 (Venus Williams, at 77, is the highest-ranked woman).

**6,100**: Number of the nearly 280,000 career firefighters in the United States who are women.

**1**: Number of female authors awarded a National Book Award

 (Virginia Euwer Wolff, for Young People’s Literature).

**3**: Number of women individually awarded a Pulitzer Prize (vs. 15 men).

**0**: Number of female Nobel laureates.

**2**: Women who have won the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition since it started in 1962 (Olga Kern shared the gold medal with Stanislav Loudenitch in 2001).

**192,000**: Predicted number of new breast cancer cases diagnosed in 2001.

**40,200**: Number of women expected to die of breast cancer.

**80**: Percentage of young women surveyed in 2001 who said they’d rather marry a man who is able to express his feelings than a man who makes a good living.

**27**: Percentage of women surveyed who said they spend more than five hours a week cleaning their homes.

**275**: Number of minutes the average woman spent talking on her cell phone each month

 (vs. 372 minutes for the average man).

**40.9**: Percentage of Internet users who are women (18 and older).

**LATIN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. Be careful not to refer to the U.S. as “Americans.”  Mexicans consider themselves to be (North) Americans, as well.

2. Mexico’s population is 60% Mestizo (Spanish-Indian blend), 30% Indian, and 9% European.

3. Mexican subordinates tend to avoid eye contact with their boss.

4. In polycentric Mexico, plan on being about 30 minutes late to a party and an hour late in Mexico City.

5. Every day in Mexico City, 11,000 tons of pollutants are dumped into the air.

6. The Bolivian government has had more changes over the past 150 years than any other nation in the world:  190 changes.

7. Olympia reportedly tried to introduce a photo copier in Chile under the name Roto.  The copiers, however, did not sell well.  Why?  Two possible explanations:  (1) roto is the Spanish word for “broken,” and (2) roto is the word used to delineate the lowest class in Chile.

8. Chile has an average width of slightly more than a hundred miles and a length of twenty-seven hundred miles.

9. Bolivia , Ecuador , Columbia , and Peru are members of the Andean Pact.  The members of MERCOSUR (the Southern Common Market) include Brazil , Argentina , Uruguay , and Paraguay .

10. Most of Brazil’s 146m live within 200 miles of the coast 90% of the people live on 10% of the land.

11. Brazilians don’t consider themselves to be Hispanic and resent being spoken to in Spanish.

12. Chile’s population is 95% European.  Chile has more professional women than any other Latin American nation.

13. Most Hispanics use 2 surnames.  Their paternal surname is listed first followed by their maternal.

14. Because of its stability and tradition of democracy, Costa Rica (the name means Rich Coast) has long been known as the “Switzerland of Central America.”  The Costa Ricans (who call themselves ticos) are proud of their peaceful traditions.  Costa Rica does not even have an army.

15. There are several traditions about pouring wine in Chile, so it is safer for a foreigner to avoid pouring wine rather than inadvertently cause offense.  (For example, it is insulting to pour wine with the left hand, or so that the wine splashes against the far inside surface of a wineglass.)

16. Nepotism is the influential family member’s first obligation throughout most of Latin America.

17. When greeting, most Latinos expect body contact (hug, kiss, abrazo).

18. In Latin cultures, personalismo means that you put your trust in individuals rather than institutions or abstractions.

19. In most Latin countries, business colleagues rarely address one another by first name.

20. In most Latin American cultures, retail clerks wait on several people at the same time, so don’t feel slighted by lack of individualized attention.

21. Most Hispanics communicate at closer proximity than U.S. Americans.  Be careful not to pull away when talking to avoid insult.

22. A U.S. executive went to Chile for a final negotiating round with the owner of a major Chilean corporation.  Unfortunately, the gentleman from the U.S.A. wore a heavy gold ring with a diamond, plus a gold watch.  The Chileans interpreted this jewelry as proof that the American was in business to amass personal wealth, and furthermore had the poor taste to display it.  The Chilean contract went to an Italian firm.

23. In Latin cultures, shake hands with everyone, including secretaries.

24. Peru is very ethnically diverse, with descendants from the Incans, Europe, Japan, and China.

25. Argentines pride themselves on their European heritage (mainly Italian, British, Spanish and German).  There is a tendency to look down upon the native Indians.

26. There is no such thing as a breakfast meeting in Argentina.  Argentines keep late hours and do not conduct business early in the morning. Dinner is served about 10:00 p.m. , and later on weekends.

27. Foreign executives should always consider themselves at risk for kidnapping in Columbia.  Never assume that you are safe because your company is small or your position is unimportant; criminals have frequently kidnapped the wrong people.  Kidnap and ransom insurance is recommended; policies not only pay ransom but the cost of security consultants to handle negotiations and the kidnap victim’s loss of income. As the country with the most kidnappings in the world, insurance premiums for Colombia are the most expensive.

28. Maté is a type of tea made from the young leaves of an evergreen tree of the holly family.  The dry tea is called yerba mate.  Maté is generally served in homes and not in restaurants.  It is frequently sipped through a silver straw from a gourd, and is passed from one person to another.  People often drink it instead of coffee; it contains a good deal of caffeine.  Maté is served in a number of ways:  with sugar, anise seeds, orange peel or milk. It is enjoyed all over Argentina, but particularly in the interior, reflecting the gaucho (cowboy) heritage.

29. Brazil is the only country in Latin America in which Portuguese, not Spanish, is spoken.  English, German and French are also spoken by many Brazilians.  Portuguese speakers understand Spanish, but they may be offended if you deliberately speak to them in Spanish.  A visitor should try to learn and speak some Portuguese.

30. Brazilians tend to be blunt about personal characteristics, such as whether you are fat or thin.  These comments are meant as observations and are not intended as insults.

31. Brazilians tend to express their opinions forcefully.  This should not be misinterpreted as anger.

32. Brazilians eat continental style, holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left.  They wipe their mouths each time before drinking.  Do not use your hands to pick up food.  If you must pick up food (such as a sandwich) with your hands, use a napkin.

33. Carnaval (a week of feasting and celebration preceding Lent).  It is the most famous holiday in Brazil, marked by street parades, dancing, parties, drinking and costumes.

34. The Aztecs were the last great Central American empire, but they were conquered by the Spanish in 1591.  The Spanish, who ruled until the 19th century, virtually destroyed the Aztec culture.

35. Titles are considered to be an important part of business protocol.  Common titles are “Doctor,” “Professor,” “Químico” (chemist), “Ingeniero”  (engineer), “Arquitecto” (architect).  Lic. following a person’s name in writing means that he or she has a bachelor’s degree.

36. Spanish names usually include the mother’s family name after, not before, the father’s family name, although the father’s family name is considered the surname.  For instance, a man named José Rodriquez Ortega would be called “Señor Rodriquez.”  A married woman or widow usually uses her maiden name in the middle position.

37. If a businesswoman entertains a Mexican businessman at lunch, she should arrange to have the lunch in her hotel’s restaurant so she can have the check.

38. In the province of Québec, where the official language is French, most people are not fluent in English.  If you are traveling to Québec, a working knowledge of French is essential.  In the province of New Brunswick, about a third of the population speaks French as their first language.

39. In 1493, Columbus arrived in the region now known as Puerto Rico and claimed the island for Spain, calling it San Juan Bautista.  In 1508, Spanish settlers began colonizing the island, and they began importing African slaves in 1513.  During this period of colonization, the indigenous Taino tribe was virtually wiped out.

40. In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, the United States invaded the island of Puerto Rico and defeated the Spaniards.  Spain ceded the island to the U.S. in that year.  Puerto Rico became the first colony of the United States. In 1917, Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory, and its people were granted citizenship.  The issue of commonwealth status has been volatile and has sometimes caused violence to erupt.  In 1954, militants from Puerto Rico shot several congressmen in Washington during a session of the House of Representatives.  Today, Puerto Ricans continue to be divided over the issue of whether to request statehood or remain a commonwealth.

41. La Paz, Bolivia (12,000 feet) is the highest capital city in the world.

42. The full name of the city of El Paso is El Paso Del Norte.

43. Angel Falls in Venezuela is the tallest waterfall in the world.

44. The seven nations of Central America are:  Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

45. There are 31 states in Mexico.

46. Paraguay is the least developed nation in South America because it is landlocked.

47. Ecuador is the only South American nation that straddles the equator.

48. The following diseases brought by the Spanish conquistadors wiped out the Ameridians:

Smallpox, typhoid fever, measles, flu, and the mumps.

49. The 6 states Mexico yielded to the U.S. in the 1846-1848 war were:
Arizona , California , Colorado , Nevada , New Mexico , and Wyoming .

50. Columbia is the only South American nation with coastlines on both the Pacific and Caribbean.

51. The Andes cut Chile off from the rest of South America.  Isolation is a fact of life even within Chile itself; the deserts of Northern Chile are a long way from the rainy hills of Southern Chile.

52. Lake Titicaca (in the Andes between Peru and Bolivia) is the world’s highest lake above sea level.  (12,507 feet)

53. Batista ruled Cuba before Castro.

54. Mexico’s largest mountain range is the Sierra Madre.

55. If Brazil were as densely populated as Belgium, all of the world’s population would fit into Brazil.

56. The Christ the Redeemer statue is located on top of the mountain Corcovado in Brazil.

57. The Mayan civilization was located in Guatemala.

58. Buenos Aires, Argentina is the largest city south of the equator.

59. Bolivia is the only South American nation named after its founder. (Simon Bolivar)

60. South America has 13 nations.

61. The Andes are the world’s largest mountain chain.

62. Mexican presidents serve a single, 6-year term of office.

63. The 4 largest exports of Mexico are oil, cotton, shrimp, and coffee.

64. The Andes cut Chile off from the rest of South America.  Isolation is a fact of life even within Chile itself; the deserts of Northern Chile are a long way from the rainy hills of Southern Chile.

**MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. In the Middle East, eat only with your right hand.  The left hand is considered unclean.

2. You can determine how many courses will be served at a formal Middle Eastern banquet by observing the number of table clothes place on the table beforehand.  (A fresh tablecloth is used for each course.)

3. When visiting temples or mosques, always wear clothing that covers your arms and legs and remove shoes and hats.

4. Arabs may feel obligated to give you any item that you profusely admire.

5. London:  World Cup soccer promotion became an embarrassment for McDonald’s.  The chain printed a Koran scripture on throwaway bags.  Islamic officials said the sacred worlds from the flag of the Saudi world cup team should not be crumpled up and thrown away.  The words:  “There is no got but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet.”

6. Ramadan is a month long religious fast commemorating the revelation of God’s law to Muhammad.

7. Arabs use the phrase “Inshallah” (“God willing”) a lot in casual conversation to indicate that people are not in complete control of human events.

8. Saudi government officials are not allowed to work more than 6 hours a day.  The Saudi work week runs from Saturday through Wednesday.  Fridays are a holy day.

9. Arabs are not impressed by “self-made men” because of the traditional Moslem emphasis placed on family lineage.

10. When entering a Muslim mosque or a Buddhist temple take off your hat and leave your camera behind.

11. Saudis greet foreigners with a handclasp, but no hand shaking.

12. Never show the bottom of your foot to an Arab.  Keep both feet on the ground and avoid crossing your legs.

13. Moslem Brunei has no concert halls, no discos, no galleries, no nightclubs, and no liquor.  Independence from Britain came in 1984.  Half the population is under the age of twenty-one.

14. Mohammed was born in A.D. 570 in the Saudi Arabian city of Mecca.

15. Saudis speak at much closer quarters than Americans and use constant eye contact.

16. The 5 duties of Muslims are to recite the shahada creed; pray 5 times daily (salat); give alms (zakat); engage in fasting during the month-long Ramadan (sawm); and make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

17. In Arab nations, the US hand wave for good-bye means come here.

18. Egyptians tend to have large extended families.  They are rarely alone, and solitude is not often a chosen condition.  As a result, Egyptians gravitate toward others in public.  If you are sitting in an empty movie theater, an Egyptian will probably choose a seat next to you.  If you are seated at one end of a bench, an Egyptian is likely to sit next to you, rather than at the other end of the bench.  This is just force of habit; it does not mean that the Egyptian wishes to speak to you.

19. When greeting, Muslims avoid cross-gender body contact, but same-gender touching is okay.  When shaking hands, don’t pull your hand away too quickly.

20. The name of Allah is considered sacrosanct by many Muslims; to obscure or trivialize it is considered blasphemy.  Even disposing of anything adorned with the name of Allah is sensitive--hence the protests from Saudi officials when the Saudi Arabian flag has been printed (along with other flags) on such disposable items as paper bags.

21. If your meeting with a company official in a Moslem nation is frequently interrupted by drop-in visitors, just sit patiently, since Arab cultures are very polychronic (open to people in the environment).

22. Arabs don’t like to be alone and cluster closely together.  When entering an elevator, most Arabs will stand close to anyone else on the elevator, in contrast to Westerners who seek maximum personal space for reasons of independence.

24. Islam means submission to God and is a total way of life.  There is no separation of church and state as in the West.

25. Arabs place a great deal of power in words, which are often seen as substitutes for action.  Thus, Arabs often feel that saying the words is the same as solving the problem.

26. In the Arab name, Encik (Mr.) Abdul Hisham Hajii, Hajii indicates his father visited Mecca, and Hisham is his father’s last name.  He should be formally addressed as Encik Hisham, or Hajii Hasham if he has visited Mecca himself.

27. Through the centuries, the Kyber Pass has been a busy place.  Many invaders have entered this realm:  Cyrus the Great from Persia , Alexander the Great from Macedonia , the Huns, the Islamic Turks, and the Mongols under Genghis Kahn and Tamerlane.

28. Libya started in the 1980s to spend a planned $25 billion of its oil revenue to bring in water.

29. A firm in Taiwan shipped some drinking glasses to the Middle East.  The company used wooden crates and padded the glasses with hay.  Most of the glasses, however, were broken by the time they reached their destination.  As the crates traveled into the drier Middle East, the moisture content of the hay dropped.  By the time the crates were delivered, the thin straw offered almost no protection.

30. Although people all over the world now drink coffee, it is believed that Ethiopians were the first to drink it.

31. Sunni and Shiite are the two major Islamic sects.  Worldwide, about 11 percent of Muslims are members of the Shiite sect, and 85 percent are Sunni.  (The remaining 4 percent belong to smaller offshoots of Islam.)  Shiite groups are located primarily in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain, with minorities living in other countries throughout the region.

32. It is customary to use the title “Shaikh” (for a man) or “Shaikha” (for a woman) in front of the name of a member of the royal family.  “Bin” in the middle of a name means “son of.”

33. Formal and informal nicknames are common.  Among formal nicknames, you will find “Abu,” which means “father of” when used before the given name of the oldest son, such as “Abu Mohammed” (father of Mohammed).  Similarly, “Ibn” means “son of,” as in “Ibn Rashid” (son of Rashid).

34. Popular Arab dishes include beryani (rice with meat), machbous (rice, meat, tomatoes and lentils) and saloneh (mixed vegetables).  Fish and seafood are also staples.  Halwa (a starch pudding mixed with crushed cardamom seeds, saffron sugar and fat) is a traditional dessert.  Dates are served with meals.

35. If sitting on the floor or if crossing the legs, remember to position your feet so as not to point them directly at another person.

36. During Ramadan, it is impolite for non-Muslims to eat or drink in front of Muslims during daylight hours.

37. The most common greeting in Bahrain is “Assalam alikum” (“the peach of Allah be upon you”).  The correct reply is “Alikum essalam,” meaning virtually the same thing.

38. In Israel, many people observe the traditional Kosher dietary laws that prohibit milk and meat from being eaten during the same meal.  Under these laws, pork and shellfish are also forbidden at any time.

39. Since Jordan is part of the “Fertile Crescent” of the Middle East, it has been settled and conquered by a number of peoples.  The early settlers of the area included the Amorites, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites.  Later, the land was conquered by the Hittites, Egyptians, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans.

40. In Jordan, women comprise only about 10% of the work force.

41. The national dish of Jordan is mansaf, a large tray of rice covered with chunks of stewed lamb (including the head) and jameed (yogurt sauce).  It is eaten by hand from the serving tray. Other popular dishes include mahshi (stuffed vegetables), musakhan (chicken with onions, olive oil, pine seeds and seasonings) and meshwi or shisk kebab. Lamb and chicken are the most common meats.  Tomatoes, onions, eggplant, cabbage and other vegetables are also eaten regularly.  Coffee is important at all meals. Qahwah Saadah (Bedouin coffee) is sipped slowly from small cups.  Arabic or Turkish coffee is sweeter.  It is deliberately not stirred so as to keep the thick coffee grains at the bottom of the cup.

42. Arabs love children; they lavish a great deal of time and attention on them. Likewise, the elderly are greatly respected and cared for by their children.

43. To be able to help another member of the Arab family is considered a great honor as well as a duty.

44. The most common form of greeting is a handshake, especially in business. Foreign businesswomen should wait for a Kuwaiti businessman to offer his hand. Similarly, a foreign businessman should wait for a Kuwaiti businesswoman to offer her hand.

45. In general, Arabic names are written in the same order as English names—title, given name, middle name (patronymic) and surname (see examples below).  A Kuwaiti’s second name is his father’s name.  If an Arab’s grandfather was (or is) a famous person, he may sometimes add his grandfather’s name after his father’s name and before his surname.  Women in Kuwait adopt their husband’s name after marriage.  The terms “al” and “bin” literally mean “from” and, in practice can mean either “son of…” or “from the town of…” The female form of “bin” is “bint.”  For example the name “Dr. Mahmoud bin Sultan bin Hamad al-Muqrin” means “Dr. Mahmoud, son of Sultan, grandson of Hamad, of the house (family) of Muqrin.”  Similarly, “Princess Fatima bint Ibrahim al-Saud” means “Princes Fatima, daughter of Ibrahim, of the house of Saud.”

46. Kuwaitis do not speak loudly, and they tend to stand close together when conversing.  A calm demeanor is taken as a sign of intelligence.  Maintaining eye contact is also very important.  If you shift eye contact away from your host, it may be interpreted as a sign that you are not trustworthy.

47. Since maintaining personal honor is very important, one should avoid embarrassing or criticizing anyone.  Compromises may sometimes be necessary simply in order to maintain someone’s sense of honor.

48. Avoid arranging business travel during the period of Ramadan, since most businesses close during the day at this time so Kuwaitis may fast and pray.  Since the exact time of Ramadan changes every year, check if any festivals or religious holidays are coming up before arranging your visit.

49. Very often, the first meeting (or first few meetings) will simply be spent on polite small talk.  While they may seem banal, these preliminary meetings should be taken seriously.  During this time, your Kuwaiti counterpart will be trying to evaluate subjectively whether or not business should take place in the future.  Often, after an initial talk, your counterpart will end the meeting and will invite you to come to another meeting where the actual business discussions will be conducted.  The Kuwaiti executives will indicate when they are ready to start discussing business.

50. Establishing a personal relationship of depth and trust is one of the most important elements of conducting business in Kuwait.  You should allow plenty of time for conducting transactions in Kuwait.  At times, several days may pass between meetings and it is not acceptable to close deals by phone or fax communication.

51. Don’t be surprised if your Kuwaiti counterparts take time to pray during a meeting.  Praying five times a day is the Islamic practice.  It is out of place to ask a Muslim to interfere with this practice; one should simply be patient.  The period of prayer usually lasts only about 20 minutes and the flow of conversation is readily picked up when the prayer has concluded.

52. In negotiating, a calm but firm, sincere and personal approach works best.  Kuwaiti business people do not appreciate a “hard-sell” approach or being hurried; instead, lengthy haggling almost always occurs.

53. Business meetings are rarely private.  It is important to be patient since there are often numerous interruptions for phone calls and visitors.  Since people wander in and out of meetings, you may be asked to deliver a presentation a number of times.

54. Since Arabic is a language of hyperbole, a “yes” very often means “maybe.”

55. Generosity is considered one of the highest values in Kuwait.  The greatest compliment you can pay your host is to acknowledge his generosity.  Similarly, when a Kuwaiti offers you a gift, it is impolite to refuse.

56. Rice is a basic element of the Kuwait diet.  When it is mixed with onions, it is called mashkoul; when it is mixed with lentils it is called muaddas.  Cous-cous (a grain-like pasta) is also popular.  The main spices of Kuwaiti cuisine are turmeric, ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, parsley, rosewater, pepper, saffron and ground citrus fruits.  Ground limes are used in many dishes and are called loomi.  Cucumber, tomatoes, chickpeas, eggplant, onions and olives often accompany many dishes.  Broiled lamb, barbecued fish, chicken and prawns are also common.

57. Kuwaiti cuisine includes Middle Eastern and European dishes, along with traditional Kuwaiti ones.  For example, samouli is a white bread, which is similar to the French baguette.  Popular dishes include kabab maswiis (ground beef or lamb served on Arabic bread with yogurt-cucumber sauce), lahm bil bayd (a deep-fried dish made with ground beef and boiled eggs), machbous (a spicy lamb dish served with rice) and basal mahshi (onions stuffed with rice and either beef or lamb).

58. Age is highly respected and associated with wisdom.  To increase your chances of success, it is recommended that an older person be sent to meet with prospective business partners.  Sending a younger executive may suggest to Nigerians that their business is not worthy of the attention of the elders who are presumed to head an organization.

59. It is best to schedule no more than two appointments a day and to allow plenty of time in between.  Nigerians do not have a rigid sense of time and punctuality is not very prevalent.  Your 8:00 a.m. appointment may not show up until 4:00 p.m. or not at all.

60. In Saudi Arabia, it is customary to shake hands lightly, but sincerely, with everyone in an office when meeting and when departing.  The handshake is long and often continues through the entire greeting.

61. It is likely that you will shake hands frequently, possibly several times a day with the same person.  For example, whenever someone enters the room, you should shake hands.

62. Saudis tend to stand very close and make direct eye contact when talking to others.  This is a sign of courtesy and respect.  They may also touch often, in order to heighten communication.

63. Saudi women dress very modestly and foreign women should respect this custom.  Women should always completely cover their arms, legs and hair (wear a long skirt, down to the angles, and a long-sleeved blouse) and dress so as not to attract attention to their bodies.  Businesswomen should never wear pantsuits.

64. Be aware that people sometimes remove their shoes before entering an Arab office.  Check if there is a pile of shoes by the door and then proceed accordingly.

65. It is not unusual to arrive for a business meeting and find another meeting already underway.  It is also common practice for other people to interrupt or to walk in on your meeting and for the meeting to be reconvened several times.  Although this may test your patience, the Saudis have a more relaxed attitude toward appointments.  It will be necessary to tolerate frequent diversions and waiting.  It may, in fact, be impossible to conduct a private meeting.

66. Be aware that Saudi Arabian men do not typically socialize with other men outside of the family.  Women do not attend social gatherings.  However, from working with Westernized companies over the past 15 years, the Saudis have adapted to the practice of business entertaining.

67. Do not expect to find traditional Saudi restaurants.  Rather, the restaurants in Saudi Arabia are predominantly Chinese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani or Ethiopian.

68. No alcohol is served in Saudi Arabia.

69. Women should not go into restaurants alone, unless accompanied by a couple or a male relative.  Most hotels have two restaurants – one for men and one for families.  Foreign women should always eat in a family restaurant.

70. At meals in homes, people traditionally sit in a circle on the floor in front of a large mat with food on it. There are no individual plates.  When sitting on the floor, sit cross-legged or kneel on one knee.  Make sure that your feet are not touching the food mat and that your soles are not facing anybody.

71. Men and women always eat separately.

72. A formal Saudi meal may include khouzi (stuffed mutton garnished with almonds and eggs), fried shrimp, ragout of okra, kabsah (kebabs of lamb with vegetables and rice).  Your host will be delighted to explain the ingredients as well as the preparation of the different dishes.

73. At the end of the meal, you should say Bismillah (which means “Thanks to God”) or simply “Thank you.”

74. Appropriate dress for men is conservative, preferably lightweight, suits.  In general, people tend to cover themselves, no matter how hot the weather.  Shorts should not be worn in public.

75. You should be aware the Saudis pray five times a day –between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m., around noon, some time between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., at sunset and one hour after sunset (never later than 9:00 p.m.).  This schedule varies according to the time of year and the part of the country.  At prayer times, everything stops so you may want to make plans around the prayer schedule.

76. Be extremely careful taking photographs.  The Qur’an prohibits the depiction of the human form by graven images.  Since Saudi Arabia is the strictest Muslim country, your film may be confiscated or you may be arrested for taking a photograph that includes human figures.  You should definitely not photograph women or religious processions.

77. If your passport contains a “religion” category, it should not read “none.”

78. Never swear or use obscenities in Saudi Arabia.

79. Foreigners may not enter mosques in Saudi Arabia.

80. As throughout the Islamic world, Friday is the day of rest.

81. Non-Muslims are expected to refrain from eating, consuming beverages or smoking in public during Ramadan, although some restaurants stay open for foreigners, and, of course hotels serve meals.

82. The hottest temperature ever recorded was 136.4 in Al-Aziziya Libya.

83. Tel Aviv is Israel’s largest city.

84. Farsi the official language in Iran

85. The Suez Canal is 100 miles long.

86. Muslims and Jews don’t eat pork or fish without fins.  Hindus don’t eat beef.  Some Puerto Ricans won’t eat pineapple along with other foods.  Muslims & Hindus don’t consume alcoholic beverages.

87. Israel has a diverse population.  Jews make up only about 82% of the population, and almost half of the Israeli Jews were born outside Israel.  The remainder includes Palestinians (who can be Muslim or Christian) and Druze (all of whom worship an offshoot of Islam).

88. Damascus, Syria is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world.

89. Same sex hand-holding is a sign of friendship with Middle-Easterners, Asians, and many Latinos.

90. McDonald’s recently opened its first kosher restaurant in Israel, near Tel Aviv.  And its Mecca site in Saudi Arabia serves only halal beef, slaughtered according to Islamic law.

91. The “Med” and the “Red” seas are connected by the Suez Cannel.

92. After years of interaction with both Europe and Asia , the Turkish people have incorporated features from both areas into their life-style, customs and thinking.  Do not make the mistake of calling Turkey part of the Middle East since Turks consider themselves European.  Similarly, do not make the mistake of referring to Turks as Arabs, which they are not.

93. Arabs are highly sensitive to body language:

A. Never use the left hand for public matters (such as eating, passing out a business card, handling documents, etc.)

B. Avoid gesturing

C. Don’t expose the sole of the foot/shoe

D. Don’t touch (back pat, shoulder tap, etc.)

E. Never swear in public or talk about female family members

F. Avoid discussions of Middle Eastern politics

**CHINESE CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. The Chinese typically negotiate at round tables, with the highest-ranking official sitting facing the door to the room.

2. The Chinese identify three phases in the process of getting to know a foreigner:  know their name, know their face, know their heart.  Don’t expect a Chinese to trust you simply because you’ve shown up at a business meeting.  The process of getting to “know your heart” takes time.

3. Chinese is a tonal language based on four basic pronunciation tones (with the change in pitch done on vowels):

A. A high flat pitch

B. Rising from mid to high pitch

C. A fall and rise “V” pattern

D. Falling from high to low pitch

E. May Chinese words have a Ts pronunciation similar to the word “its”.

4. Refusing food may be considered rude.  If you don’t want to eat a particular item, just move it to the side of your dish.

5. Soup is sometimes one of the last courses served.  The serving of fruit signals the end of the meal.  Your host will probably rise to show that the banquet has ended.  If not, wait 10 minutes after tea is served and hot towels have been distributed before leaving.

6. It is rude to put your hands in your mouth.  As a result, you should refrain from biting your fingernails or using your nails to remove food from your teeth.  It will disgust the Chinese.

7. The Chinese are very conscious of social position.  Anything you can do to enhance their opinion of your social position is worthwhile, as long as you do not appear arrogant or haughty.

8. When somebody pours you tea at a meal, indicate “thank you” by lightly tapping your fingertips on the table.

9. Chinese chopsticks are generally both heavier and thicker than the chopsticks used in Japan.  Chopsticks are called kuaitzu, a word that also means hurry.  Most Chinese can eat very hurriedly with chopsticks.

10. Handshakes in Chinese culture is limp and last 10 or 12 seconds.

11. Don’t “clean your plate” at a Chinese banquet, since this is interpreted to mean that you were not fed enough.

12. Obtaining official approval for a joint venture in China takes from 6 to 18 months, unless you have cultivated relationships with government officials.

13. While negotiating with you, your Chinese counterparts periodically move their tea cups around into different positions to indicate how much progress is being made towards reaching a consensus.

14. Chinese negotiators often try to gain an advantage by trying to renegotiate a deal at the last minute.  Thus, don’t reveal your departure date.

15. When meeting Chinese, always recognize the oldest person first and inquire about his health.

16. When eating rice in China, hold the bowl close to your mouth.  Eat just a little of everything served, because twenty courses are not uncommon.  Leave something on your plate if you don’t want it refilled.

17. Zhang Wenqiang would be addressed as Mr. Zhang, since the order of Chinese names is family names first.  There are only 440 family names with the 100 most common accounting for 90% of names in the total population.  Chinese wives do not adopt their husband’s surnames.

18. Running out of business cards in Chinese cultures will cause you to lose status.

19. Chinese children are discouraged from exposing emotions outside the family.

20. When finished eating with chopsticks, it is considered a sign of bad luck if you rest them parallel on top of the bowl.

21. Status in Confucian culture is based on age, job, marriage, and wealth.

22. Chinese tend to use a yes/no pattern in asking questions:  “Do you want something to eat or not?”

23. Traditional greetings among the Chinese often consist of asking about food:  “Have you eaten your rice?”  Always answer yes.

24. The Chinese don’t use their hands much in communicating and prefer that others keep their hands still.  They also dislike loud behavior.

25. Never confront a Chinese person with an unpleasant message in public, as this may cause an embarrassing display of emotion.

26. Feng shui is an ancient Chinese philosophy based on the I Ching (yin & yang) that seeks the most harmonious way to arrange the positioning of building and furnishing.

27. Chinese banquets usually contain four main courses: leng pen (cold dishes); re chao (hot stir fried foods that are both crisp and tender and sweet/sour and spicy; da cai (often a whole cooked fish, symbolizing abundance); and tang (soup).

28. Hold chopsticks between your first 2 fingers.  When handed your rice bowl, accept it with both hands. Begin eating at an Asian banquet after the host starts.  Don’t pour sauces onto your food, but rather dip a bit of your food on a chopstick into the sauce bowl.

29. Written Chinese lacks verb tenses.

30. Many Chinese are superstitious about certain numbers. Si (four) sounds like “death” in Chinese.  Therefore, rather than having a fourth floor, many Chinese buildings have floor 3A followed by 3B. Lin (six) represents luck. Ba (eight) sounds like fa (prosperity), and so is desirable for all occasions. Jau (nine) stands for longevity.  The Forbidden City was designed with 999,000 rooms and stairs to all palaces have either nine steps or a number that can be divided by nine. Shi san (13) implies bad luck just as it does in the West. Number combinations are also considered significant.  Si ba liu sounds like “to live forever,” and wu jiu ba is similar to “my prosperity lasts forever.”

31. Superstitions also apply to many common objects, such as the handkerchief, which signifies bad luck because it is used in funerals/tragic occasions to wipe tears. The straw sandal is inappropriate because it symbolizes poverty. It is a very bad idea to give a clock because of its pronunciation.  The word “clock” has a similar sound to the word meaning “end of life”. You wouldn’t wrap gifts in black or white because it conveys a feeling of death and loss.  A black band is often worn on the sleeves of mourners to show grief and loss of a loved one. A white cloth is placed on the head to represent sorrow and grief. Gold ink is considered most prestigious for business cards used in Chinese cultures.

32. Confucianism and Protestantism both promote hard work for improvement of the group and individual.  Islam and Catholicism promote a sense of fatalism and human non-accountability.  Therefore adherents tend to do only as much work as is necessary to live.  Confucian cultures view education in high esteem because it is seen as the best way to foster achievement in society.

33. If you have just finished the next-to-last course of a formal Chinese meal and are offered a bowl of plain boiled rice, politely turn it down (to show that you are full and have been generously hosted).

34. Exporters shouldn’t use yellow tags in sending products into China, as these signify defective products.

35. If you are applauded in China, you should applaud back.

36. People in Taiwan do not even like to give health warnings, nor do they comment on illness to a sick person.  The insurance industry has gotten around this reluctance by speaking of insurance as if it were a bet (most Taiwanese love gambling).  A life insurance salesperson will explain a policy by saying, “We will bet that you live to age sixty, and if we lose we will pay your beneficiaries.”

37. China has the longest continuous recorded history.

38. Mandarin Chinese is the native language spoken by the greatest number of people in the world.

39. The most densely populated specific area in the world is the island of Macao near the southern coast of China.

40. Thirteen of the world’s languages are each spoken by more than 100 million people (in descending order by number of speakers):  Mandarin Chinese, English, Hindi, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Malay-Indonesian, French, Japanese, German, and Urdu.

41. After taking control of Mainland China in 1949, the Communist Chinese made changes in their language, both written and verbal. Outside the People’s Republic of China, many Chinese have been slow to incorporate these changes.  When you have your written materials translated for use in the PRC, make sure your translator uses the appropriate, “reformed” Chinese.

42. When conversing with people from Taiwan, the country of “Taiwan ” should be referred to by its official name “The Republic of China” (as opposed to mainland China , which is “The People’s Republic of China”).

43. Mandarin Chinese is known as Putonghua.

44. Westerners who wish to speak Chinese should be thankful that Mandarin was chosen as Taiwan’s official language. Mandarin, with four different tones, is difficult enough to learn.  The native Taiwanese language (imported from southern Fujian province) has six tones, which change depending upon the position of a word in the sentence!

45. China suffered defeat at the hands of the British in the Opium War (1841-1842).  The British won Hong Kong Island at this time.

46. Seating arrangements are important, whether for business meetings or for dining.  The principal guest sits next to the host when dining.  Guests will be shown where to sit.  At meetings, the main guest is seated facing the door and the host with his back to the door.

47. Tipping is officially illegal in China.  Some people, however, will accept tips in private.

48. Eat one dish at a time using the chopsticks.  Never touch food with your fingers.

49. During the period of Japanese rule of Taiwan, forces on mainland China battled for governmental control. Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang (KMT) forces battled Mao Zedong’s Communist forces, lost and were forced to flee.  They established the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan after Japan’s defeat in World War II.  Chiang’s government declared itself the legitimate government of all of China and established a policy to eventually reunite with the mainland. In 1950, the U.S. signed an agreement to protect Taiwan in case of an attack from the PRC. In 1971, the People’s Republic of China was admitted to the United Nations.  In 1979, the U.S. normalized diplomatic relations with the PRC and broke them with the ROC.  Relations between the U.S. and Taiwan continue on an unofficial basis. The KMT ruled Taiwan as a one-party state under martial law until 1987.  Political reforms allowed a multiparty democracy to start emerging in 1989.

**JAPANESE CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. The correct way to bow in Japan is to lower your eyes and keep your palms flat against your thighs.

2. Slip-on shoes are best in Japan for ease of removal when entering homes.

3. In Japan , avoid giving gifts (such as flowers in a bouquet) containing an even number of components.  Especially avoid giving 4 items of anything.

4. When meeting Japanese business reps for the first time, they will probably check to see if your shoes are shined.

5. Japanese negotiators prefer to look at issues in a circular, rather than linear, fashion in which one issue may be at discussed at several different times or several issues may be discussed simultaneously.

6. 99% of the Japanese population is native born.  Extremely high population density fuels the culture’s group mentality.

7. Close-up on Japan

A. 4000 character alphabet

B. Only past and present verb tenses

C. Only 5% of the U.S. crime rate

D. 120 million people on a land mass the size of California

E. Superiors resign if subordinates engage in wrong-doing

F. Japanese employees in large companies offer over a million annual suggestions for improvement

G. Dependence is seen as a sign of health; independence as a kind of sickness.

8. A shokai-sha (3rd party relationship facilitator) is essential in negotiating with the Japanese to build high context rapport and to handle negotiation tensions where face-saving is needed.

9. Kimonos in Japan should be wrapped left side over right.  Only corpses use right over left.

10. The Japanese may ask you a lot of personal questions.  Don’t be upset, they’re merely trying to determine your social standing so they can address you correctly.

11. To promote harmonious relationships with the Japanese, send negotiating questions well in advance of the meeting and don’t be surprised if executives engage in long pauses of silence before answer questions.

12. You should keep your hands and face still in Japan, since small gestures and expressions often have significant meaning.

13. The Japanese are very neat and clean.  Use tissue rather than a handkerchief, and change your clothes often.

14. The Japanese consider it rude to show the inside of the mouth, so they typically cover their mouth when laughing.

15. Most Japanese know what will be discussed in a meeting, how everyone feels about it, and how it will impact their business before they ever get there.  The purpose of a Japanese meeting is for the participants to reach some sort of consensus.

16. Japan leads the world in alcohol and cigarette consumption.

17. The 3 largest cities in Japan are Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka.

18. The Nikkei (“knee-kay”) is the name of the Japanese stock market.

19. Tipping is virtually nonexistent in Japan, and a tip may very well be refused.  At hotels and restaurants, be prepared to have a service charge added to your bill.

20. The four main islands of Japan are Hokkido, Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku.

21. Honshu (with the cities of Toyko, Osaka, Fukuoka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima) is the most populated Japanese island.

22. The Japanese have the longest lifespan (for both men and women).

23. Responding to a recent trend back to more traditional Japanese tastes, teriyaki burgers often appear on the menu alongside the Big Mac.  Mild curries, rice dishes and rice balls have been added from time to time in an attempt to beat tough local competitors.

24. Japan has been ruled by emperors for over 2,000 years.  According to legend, the first Emperor was Jimmu in 600 B.C.

25. Japan came under the cultural influence of China in the sixth century A.D. with the import of Buddhism and the Chinese writing system.  It modeled its governmental and cultural institutions on the Chinese Tang Dynasty.

26. Shoguns (feudal lords) held political control from the 12th century A.D. until the late 19th century.  Portuguese traders and missionaries arrived in the 16th century, followed by the Dutch and the British.  The shoguns expelled all foreigners in the 17th century with the exception of a few on Deshima (an island off the coast of Nagasaki).

27. In 1853, Matthew Perry (U.S. Navy) renewed Western contact with the Japanese. The shoguns lost power in the 1860s, and the emperor again took control. In 1895, the Japanese defeated China.  The Japanese then gained the influence that China had held in Korea. Japan was also victorious in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, which led to its recognition as a military power. Japan invaded Manchuria and much of China in the 1930s. After its defeat in World War II, Japan was occupied by military forces (mainly from the U.S.), from 1945 to 1952.  In 1947, a new constitution was adopted that declared Japan a democracy. The current emperor, Akihito, ascended to the throne in 1989.  He is the head of state, but has no governing power. In January 1996, Ryutaro Hashimoto became Japan’s Prime Minister.  This was the fourth change in government since 1993, and it returned the Liberal Democratic Party to power.  Throughout the political instability of the early 1990s, the fundamental problems of Japanese politics such as factionalism, corruption, the dominance of big business and “money politics” continued to exist.

28. Spoken Japanese is not closely related to the spoken Chinese language, but written Japanese is based on Chinese ideographs (characters).  The Japanese also use two phonetic alphabets simplified from the ideographs.  A third phonetic alphabet uses Roman letters.

29. Japanese people don’t like surprises.  It is necessary to prepare them for upcoming presentations or discussions by sending them written material well in advance.  Arrange for several copies to be printed—translated into Japanese—of any written material you plan to use.  This will allow each member of the team to have a copy, which will in turn, speed the decision-making process.

30. Traditional etiquette among the Japanese people emphasizes humility.  If you are offered tea or fruit, before accepting you should express a slight hesitation.  It is also courteous to deny compliments graciously and to avoid extending excessive compliments on the décor.  Understated compliments are more appropriate.

31. Japanese culture is steeped in tradition, a part of which applies to dining.  Japanese people generally consume food in a certain order.  For example, first a chopstick full of rice is eaten, then one of the side dishes and then more rice.  It is considered rude to eat just one dish at a time.

32. After being seated, you will be given an oshibori (damp cloth) for cleaning your hands.  Remember not to use this on your face, neck or arms.  Put it back on the tray from which it was served when you are done.  Handkerchiefs are often used in place of napkins during a meal.

33. Japanese food is frequently served to individuals on square or rectangular trays containing food in dishes or compartments.

34. Wait until your host/hostess picks up his/her chopsticks before you touch yours, but do not wait until he/she starts eating.  The highest-ranking guest is the one who should start eating first.  The custom is for the host to bow to the guest and for the guest to say “Itadakimasu,” which means literally “I receive this feast.”  A variation is for your host to bow and say this; you should then reply with the same word and start eating.

35. Green tea is the most popular drink in Japan, although coffee has become more common in recent years.  Western-style soft drinks are also popular.

36. Sake, a traditional drink in Japan, is made from rice.  It is served slightly warmed in tiny cups.  A sake cup should be held with one hand underneath the cup and the other around it.

37. If you are sitting at a meal and have to blow your nose, it is polite to get up, excuse yourself and leave the table.  Use a paper tissue to blow your nose, not a handkerchief.  A handkerchief is used for wiping the fingers, the brow or as a napkin during a meal.

38. The main meal of the day is eaten in the evening.  Popular Japanese specialties include miso (bean paste) soup, various kinds of noodles (ramen, udon and soba), sashimi (uncooked fish), and tofu (soybean curd) and pork dishes.  Sushi is a combination of fish (cooked or raw) and rice with vinegar.  Sukiyaki is thinly sliced beef cooked with vegetables in soy sauce and sake.  Tempura is fish or vegetables dipped in batter and deep-fried.

39. Be aware that Japanese people generally do not eat desserts, except for fresh fruit.

40. Shoes are removed before entering a Japanese home.  Place them together, pointing away from the house.

41. Men and women do not wear shorts, except at resorts or while jogging.

42. Traditional sports include sumo wrestling, judo, kendo (fencing with bamboo poles) and karate.  Baseball has been played in Japan since the 1870s and is considered the national sport.

43. The Japanese have always loved trendy gadgets, especially high tech ones. Some of the latest “gadget fads” include “negative ions” (which dispense “positive moods”) air conditioners, hair dryers, jewelry, etc; Pokemon, pet robots, bottled Chinese tea, and skin-whitening soap.

**KOREAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. Many Koreans consult fortune tellers.

2. Koreans like to sing at the conclusion of a meal, and often ask foreigners to sing a short song.  Singing expresses harmony in a symbolic way, and is a form of controlled emotional release.

3. When Koreans are silent, it often means they haven’t understood you.  When conducting business with Koreans, never bring up any Japanese contacts your company may, since there is a strong rivalry between the 2 nations.  Never write a Korean’s name in red ink, since this indicates they are deceased.

4. Koreans are the straightest forward of Asians.

5. Koreans are very protective of their boss’s mental harmony and avoid delivering bad news until late in the day.

6. Koreans understand Western culture better than any other Asian culture.  In comparison with the Japanese, Koreans tend to be less ethnocentric, less nationalistic, and less chauvinistic.

7. South Korea is the closest nation geographically to Japan.

8. In 1992, Kim Young Sam was elected as the first civilian to occupy the office of president in more than 30 years.

9. Interrupting someone is considered a desirable sign of eagerness among Koreans.  Therefore, don’t be insulted if a Korean colleague interrupts you.

10. In Korea, as in Japan and most other Asian nations, bowing remains the formal method of acknowledging, greeting, and paying respect to people, to religious symbols, and so on, although where casual meetings and farewells are concerned internationalized Koreans and other Asians routinely combine the bow—and sometimes replace it altogether—with the Western custom of handshaking.

11. Bowing properly is not as simple as it may seem.  It requires a great deal of intuitive understanding of the situation and practice in the physical technology involved, both of which are generally learned only through long experience in the culture.  Training programs conducted for new employees by larger Korean companies usually include lessons in bowing.

12. When doing business in a Korean executive’s office, never put anything on his desk (violation of personal space).

**ASIAN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

1. When being served a meal in Asian culture, don’t start eating immediately, which creates the impression of being greedy.

2. Most Asians are comfortable with silence in both social and business settings.

3. In Asia, don’t open gifts in the presence of the giver.  Receive and present gifts with both hands.

4. In most Asian nations it is rude to point your chopstick at another person.

5. “Yes, but” means “no” in most Asian cultures.

6. In Asian culture, one who is powerful shows personal humility as a way of demonstrating allegiance to the collective group.  Humility maintains harmony.  Foreigners must demonstrate humility in order to be invited into Asian culture.

7. Many Asians are very uncomfortable receiving personal praise or public notice for fear of showing up others, altering social relationships, or because they wonder if it is manipulative in motive.

8. It is considered rude to blow your nose in public in Asian nations.

10. Hong Kong has the highest per capita number of cellular phones in the world.

11. Indonesia and Malaysia are Moslem nations.  The Philippines is Roman Catholic.

12. When arriving at a social event in Indonesia, try to arrive later than the least important guests but earlier than the most important.

13. Most Filipinos didn’t have surnames until 1849, when they adopted Spanish surnames alphabetically by the region they came from.

14. Out of politeness, Asians and Moslems don’t always respond to offers of hospitality immediately.  Ask them more than once.

15. In most Asian cultures, slurping and eating loudly is considered a polite way to compliment the cook.

16. One body language clue many Asians use to politely signal a “no” answer is sucking in air through the teeth.

17. One way to get Asians to respond negatively is to phrase negative questions in a way that requires a yes response.

18. Indonesia has over 300 ethnic groups.

19. Groups of Filipinos do not arrange themselves in neat lines.  The only times that Filipinos have queued in neat lines was in World War II under the gun of armed soldiers.

20. If you wander into a traditional Taiwanese office between 1 and 1:30 p.m., you may think you’ve stumbled into a roomful of headless corpses!  Taiwanese workers generally take a short nap after lunch, and many pull their jackets over their heads to help them sleep.  The office management cooperates by dimming the lights and keeping activity to a minimum.

21. Malaysians find dairy products disgusting, except for ice cream.

22. Travelers in Singapore should be aware of public laws (and heavy fines) prohibiting littering, spitting, chewing gum, jaywalking, and smoking (not to mention pornography or drugs).

23. In Asia, leave something on your plate.  In Europe, eat everything on your plate.

24. Laughter in Asia may indicate confusion, shock, or embarrassment rather than mirth.

25. Trucks in Singapore must carry lights on their rooftops that blink as soon as the vehicles go over the speed limit, beckoning the hordes of Singapore politicians--who also hand out extraordinarily stiff fines for littering, jaywalking, gambling and spitting.

26. The guayabera, batik, tagalog, barong, and tagolog are names given in tropical Asian island nations to multi-pocket white shirts (not tucked in) which are acceptable professional wear in place of a suit coat and necktie.

27. In almost all Asian cultures, compliment the group, not the individual.

28. When receiving a business card from an Asian, never put it in your wallet and then your back pocket (which in their eyes signifies a low level of importance).  Neither should you write on the card in their presence (which ruins the formal status of the card).

29. Singapore has 4 official languages:  Malay, Tamil, Chinese, and English

30. When doing business in Asian culture, avoid asking confrontational competitive questions, such as “Which of your competitor’s products do you consider best or worst?”

31. In Asian culture, “yes” is best interpreted to mean, “I heard you,” not “I agree with you.”

32. In business meetings with Asians, try to match the ranks of those meeting together.  Age is usually the best indicator of rank.

33. Avoid body contact when meeting most Asians.  Use verbal greetings only.

34. Initial sales of Nissan’s sports car, the Fair Lady, were so disappointing in the United States that management decided to investigate the cause.  The conclusion:  the name fair lady was not sporty enough.  Thus, the name was changed to 240Z and the car became one of the most successful Nissan has ever launched.

35. Don’t forget to put cash aside for the Hong Kong Departure tax, payable at the airport:  HK $120 for adults, HK $60 for children under 12.

36. China wants Shanghai to overshadow Hong Kong as its official financial capital.

37. Because or their thousands of small and large islands, Indonesia and the Philippines are classified geographically as archipelagos.

38. The member nations of the Association of Southeastern Asian Nations (ASEAN) are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar (Cambodia ), Taiwan, and Vietnam.

39. Indonesia (13,600) and the Philippines (11,000) have the greatest number of islands)

40. Indonesia’s main islands are Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, and New Guinea.  It is the 5th most populated country in the world (183 m).

41. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population.

42. Thailand is the only Asian nation never to be under Western control.

43. The major city in Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur.

44. Ethnic Malays are called Bumiputera.

45. The first hydrogen bomb was detonated in the Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Islands.

46. **Indonesia** is made up of 13,760 islands that stretch 3,200 miles; only 6,000 of the islands are inhabited. Indonesia has more than 60 ethnic groups, each with its own customs, culture and language.  The Javanese people form the largest group. Indonesia became a Dutch colony in 1816 and remained under Dutch rule until the1940s. Independence from the Netherlands was proclaimed in August 1945. A republic was formed under President Sukarno. People usually shake hands only when introduced for the first time or when congratulating someone. On other occasions, it isn’t customary to shake hands.  Shake hands lightly and state your name when first meeting someone.  If someone touches her/his heart while shaking hands, that means that the greeting is very heartfelt and that the person being greeted is very special.  It is appropriate to bow slightly when greeting an older person. Women usually do not shake hands. The atmosphere of most business meetings may be informal.  Do not voice criticism at a meeting. It is always given in private. Most Indonesian businesses close for two to three hours in the middle of the day.  Business and government offices close at midday on Friday for worship. Indonesians do business with “friends.”  Developing a rapport and a friendship is crucial. While quality and price are important, they remain secondary to the personal interaction of the business partners. There are no sales without face-to-face negotiation.

47. The Dutch followed the Portuguese into **Malaysia** in 1641, and were, in turn, followed by the British, who acquired the island of Penang in 1786.  By 1795, the British had taken over most of the Malay Peninsula’s west coast.  By the early 20th century, Britain had gained control of all the Malay states including those on Borneo as colonies or protectorates. The period after World War II was marked by a 12-year Communist insurrection, which led to Great Britain granting independence to Malaysia in 1957.  The nation was then called the Federation of Malaya. Six years later the Federation of Malaya and the former British colonies of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) united to become Malaysia.  Tension between the Malay-dominated government in Malaya and the Chinese-dominated government in Singapore led to the creation of an independent Singapore in 1965. Malaysia has two different and distinct land regions:  the Malaysia Peninsula and East Malaysia, which is located on the island of Borneo. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country:  the Chinese people are the predominant residents in urban areas as well as in business, and Malays (mostly Muslim) predominantly live in rural areas.

48. The **Philippines** is a collection of 7,107 islands.  Many of these islands are uninhabited.  Most of the population is on 11 main islands, of which Luzon and Mindanao are the largest. José Rizal, a Filipino writer and a patriot, inspired a revolt against Spain in 1896.  At the same time, Spain and the U.S. were engaged in war.  When Spain lost the war, they handed over the Philippines to the U.S. On July 4, 1946, the Philippines became an independent republic with a constitution based on the U.S. model. In the Philippines, 80 different languages are used, including some Spanish.  While Tagalog (or Filipino) has been declared the official language, it has failed to replace English as the country’s unifying language.  English is widely spoken and is the de facto national language in law, commerce, government and popular entertainment. Remember that Filipinos almost never cook anything by itself, except for fish, which is broiled or grilled.  Chicken, fish, vegetables and noodles are all combined in soups and stews and then served with rice.  The rice and food are mixed together on the plate and bagoong or patis are added.  Bagoong is a pungent fish or shrimp paste; patis is an amber-colored liquid fish seasoning.  In homes, there will be bottles of these two condiments on the table, while in restaurants they are added to the food in the cooking.  Filipino food tends to be sweet or salty, rather than bland or intensely spiced. Don’t be surprised to see men or boys holding hands with one another (or women and women).  The gesture has no sexual implications.  In contrast, physical contact with members of the opposite sex have no such implications. Remember that in the Philippines, raising the eyebrows means “No.” Don’t be surprised if a Filipino smiles when upset or embarrassed.  This is the Filipino way of changing the atmosphere during a difficult moment or situation.

49. **Singapore** is an island nation located off the tip of the Malaysian peninsula.  Singapore is actually a city-state without any truly rural areas. Three major cultures (Chinese, Malay and Indian) are all represented in Singapore.  About 75% of the population has a Chinese heritage. Singapore’s strategic location and natural deep-water ports attracted the British in the early 19th century.  In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles established a British trading post on the island.  Britain acquired it as a possession in 1824. Singapore became a British Crown Colony in 1948.  Internal self rule was granted in 1959.  It became part of Malaysia in 1963.  But this caused domestic political problems and the island became independent in 1965. In 1993, Singapore revamped and enhanced the office of the president, to which Ong Teng Cheong was elected later that year.  He and Prime Minister Goh have maintained a hard line against anyone critical of Singapore or its government.  They believe that authoritarian means are justifiable when the ends are economic prosperity and a safe, clean environment.

50. A number of military dictators have ruled **Thailand** over the last few decades.  A popular revolt in 1973 overthrew Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and Prapas Charusathiara, who had annulled the constitution and declared martial law two years earlier.  A civilian-led government lasted only three years. Although the gap between the rich and the poor is large, the Thai economy is one of the fastest growing in East Asia.  The government has taken on environmental problems and infrastructure development is moving ahead.  It remains to be seen whether the military can be kept out of politics, and whether a stable democracy will emerge.  Another major issue is AIDS, as Thailand has the fastest growing infected population in Asia.

51. At the end of World War II , **Vietnam** was divided into two zones.  In the south, the British restored French rule; in the north, China ceded power to Vietnam’s emperor, Boa Dai,who abdicated in favor of Ho Chi Minh.  Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam’s independence in1946 and subsequently led a revolt against the French and their southern allies. The French were defeated in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu. The U.S., alarmed at the possibility of the spread of Communism, gave support to South Vietnam, including troops and supplies. The war spread to Cambodia and Laos. The war ended with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the fall of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in April 1975.  Vietnam, as well as Laos and Cambodia, came under Communist rule.  Thousands of people fled the area.  For those who remained, difficult years of repression, poverty and isolation followed. Vietnam was officially reunited in 1976 as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.  The U.S. refused to recognize the new government and did not establish diplomatic ties.  This kept Vietnam relatively isolated from Western nations. In 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia deposing the Pol Pot regime and installing a government loyal to Hanoi.  In 1989, Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. During the same period, Vietnam fought off a Chinese invasion. The Communist leaders of Vietnam introduced market reforms in 1986 and stepped up its efforts to improve relations with their non-communist neighbors as well as with the West. The peace treaty with Cambodia led the U.S. to renew relations with Vietnam.  The U.S. opened a diplomatic office in Hanoi in 1991 to coordinate the search for American MIAs (missing in action) and to pave the way to better relations.  Economic sanctions were lifted on February 4, 1994 and full diplomatic relations were announced in July 1995.

52. Knowledge of about 3000 Chinese characters is needed to read a local newspaper. Reading the New York Times translated into Chinese requires knowledge of about 5000 characters, while 7000 are needed to read technical business documents.

53.  Many Asians believe in the reality of demons and may make street offerings to them in some nations.

54. Couples in Sweden can take up to 13 months maternity off between them with the state paying 80% of total lost wages.

Coca-Cola tried to introduce the two-liter plastic bottle in Spain, but market entry was difficult.  The company soon discovered that few Spaniards had refrigerator doors with compartments large enough to accommodate the large-size bottle.

The correct name of the Netherlands is the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands received its nickname “Holland” from two of its provinces: North Holland and South Holland.  People from other provinces may object to this name. Therefore, you should refer to people as “Netherlanders” or “Dutch.” If a Dutch person taps the thumbnails together (as if applauding), it is a signal that the person does not appreciate what has just transpired (e.g., a joke or comment).

In Britain, a bonnet is the hood of a car; a vest is an man’s undershirt; a panda is a police car; a counter jumper is a salesman; “trouble and strive” is your wife.

Coffee is served mainly after meals in most European cultures.

In the 1990s one in five doctors and one in three mathematicians left Poland.

Continental dining etiquette requires the fork to be held in the left hand, the knife in the right hand.  When through with your meal, you should place silverware at a 6:30 clock position (versus. 5:25 for the USA).

Europeans and South Americans write the date with the day first and year last.

Amsterdam has over 1000 bridges.

Denmark controls Greenland.

The 2 most northern capitals in the world are Helsinki, Finland and Reykjavik, Iceland.

France is the largest European nation geographically.

The Mediterranean is the world’s largest inland sea.

Switzerland and Austria are the 2 most mountainous nations in Europe.

Ireland ’s longest river is the Shannon .

Belgium and the Netherlands have the highest population density in Europe.

The Berlin Wall stood 29 years (1961-1990).

The most heavily used waterway in Europe is the Rhine River.

Switzerland has the highest per capita income.

France is the largest agricultural producer in Europe.

France and Portugal are the #1 and #2 wine producers in Europe.

A third of the land in the Netherlands has been reclaimed from the sea.

England has 82 lawyers per 100,000 people and Japan has 11/100,000. The U.S. has 290 per 100,000 Americans.

Various nationalities of Slavic background: Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovens, Croats, Bulgars, Macedonians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Latvians, Lithuaians, Bylo-Russians, Ukrainains, and Russians.

Ireland has the lowest rate of marriage per capita in the European Union yet the highesility rate (2.1 children per woman), plus an 18% illegitimacy rate.

Belgium has three official languages:  French, Dutch and German. Legal lines divide the different linguistic areas.  According to a new federal structure, policy-making is divided between authorities—the central state, the regions (Flanders, Walloon, and Brussels) and local communities. The majority of Belgian people are Flemings.  Most Flemish live in Flanders (the northern part of Belgium) and speak a dialect similar to Dutch.  A sizeable minority, the Walloons speak French and most live in Wallonia (the southern part of Belgium).  A small German-speaking community lives in the far eastern part of Belgium.  French and Flemish dominate the capital, Brussels. Most Belgians speak three languages as well as English.  Specific social and eating customs vary among the different regions. The Walloons and the Flemish can be distinguished by their manner in personal relations.  The Flemish are more reserved, while the Walloons exhibit great personal warmth.  However, both have a love for life and live it to the fullest, enjoying both hard work and good entertainment.

In a typical European home, the host and hostess will seat everyone for dinner. Husbands and wives are never seated together.  The host and hostess usually sit at either end of the table, with the male guest of honor to the right of the hostess and the female guest of honor to the right of the host. Wrists should be kept on the table during the meal.  You should not put your hands on your lap. When dining out, never order tea or coffee during a meal.  Rather, wait until the meal has ended. When finished eating, place your fork and knife horizontally across the top of the plate, with the tines of the fork and the knife facing left.  It is impolite to cross your knife and fork. The specialties of each region differ.  In Alsace an Lorraine try choucroute garnie (sauerkraut with sausage and pork), pâté de foiegras (goose liver paste) and quiche Lorraine (pastry filled with bacon, cheese, eggs and cream).  In Brittany, crepes (with jam or Grand Marnier and sugar) are an area specialty.  Boeuf bourguinonne (beef stew with wine, carrots, onion and mushrooms) is a specialty of the Burgundy region.  In Provence, near the Mediterranean, try bouillabaisse (seafood soup) and ratatouille (a mixture of zucchini, tomatoes, eggplant, onions and peppers).

In America, about 20 percent of adults are living in poverty at any given time. In France, the comparable figure is 7.5 percent; it is 7.6 percent for Germany and 6.5 percent in Italy. Britain, with a somewhat leaner benefit system than its continental neighbors, has about 14.6 percent of its adults in poverty.

Thomas Lynn, did a study of the language used in hallway conversations. The conclusion: about 80 percent of all conversations are in English now. Companies operating across borders in Europe routinely require their employees to converse in English. On MTV Europe, about 80 percent of the DJs use English; the songs are primarily in English—

English is the language of European baseball caps, backpacks, T-shirts, and tattoos. English is the language of almost every new song performed at Eurovision.

Twenty-first-century Europe has “one of the least religious populations in the world.” In Britain, France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium, fewer than 10 percent of the population attend church as often as once a month. Only 12 percent of Britons describe themselves as “active” members of the Anglican Church. In Scandinavia, the handsome high-steepled churches that mark every city and village attract less than 3 percent of the people, and governments no longer subsidize the disestablished Lutheran Church. In Amsterdam, the Dutch Reformed hierarchy is converting cathedrals into luxury apartments to pay its bills.

More and more Europeans tend to act out what faith they have outside the official structure. They pray at home—or in the car during the morning commute. They flock to carol services at Christmas and buy CDs of religious music, which perhaps explains why records of Gregorian chant have been best-sellers in several European countries. In the same cities where churches stand empty, Islamic immigrants are building immense new mosques. The United States has more Jews than all of Europe combined.

The wealthy nations of Europe—have the world’s highest rates of children born out of wedlock. Americans who are disturbed that some 30 percent of babies in the United States are born to single mothers should perhaps be relieved they don’t live in Norway (49 percent of all births to unwed parents), Sweden (48 percent), France (41 percent), Britain (38 percent), or Ireland (31 percent). On the other hand, most of the “out-of-wedlock” children in Europe are actually living with both parents—a significant difference from the untied States, where the typical single mom doesn’t have the father around the house.

Belgium and the Netherlands both offer full legal recognition of gay marriages, and most other European countries have authorized civil ceremonies that give gay couples all the legal benefits that their heterosexual neighbors are entitled to.

It is hard to argue that twenty-first-century Europe is a less moral or caring society than the church-going United States. Yes, Americans put up huge billboards reading “Love Thy Neighbor,” but they murder and rape their neighbors at rates that would shock any European nation. Corruption in business and government

**IRELAND** **UP CLOSE**

Gaelic is an official language in both Ireland and Brussels, even though fewer than 100,000 people can speak it.

Ireland did not become a fully independent republic until 1949.  Dublin is the only major city in Ireland.

The colonial presence of British culture has produced an elaborate class system in Ireland based on education, wealth, and professional status.

The predominate unifying force in Ireland is the Roman Catholic Church, to which over 90% of the population belongs.

An economic boom during the 1960's and 1970's led to the development of a welfare state in Ireland that quickly evaporated due to an economic downturn in the 1980's.   During the 1970's over 100,000 mainly young people emigrated from Ireland constituting nearly 10% of the work force.

As the British economy goes, so goes the Irish economy.

**LUXEMBOURG** **'S CULTURE**

Luxembourgers base their sense of identity primarily on their unique language, which is Luxembourgisch.

The Luxembourg economy is heavily dominated by international banks for global companies who use the nation as a central distribution center for Europe

A very unique feature of the Luxembourg work force is that a third of it consists of commuters from Belgium, France, and Germany.  The Luxembourg government can closely regulate unemployment levels and keep out troublemakers through the use of a closely monitored work permit system.

**THE SOCIAL AND BUSINESS CULTURE OF GREECE**

Like the Dutch, Greeks excel in global shipping.

Greek companies are dominated by large family dynasties.

Greek attitudes toward government and business careers are almost identical to the Italian point of view--organizations are seen to exist solely for the benefit of their employees.

Greece is a high context culture in which business must be done on a face-to-face basis.

Under the rule of Alexander the Great, ancient Greece developed an empire that covered much of what is now the Middle East.  However, after Alexander’s death in 323 B.C., the empire began to decline, and, by 146 B.C., it became part of the Roman Empire. During World War II, the country was occupied by German and Italian forces and lost one-eighth of its population due to the war.  After the war ended and Greece was liberated, a civil war between the government and communist guerillas cost another 120,000 lives.  With aid from the U.S. , the Greek government was victorious in 1949.

Greeks like to “pass” time, not “use” time.  They may not be prompt in keeping appointments and consider it foolish to set a specific length of time for a meeting.  Foreigners are expected to arrive on time, but don’t be surprised if a Greek is a half-hour or more late.  This may partly be due to their temperament and the horrendous Athenian traffic and parking conditions.

**THE SOCIAL AND BUSINESS CULTURE OF BELGIUM**

Belgium was created in 1830 from the Catholic provinces of the Netherlands.  Flanders makes up Northern Belgium, where the Flemish speak a dialect of Dutch.  Wallonia is the Southern part of Belgium and French-speaking.  Brussels is a third distinct area where French is also spoken.  Citizens of Belgium identify first with being Walloons or Flemish, secondly as Europeans and thirdly, and Belgians.  Belgium has a weak sense of national identity and a very strong enthusiasm for a united Europe .

Like the Netherlands, Belgium is heavily dependent on international trade; Antwerp is the third largest port in the world and rival to Rotterdam as the gateway to the rest of Europe .

People in Belgium are very pragmatic and more concerned with finding solutions to problems than with philosophical principles underlying the problems.  For example, the king of Belgium solved the problem of opposing abortion legislation not by arguing his moral convictions, but rather by officially abdicating his throne for the day on which the legislature voted abortion into law.

**U.S.** **CULTURE UP CLOSE**

Honolulu , Hawaii is the southern-most capital city in the U.S.   Juno, Alaska is the western-most.

Popular USA foods which many cultures find repulsive: Corn, grits, peanut butter, marshmallows, pecan and apple pie, commercial white bread, blackeye peas.

The oldest living thing on earth is the Redwood tree named Methuselah (4700 years old).

Fast food chains have been especially quick to modify their offerings.  McDonald’s, for example, adjusts its menu for each foreign market.  It has sold beer in Germany, wine in France, mutton pot pies in Australia, and McSpaghetti in the Philippines.  Burger King in Venezuela does not use sesame seed buns, the milkshakes there are sweeter and creamier, and even the ketchup is much sweeter.  Wendy’s serves shrimp cake sandwiches in Japan.  Shaky’s sells chorizo in Mexico and squid in Japan.  Arby’s dropped its ham sandwiches from its menus in the Middle East.  Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC serves “chips” rather than “fries” in England, and has added rice and smoked chicken to its menus in Japan.  KFC also initiated one of the more unique product modifications; in order to sell its chicken in Israel, it introduced kosher chicken.

Most U.S. business people carry business cards.  However, they are not always exchanged automatically on meeting but usually only if there is some reason you want to get in touch later.

The U.S. is not particularly rank and status conscious.  Titles are not used when addressing executives.  People in the U.S. usually like to use first names soon after meeting.  Informality tends to be equated with equality.

Always make a point to be punctual as business people in the U.S. can be very time conscious.  However, arriving a few minutes late (depending on the circumstances) for a business meeting is usually not frowned upon.  People in the U.S. also tend to conduct business at a fast pace and make quick decisions although the decisions may not be final.

Decisions can be changed quickly if it appears things are not working.  Keep in mind that people in the U.S. want to accomplish the job with a minimum expenditure of time and effort.

In an office, accepting or rejecting offers of coffee is perfectly proper.  To most international visitors, the coffee served in the U.S. is a disappointing beverage.

**STATISTICS ON AMERICAN WOMEN:**

**56.1**: Percentage of students enrolled in college nationwide who are women.

**12.4**: Percentage of board seats women held at Fortune 500 companies.

**8.9**: Percentage of board seats women held in second-tier companies.

**11**: According to an analysis of Sunday morning talk shows, percentage of on-air guest ‘‘experts’’

who were women.

**20**: Percentage of top executives at major news networks who are women.

**60**: Number of women in the U.S. House of Representatives (vs. 375 men).

**13**: Number of women in the U.S. Senate (vs. 87 men).

**4**: Number of women in President Bush’s Cabinet.

**1**: Number of female acts whose albums made Billboard’s annual top 10

(Enya, whose ‘‘A Day Without Rain’’ came in at No. 8).

**18**: Number of women who appear in Premiere’s Power 2001 list of 100 most influential people in entertainment.

**0**: Percentage of the 10 highest-grossing movies that featured stories about women.

**4**: Number of women in The Sporting News’’ list of the 100 Most Powerful Sports People of the Year

(Venus Williams, at 77, is the highest-ranked woman).

**6,100**: Number of the nearly 280,000 career firefighters in the United States who are women.

**1**: Number of female authors awarded a National Book Award

(Virginia Euwer Wolff, for Young People’s Literature).

**3**: Number of women individually awarded a Pulitzer Prize (vs. 15 men).

**0**: Number of female Nobel laureates.

**2**: Women who have won the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition since it started in 1962 (Olga Kern shared the gold medal with Stanislav Loudenitch in 2001).

**192,000**: Predicted number of new breast cancer cases diagnosed in 2001.

**40,200**: Number of women expected to die of breast cancer.

**80**: Percentage of young women surveyed in 2001 who said they’d rather marry a man who is able to express his feelings than a man who makes a good living.

**27**: Percentage of women surveyed who said they spend more than five hours a week cleaning their homes.

**275**: Number of minutes the average woman spent talking on her cell phone each month

(vs. 372 minutes for the average man).

Bolivia , Ecuador , Columbia , and Peru are members of the Andean Pact.  The members of MERCOSUR (the Southern Common Market) include Brazil , Argentina , Uruguay , and Paraguay .

Most of Brazil’s 146m live within 200 miles of the coast 90% of the people live on 10% of the land.

Brazilians don’t consider themselves to be Hispanic and resent being spoken to in Spanish.

Chile’s population is 95% European.  Chile has more professional women than any other Latin American nation.

Most Hispanics use 2 surnames.  Their paternal surname is listed first followed by their maternal.

Because of its stability and tradition of democracy, Costa Rica (the name means Rich Coast) has long been known as the “Switzerland of Central America.”  The Costa Ricans (who call themselves ticos) are proud of their peaceful traditions.  Costa Rica does not even have an army.

There are several traditions about pouring wine in Chile, so it is safer for a foreigner to avoid pouring wine rather than inadvertently cause offense.  (For example, it is insulting to pour wine with the left hand, or so that the wine splashes against the far inside surface of a wineglass.)

Nepotism is the influential family member’s first obligation throughout most of Latin America.

When greeting, most Latinos expect body contact (hug, kiss, abrazo).

In Latin cultures, personalismo means that you put your trust in individuals rather than institutions or abstractions.

In most Latin countries, business colleagues rarely address one another by first name.

In most Latin American cultures, retail clerks wait on several people at the same time, so don’t feel slighted by lack of individualized attention.

Most Hispanics communicate at closer proximity than U.S. Americans.  Be careful not to pull away when talking to avoid insult.

A U.S. executive went to Chile for a final negotiating round with the owner of a major Chilean corporation.  Unfortunately, the gentleman from the U.S.A. wore a heavy gold ring with a diamond, plus a gold watch.  The Chileans interpreted this jewelry as proof that the American was in business to amass personal wealth, and furthermore had the poor taste to display it.  The Chilean contract went to an Italian firm.

In Latin cultures, shake hands with everyone, including secretaries.

Peru is very ethnically diverse, with descendants from the Incans, Europe, Japan, and China.

Argentines pride themselves on their European heritage (mainly Italian, British, Spanish and German).  There is a tendency to look down upon the native Indians.

There is no such thing as a breakfast meeting in Argentina.  Argentines keep late hours and do not conduct business early in the morning. Dinner is served about 10:00 p.m. , and later on weekends.

Foreign executives should always consider themselves at risk for kidnapping in Columbia.  Never assume that you are safe because your company is small or your position is unimportant; criminals have frequently kidnapped the wrong people.  Kidnap and ransom insurance is recommended; policies not only pay ransom but the cost of security consultants to handle negotiations and the kidnap victim’s loss of income. As the country with the most kidnappings in the world, insurance premiums for Colombia are the most expensive.

Maté is a type of tea made from the young leaves of an evergreen tree of the holly family.  The dry tea is called yerba mate.  Maté is generally served in homes and not in restaurants.  It is frequently sipped through a silver straw from a gourd, and is passed from one person to another.  People often drink it instead of coffee; it contains a good deal of caffeine.  Maté is served in a number of ways:  with sugar, anise seeds, orange peel or milk. It is enjoyed all over Argentina, but particularly in the interior, reflecting the gaucho (cowboy) heritage.

Brazil is the only country in Latin America in which Portuguese, not Spanish, is spoken.  English, German and French are also spoken by many Brazilians.  Portuguese speakers understand Spanish, but they may be offended if you deliberately speak to them in Spanish.  A visitor should try to learn and speak some Portuguese.

Brazilians tend to be blunt about personal characteristics, such as whether you are fat or thin.  These comments are meant as observations and are not intended as insults.

Brazilians tend to express their opinions forcefully.  This should not be misinterpreted as anger.

Brazilians eat continental style, holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left.  They wipe their mouths each time before drinking.  Do not use your hands to pick up food.  If you must pick up food (such as a sandwich) with your hands, use a napkin.

Carnaval (a week of feasting and celebration preceding Lent).  It is the most famous holiday in Brazil, marked by street parades, dancing, parties, drinking and costumes.

The Aztecs were the last great Central American empire, but they were conquered by the Spanish in 1591.  The Spanish, who ruled until the 19th century, virtually destroyed the Aztec culture.

Titles are considered to be an important part of business protocol.  Common titles are “Doctor,” “Professor,” “Químico” (chemist), “Ingeniero”  (engineer), “Arquitecto” (architect).  Lic. following a person’s name in writing means that he or she has a bachelor’s degree.

Spanish names usually include the mother’s family name after, not before, the father’s family name, although the father’s family name is considered the surname.  For instance, a man named José Rodriquez Ortega would be called “Señor Rodriquez.”  A married woman or widow usually uses her maiden name in the middle position.

If a businesswoman entertains a Mexican businessman at lunch, she should arrange to have the lunch in her hotel’s restaurant so she can have the check.

In the province of Québec, where the official language is French, most people are not fluent in English.  If you are traveling to Québec, a working knowledge of French is essential.  In the province of New Brunswick, about a third of the population speaks French as their first language.

In 1493, Columbus arrived in the region now known as Puerto Rico and claimed the island for Spain, calling it San Juan Bautista.  In 1508, Spanish settlers began colonizing the island, and they began importing African slaves in 1513.  During this period of colonization, the indigenous Taino tribe was virtually wiped out.

In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, the United States invaded the island of Puerto Rico and defeated the Spaniards.  Spain ceded the island to the U.S. in that year.  Puerto Rico became the first colony of the United States. In 1917, Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory, and its people were granted citizenship.  The issue of commonwealth status has been volatile and has sometimes caused violence to erupt.  In 1954, militants from Puerto Rico shot several congressmen in Washington during a session of the House of Representatives.  Today, Puerto Ricans continue to be divided over the issue of whether to request statehood or remain a commonwealth.

La Paz, Bolivia (12,000 feet) is the highest capital city in the world.

The full name of the city of El Paso is El Paso Del Norte.

Angel Falls in Venezuela is the tallest waterfall in the world.

The seven nations of Central America are:  Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

There are 31 states in Mexico.

Paraguay is the least developed nation in South America because it is landlocked.

Ecuador is the only South American nation that straddles the equator.

The following diseases brought by the Spanish conquistadors wiped out the Ameridians:

Smallpox, typhoid fever, measles, flu, and the mumps.

The 6 states Mexico yielded to the U.S. in the 1846-1848 war were:
Arizona , California , Colorado , Nevada , New Mexico , and Wyoming .

Columbia is the only South American nation with coastlines on both the Pacific and Caribbean.

The Andes cut Chile off from the rest of South America.  Isolation is a fact of life even within Chile itself; the deserts of Northern Chile are a long way from the rainy hills of Southern Chile.

Lake Titicaca (in the Andes between Peru and Bolivia) is the world’s highest lake above sea level.  (12,507 feet)

Batista ruled Cuba before Castro.

Mexico’s largest mountain range is the Sierra Madre.

If Brazil were as densely populated as Belgium, all of the world’s population would fit into Brazil.

The Christ the Redeemer statue is located on top of the mountain Corcovado in Brazil.

The Mayan civilization was located in Guatemala.

Buenos Aires, Argentina is the largest city south of the equator.

Bolivia is the only South American nation named after its founder. (Simon Bolivar)

South America has 13 nations.

The Andes are the world’s largest mountain chain.

Mexican presidents serve a single, 6-year term of office.

The 4 largest exports of Mexico are oil, cotton, shrimp, and coffee.

The Andes cut Chile off from the rest of South America.  Isolation is a fact of life even within Chile itself; the deserts of Northern Chile are a long way from the rainy hills of Southern Chile.

**MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURE UP CLOSE**

In the Middle East, eat only with your right hand.  The left hand is considered unclean.

You can determine how many courses will be served at a formal Middle Eastern banquet by observing the number of table clothes place on the table beforehand.  (A fresh tablecloth is used for each course.)

When visiting temples or mosques, always wear clothing that covers your arms and legs and remove shoes and hats.

Arabs may feel obligated to give you any item that you profusely admire.

London:  World Cup soccer promotion became an embarrassment for McDonald’s.  The chain printed a Koran scripture on throwaway bags.  Islamic officials said the sacred worlds from the flag of the Saudi world cup team should not be crumpled up and thrown away.  The words:  “There is no got but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet.”

Ramadan is a month long religious fast commemorating the revelation of God’s law to Muhammad.

Arabs use the phrase “Inshallah” (“God willing”) a lot in casual conversation to indicate that people are not in complete control of human events.

Saudi government officials are not allowed to work more than 6 hours a day.  The Saudi work week runs from Saturday through Wednesday.  Fridays are a holy day.

Arabs are not impressed by “self-made men” because of the traditional Moslem emphasis placed on family lineage.

When entering a Muslim mosque or a Buddhist temple take off your hat and leave your camera behind.

Saudis greet foreigners with a handclasp, but no hand shaking.

Never show the bottom of your foot to an Arab.  Keep both feet on the ground and avoid crossing your legs.

Moslem Brunei has no concert halls, no discos, no galleries, no nightclubs, and no liquor.  Independence from Britain came in 1984.  Half the population is under the age of twenty-one.

Mohammed was born in A.D. 570 in the Saudi Arabian city of Mecca.

Saudis speak at much closer quarters than Americans and use constant eye contact.

The 5 duties of Muslims are to recite the shahada creed; pray 5 times daily (salat); give alms (zakat); engage in fasting during the month-long Ramadan (sawm); and make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

In Arab nations, the US hand wave for good-bye means come here.

Egyptians tend to have large extended families.  They are rarely alone, and solitude is not often a chosen condition.  As a result, Egyptians gravitate toward others in public.  If you are sitting in an empty movie theater, an Egyptian will probably choose a seat next to you.  If you are seated at one end of a bench, an Egyptian is likely to sit next to you, rather than at the other end of the bench.  This is just force of habit; it does not mean that the Egyptian wishes to speak to you.

When greeting, Muslims avoid cross-gender body contact, but same-gender touching is okay.  When shaking hands, don’t pull your hand away too quickly.

The name of Allah is considered sacrosanct by many Muslims; to obscure or trivialize it is considered blasphemy.  Even disposing of anything adorned with the name of Allah is sensitive--hence the protests from Saudi officials when the Saudi Arabian flag has been printed (along with other flags) on such disposable items as paper bags.

If your meeting with a company official in a Moslem nation is frequently interrupted by drop-in visitors, just sit patiently, since Arab cultures are very polychronic (open to people in the environment).

Arabs don’t like to be alone and cluster closely together.  When entering an elevator, most Arabs will stand close to anyone else on the elevator, in contrast to Westerners who seek maximum personal space for reasons of independence.

Islam means submission to God and is a total way of life.  There is no separation of church and state as in the West.

Arabs place a great deal of power in words, which are often seen as substitutes for action.  Thus, Arabs often feel that saying the words is the same as solving the problem.

In the Arab name, Encik (Mr.) Abdul Hisham Hajii, Hajii indicates his father visited Mecca, and Hisham is his father’s last name.  He should be formally addressed as Encik Hisham, or Hajii Hasham if he has visited Mecca himself.

Through the centuries, the Kyber Pass has been a busy place.  Many invaders have entered this realm:  Cyrus the Great from Persia , Alexander the Great from Macedonia , the Huns, the Islamic Turks, and the Mongols under Genghis Kahn and Tamerlane.

Libya started in the 1980s to spend a planned $25 billion of its oil revenue to bring in water.

A firm in Taiwan shipped some drinking glasses to the Middle East.  The company used wooden crates and padded the glasses with hay.  Most of the glasses, however, were broken by the time they reached their destination.  As the crates traveled into the drier Middle East, the moisture content of the hay dropped.  By the time the crates were delivered, the thin straw offered almost no protection.

Although people all over the world now drink coffee, it is believed that Ethiopians were the first to drink it.

Sunni and Shiite are the two major Islamic sects.  Worldwide, about 11 percent of Muslims are members of the Shiite sect, and 85 percent are Sunni.  (The remaining 4 percent belong to smaller offshoots of Islam.)  Shiite groups are located primarily in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain, with minorities living in other countries throughout the region.

It is customary to use the title “Shaikh” (for a man) or “Shaikha” (for a woman) in front of the name of a member of the royal family.  “Bin” in the middle of a name means “son of.”

Formal and informal nicknames are common.  Among formal nicknames, you will find “Abu,” which means “father of” when used before the given name of the oldest son, such as “Abu Mohammed” (father of Mohammed).  Similarly, “Ibn” means “son of,” as in “Ibn Rashid” (son of Rashid).

Popular Arab dishes include beryani (rice with meat), machbous (rice, meat, tomatoes and lentils) and saloneh (mixed vegetables).  Fish and seafood are also staples.  Halwa (a starch pudding mixed with crushed cardamom seeds, saffron sugar and fat) is a traditional dessert.  Dates are served with meals.

If sitting on the floor or if crossing the legs, remember to position your feet so as not to point them directly at another person.

During Ramadan, it is impolite for non-Muslims to eat or drink in front of Muslims during daylight hours.

The most common greeting in Bahrain is “Assalam alikum” (“the peach of Allah be upon you”).  The correct reply is “Alikum essalam,” meaning virtually the same thing.

In Israel, many people observe the traditional Kosher dietary laws that prohibit milk and meat from being eaten during the same meal.  Under these laws, pork and shellfish are also forbidden at any time.

Since Jordan is part of the “Fertile Crescent” of the Middle East, it has been settled and conquered by a number of peoples.  The early settlers of the area included the Amorites, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites.  Later, the land was conquered by the Hittites, Egyptians, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans.

In Jordan, women comprise only about 10% of the work force.

The national dish of Jordan is mansaf, a large tray of rice covered with chunks of stewed lamb (including the head) and jameed (yogurt sauce).  It is eaten by hand from the serving tray. Other popular dishes include mahshi (stuffed vegetables), musakhan (chicken with onions, olive oil, pine seeds and seasonings) and meshwi or shisk kebab. Lamb and chicken are the most common meats.  Tomatoes, onions, eggplant, cabbage and other vegetables are also eaten regularly.  Coffee is important at all meals. Qahwah Saadah (Bedouin coffee) is sipped slowly from small cups.  Arabic or Turkish coffee is sweeter.  It is deliberately not stirred so as to keep the thick coffee grains at the bottom of the cup.

Arabs love children; they lavish a great deal of time and attention on them. Likewise, the elderly are greatly respected and cared for by their children.

To be able to help another member of the Arab family is considered a great honor as well as a duty.

The most common form of greeting is a handshake, especially in business. Foreign businesswomen should wait for a Kuwaiti businessman to offer his hand. Similarly, a foreign businessman should wait for a Kuwaiti businesswoman to offer her hand.

In general, Arabic names are written in the same order as English names—title, given name, middle name (patronymic) and surname (see examples below).  A Kuwaiti’s second name is his father’s name.  If an Arab’s grandfather was (or is) a famous person, he may sometimes add his grandfather’s name after his father’s name and before his surname.  Women in Kuwait adopt their husband’s name after marriage.  The terms “al” and “bin” literally mean “from” and, in practice can mean either “son of…” or “from the town of…” The female form of “bin” is “bint.”  For example the name “Dr. Mahmoud bin Sultan bin Hamad al-Muqrin” means “Dr. Mahmoud, son of Sultan, grandson of Hamad, of the house (family) of Muqrin.”  Similarly, “Princess Fatima bint Ibrahim al-Saud” means “Princes Fatima, daughter of Ibrahim, of the house of Saud.”

Kuwaitis do not speak loudly, and they tend to stand close together when conversing.  A calm demeanor is taken as a sign of intelligence.  Maintaining eye contact is also very important.  If you shift eye contact away from your host, it may be interpreted as a sign that you are not trustworthy.

Since maintaining personal honor is very important, one should avoid embarrassing or criticizing anyone.  Compromises may sometimes be necessary simply in order to maintain someone’s sense of honor.

Avoid arranging business travel during the period of Ramadan, since most businesses close during the day at this time so Kuwaitis may fast and pray.  Since the exact time of Ramadan changes every year, check if any festivals or religious holidays are coming up before arranging your visit.

Very often, the first meeting (or first few meetings) will simply be spent on polite small talk.  While they may seem banal, these preliminary meetings should be taken seriously.  During this time, your Kuwaiti counterpart will be trying to evaluate subjectively whether or not business should take place in the future.  Often, after an initial talk, your counterpart will end the meeting and will invite you to come to another meeting where the actual business discussions will be conducted.  The Kuwaiti executives will indicate when they are ready to start discussing business.

 Establishing a personal relationship of depth and trust is one of the most important elements of conducting business in Kuwait.  You should allow plenty of time for conducting transactions in Kuwait.  At times, several days may pass between meetings and it is not acceptable to close deals by phone or fax communication.

Don’t be surprised if your Kuwaiti counterparts take time to pray during a meeting.  Praying five times a day is the Islamic practice.  It is out of place to ask a Muslim to interfere with this practice; one should simply be patient.  The period of prayer usually lasts only about 20 minutes and the flow of conversation is readily picked up when the prayer has concluded.

In negotiating, a calm but firm, sincere and personal approach works best.  Kuwaiti business people do not appreciate a “hard-sell” approach or being hurried; instead, lengthy haggling almost always occurs.

Business meetings are rarely private.  It is important to be patient since there are often numerous interruptions for phone calls and visitors.  Since people wander in and out of meetings, you may be asked to deliver a presentation a number of times.

Since Arabic is a language of hyperbole, a “yes” very often means “maybe.”

Generosity is considered one of the highest values in Kuwait.  The greatest compliment you can pay your host is to acknowledge his generosity.  Similarly, when a Kuwaiti offers you a gift, it is impolite to refuse.

Rice is a basic element of the Kuwait diet.  When it is mixed with onions, it is called mashkoul; when it is mixed with lentils it is called muaddas.  Cous-cous (a grain-like pasta) is also popular.  The main spices of Kuwaiti cuisine are turmeric, ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, parsley, rosewater, pepper, saffron and ground citrus fruits.  Ground limes are used in many dishes and are called loomi.  Cucumber, tomatoes, chickpeas, eggplant, onions and olives often accompany many dishes.  Broiled lamb, barbecued fish, chicken and prawns are also common.

Kuwaiti cuisine includes Middle Eastern and European dishes, along with traditional Kuwaiti ones.  For example, samouli is a white bread, which is similar to the French baguette.  Popular dishes include kabab maswiis (ground beef or lamb served on Arabic bread with yogurt-cucumber sauce), lahm bil bayd (a deep-fried dish made with ground beef and boiled eggs), machbous (a spicy lamb dish served with rice) and basal mahshi (onions stuffed with rice and either beef or lamb).

Age is highly respected and associated with wisdom.  To increase your chances of success, it is recommended that an older person be sent to meet with prospective business partners.  Sending a younger executive may suggest to Nigerians that their business is not worthy of the attention of the elders who are presumed to head an organization.

It is best to schedule no more than two appointments a day and to allow plenty of time in between.  Nigerians do not have a rigid sense of time and punctuality is not very prevalent.  Your 8:00 a.m. appointment may not show up until 4:00 p.m. or not at all.

In Saudi Arabia, it is customary to shake hands lightly, but sincerely, with everyone in an office when meeting and when departing.  The handshake is long and often continues through the entire greeting.

It is likely that you will shake hands frequently, possibly several times a day with the sameson.  For example, whenever someone enters the room, you should shake hands.

Saudis tend to stand very close and make direct eye contact when talking to others.  This is a sign of courtesy and respect.  They may also touch often, in order to heighten communication.

Saudi women dress very modestly and foreign women should respect this custom.  Women should always completely cover their arms, legs and hair (wear a long skirt, down to the angles, and a long-sleeved blouse) and dress so as not to attract attention to their bodies.  Businesswomen should never wear pantsuits.

Be aware that people sometimes remove their shoes before entering an Arab office.  Check if there is a pile of shoes by the door and then proceed accordingly.

It is not unusual to arrive for a business meeting and find another meeting already underway.  It is also common practice for other people to interrupt or to walk in on your meeting and for the meeting to be reconvened several times.  Although this may test your patience, the Saudis have a more relaxed attitude toward appointments.  It will be necessary to tolerate frequent diversions and waiting.  It may, in fact, be impossible to conduct a private meeting.

Be aware that Saudi Arabian men do not typically socialize with other men outside of the family.  Women do not attend social gatherings.  However, from working with Westernized companies over the past 15 years, the Saudis have adapted to the practice of business entertaining.

Do not expect to find traditional Saudi restaurants.  Rather, the restaurants in Saudi Arabia are predominantly Chinese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani or Ethiopian.

No alcohol is served in Saudi Arabia.

Women should not go into restaurants alone, unless accompanied by a couple or a male relative.  Most hotels have two restaurants – one for men and one for families.  Foreign women should always eat in a family restaurant.

At meals in homes, people traditionally sit in a circle on the floor in front of a large mat with food on it. There are no individual plates.  When sitting on the floor, sit cross-legged or kneel on one knee.  Make sure that your feet are not touching the food mat and that your soles are not facing anybody.

Men and women always eat separately.

A formal Saudi meal may include khouzi (stuffed mutton garnished with almonds and eggs), fried shrimp, ragout of okra, kabsah (kebabs of lamb with vegetables and rice).  Your host will be delighted to explain the ingredients as well as the preparation of the different dishes.

At the end of the meal, you should say Bismillah (which means “Thanks to God”) or simply “Thank you.”

Appropriate dress for men is conservative, preferably lightweight, suits.  In general, people tend to cover themselves, no matter how hot the weather.  Shorts should not be worn in public.

You should be aware the Saudis pray five times a day –between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m., around noon, some time between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., at sunset and one hour after sunset (never later than 9:00 p.m.).  This schedule varies according to the time of year and the part of the country.  At prayer times, everything stops so you may want to make plans around the prayer schedule.

Be extremely careful taking photographs.  The Qur’an prohibits the depiction of the human form by graven images.  Since Saudi Arabia is the strictest Muslim country, your film may be confiscated or you may be arrested for taking a photograph that includes human figures.  You should definitely not photograph women or religious processions.

If your passport contains a “religion” category, it should not read “none.”

Never swear or use obscenities in Saudi Arabia.

Foreigners may not enter mosques in Saudi Arabia.

As throughout the Islamic world, Friday is the day of rest.

Non-Muslims are expected to refrain from eating, consuming beverages or smoking in public during Ramadan, although some restaurants stay open for foreigners, and, of course hotels serve meals.

The hottest temperature ever recorded was 136.4 in Al-Aziziya Libya.

Tel Aviv is Israel’s largest city.

Farsi the official language in Iran

The Suez Canal is 100 miles long.

Muslims and Jews don’t eat pork or fish without fins.  Hindus don’t eat beef.  Some Puerto Ricans won’t eat pineapple along with other foods.  Muslims & Hindus don’t consume alcoholic beverages.

Damascus, Syria is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world.

Same sex hand-holding is a sign of friendship with Middle-Easterners, Asians, and many Latinos.

McDonald’s recently opened its first kosher restaurant in Israel, near Tel Aviv.  And its Mecca site in Saudi Arabia serves only halal beef, slaughtered according to Islamic law.

The “Med” and the “Red” seas are connected by the Suez Cannel.

After years of interaction with both Europe and Asia , the Turkish people have incorporatedures from both areas into their life-style, customs and thinking.  Do not make the mistake of calling Turkey part of the Middle East since Turks consider themselves European.  Similarly, do not make the mistake of referring to Turks as Arabs, which they are not.

Arabs are highly sensitive to body language:

Never use the left hand for public matters (such as eating, passing out a business card, handling documents, etc.)

Don’t expose the sole of the foot/shoe

Don’t touch (back pat, shoulder tap, etc.

Never swear in public or talk about female family members