Macalester College

Country Briefs

International Class of 2017
Briefing Your Country

Disclaimer: All information is provided by students and does not necessarily represent the ideas or opinions of the ISP Office.

Americas

Brazil

Information provided by: Márcio Porto

Population: Almost 200 million; 11.32 million in São Paulo

Capital City: Brasília

Political Leaders: President: Dilma Rousseff

Religion: Catholicism; Protestantism

Fun Fact: The word "Brazil" comes from brazilwood, a tree that once grew along the Brazilian coast.

Language: Portuguese

Delicious – Delicioso

Thank You – Obrigado

Interesting Word – Saudade - "Intimate feeling and mood caused by the longing for something absent that is being missed."

Common Greeting: Men will shake each other’s hands, if a man greets a woman he will kiss her cheeks, and women will kiss each other’s cheeks.

Conversational Space: Less than one arm’s length (close contact). People in Brazil are known to be really touchy.

Hugging: Hugging is really common in Brazil, especially between good friends or family members. Hugging can occur during greeting or goodbyes, or when someone isn't doing well and could use some help.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Before middle school, Brazilian children usually call their teachers "tia / tio", which means aunt / uncle, followed by the teacher's first name. After that, we just call our teachers by their first name. The teachers are usually really friendly and caring with their students, and although we have large class sizes, the teacher usually knows everyone by name.

Manners: Making eye contact shows you are paying attention, interested and honest. Showing feelings of frustration or impatience are often seen as rude.

Punctuality: 15 or more minutes late

Traditional Breakfast: Coffee, milk, bread and jam, fresh fruit, sometimes cheese and ham
**Traditional Food and Drink:** Food - feijoada, pastel, tapioca, brigadeiro. Drinks - coffee, cachaça, caipirinha.

**Important Holidays:** Labor Day (May 1st), Independence Day (September 7th) and Christmas (December 25th)

**Famous Musician and Song:** Michel Teló - Ai Se Eu Te Pego (Oh, If I Catch You)

**Famous Celebrity:** Pelé, Ronaldo and Neymar (soccer players), Gisele Bündchen (model), Paulo Coelho (author), Helio Castroneves (race car driver) and Lula (former Brazilian president)

**Popular Sports:** SOCCER!!! Brazil's absolute favorite sport! Other popular sports are: basketball, volleyball, auto racing, martial arts, tennis and swimming.

**Language:** Spanish

**Delicious – Delicioso**

**Thank You – Gracias**

**Interesting Word –** Tocayo is the word you use to refer to someone who has the same name as you.

**Common Greeting:** Men shake hands when greeting other men (or hug depending on the relationship) and kiss once on the cheek when greeting women. Women kiss once on the cheek when greeting men and other women. A common greeting among friends is "Quiubo?", which is similar to "What's up?".

**Conversational Space:** Sometimes a little less than one arm’s length depending on the situation

**Hugging:** Hugging is common between close friends and family.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teachers are treated with respect though strictness varies by school. Usually teachers are referred to as Profesor/Profesora followed by the teacher's last name.

**Manners:** Since Colombia can be considered a hierarchical society in which a person earns respect through age and position, it is very polite in Colombia to treat your elders with respect. It is also polite to bring gifts for your hosts, like chocolates or pastries, when

**Colombia**

**Information provided by:** Juliana Arenas

**Population:** 45,700,000

**Capital City:** Bogota: 7,500,000

**Political Leaders:** President: Juan Manuel Santos

**Religion:** Roman Catholicism

**Fun Fact:** Colombia is the world's biggest source of emeralds.
visiting someone's home. It is considered rude to place your elbows on the table and not make direct eye contact when speaking to someone.

**Punctuality:** 10 minutes late

**Traditional Breakfast:** A typical breakfast might just be some eggs with "cafe con leche", but a very traditional breakfast is "calentado". Calentado literally means heated or reheated, and the dish consists of the leftover beans, plantains, rice, and meat from yesterday's dinner mixed all together.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Food: Arepa (flatbread made of corn dough), empanadas (stuffed bread/pastry), Bandeja Paisa (meal that includes steak, rice, beans and more), Ajiaco (soup from the Andes region), and Sancocho (soup/stew that varies by region). Drinks: Fresh juices made from a variety of fruits, aguardiente.

**Important Holidays:** Easter and Holy Week, Christmas, and New Years

**Famous Musician and Song:** Shakira - La tortura

**Famous Celebrity:** Carlos Vives (musician) Juanes (musician) Sofia Vergara (actress)

**Popular Sports:** Soccer and cycling

**Funny Joke:** A mother arrived to a school to talk to the principal about her son's suspension. Furious she asked, "Why have you suspended my son?". Calmly the principal responded, "He has copied another boy's test". Now even angrier the mother asked, "How do you know that it is my son that is cheating and not the other boy?". The principal turned to the mother and replied, "On all of the other questions your son's answers matched the other boy's. But on the last question when the other boy answered 'I don't know', your son's answer was "Me neither".

**Guatemala**

**Information provided by:** Alan Morales

**Population:** 14.8 million

**Capital City:** Guatemala City (1.1 million)

**Political Leaders:** President: General Otto Pérez Molina

**Religion:** Christian (Catholic and Protestant)

**Fun Fact:** It is called "Land of the eternal spring" because of its comfortable climate.

**Language:** Spanish is the official language and there are 22 Mayan Languages and one Garifuna Language.
Delicious – Delicioso
Thank You – Gracias
Interesting Word – Dicha In short, it is a benefit that is given by fate.

Common Greeting: There is a difference depending on the gender of the people exchanging the greeting. Between males it is normally a handshake followed by a hug. Between females it is normally a kiss on the right cheek followed by a hug. Between a male and a female it is a kiss on the right cheek and a hug if they are close friends. Most common greeting: ¡Qué tal!

Conversational Space: Less than one arm’s length (close contact). There is a very small concept of personal space compared to other countries.

Hugging: Very common between friends and family. Hugging someone whom you have just met is not strange.

Teacher and Student Relationship: They are referred to as "Señora" or "Señor" (Mrs. and Mr.) followed by their last name. We raise our hand before speaking in class.

Manners: Politeness is usually shown flattering the person, most commonly by telling them they are "muy amables" (very nice). Rudeness can be easily conveyed through tone only, it is very common to start a rude sentence with "Mi estimado" (my dear) in a heightened tone.

Punctuality: 15 minutes late. "Hora chapina" is the term used to refer to the convention between Guatemalans to arrive up to an hour late for a friendly event.

Traditional Breakfast: Eggs and beans with tortillas.

Traditional Food and Drink: Food: Fiambre, pepián, caldo de res, etc. Drinks: Rosa de jamaica, horchata, etc.

Important Holidays: Christmas, día de todos los santos (all saints day) and Independence Day.

Famous Musician and Song: Ricardo Arjona - "El Problema"

Famous Celebrity: Luis Von Ahn - creator of CAPTCHA Rigoberta Menchú - noble peace prize winner Erick Barrondo - fast walking Olympic medalist
Popular Sports: Football (Soccer)

Funny Joke: Pepito is at the classroom and his teacher asks him what 2+2+2 is. He replies "it depends." The teacher asks why. Pepito answers that if the sum is vertical, it is 6 but if the sum is horizontal, it is 222.

Jamaica

Information provided by: Andre Archer

Population: 2.7 Million

Capital City: Kingston - 937,700

Political Leaders: The Prime Minister is The Most Honorable Portia Simpson-Miller, Governor General is Sir Patrick Allen, head of state is the Queen of England

Religion: The main religion is Christianity. There is also the popular religion of Rastafarianism.

Fun Fact: Jamaica is the largest English Speaking Caribbean country, and the third largest Caribbean island.

Language: The official language of Jamaica is English, whereas the colloquial language spoken by everyone is Jamaican Patois (pronounced 'Patwa').

Delicious – Delicious

Thank You – Tonks/Tanks/Bless

Interesting Word – Boonoonoonous is a term of endearment used by Jamaicans to describe someone or something affectionately.

Common Greeting: During informal situations, males do a gentle fist bump with the crossing of the thumbs. Females, or males and females exchange hugs when greeting each other. In formal situations, handshakes are exchanged.

Conversational Space: One arm’s length

Hugging: Hugging is accepted only during informal situations. Depending on the relationship between males, hugging is sometimes accepted.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Teachers are addressed as 'Mister/Sir/Miss/Mrs' along with their last name. At my school, one
was required to stand when a teacher enters, and sometimes when speaking.

**Manners:** "Good Morning/Good Afternoon/Good Night" are must-dos in Jamaica, and represents common courtesy. It is considered highly offensive if these greetings are ignored.

**Punctuality:** 15 or more minutes later. Jamaicans tends to be very late, maybe an hour or two during informal meetings. However, punctuality is strictly observed for formal meetings.

**Traditional Breakfast:** Ackee and Saltfish with dumplings, breadfruit, boiled irish potato, boiled sweet potato, boiled green banana, and yam.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Traditional food(s) - Ackee and saltfish (the national dish), Callaloo and saltfish, Jerk Chicken Tradition drink - Sorrel

**Important Holidays:** Emancipation Day (August 1), Independence Day (August 6), Christmas Day, Boxing Day (December 26), New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday

**Famous Musician and Song:** Bob Marley - One Love

**Famous Celebrity:** Sean Paul, Sean Kingston, Shaggy, Jimmy Cliff, Buju Banton, Usain Bolt

**Popular Sports:** Track and Field, Football (Soccer), Cricket

**Peru**

*Information provided by: Jhader Aguad*

**Population:** 28,674,757

**Capital City:** Lima, 7 million

**Political Leaders:** President: Ollanta Humala, Prime Minister: Juan Jiménez Mayor

**Religion:** Catholic majority

**Fun Fact:** Potatoes are originally from Peru, and there are over 3,000 different varieties.

**Language:** Spanish, Quechua, and Aymara as well as many native languages.

*Delicious – Delicioso*

*Thank You – Gracias*
Interesting Word – Duende: It’s originally used to describe a mythical entity that possesses humans and creates the feeling of awe of one’s surroundings in nature. Its meaning has transitioned into referring to “the mysterious power that a work of art has to deeply move a person.”

Common Greeting: People are really affectionate, and it is very common to greet with a kiss (from men to women and women to both men and women), even if it's the first time that you meet each other. When you arrive to a new place, you have to say hello to everyone with a kiss. Nevertheless, two men don't greet with kiss, since it's frowned upon. Two male relatives could kiss in the cheek, but among friends shaking hands is more frequent.

Conversational Space: One arm's length

Hugging: Hugging is very common, especially between family and friends.

Teacher and Student Relationship: We usually call our teachers "Profe" and the relationship depends a lot of the school; in public schools it is stricter while at private schools the relationship is more informal and tight.

Manners: It is considered rude to touch other people's faces while talking. Moreover, discussions of religion and politics, and often sexuality, should be handled with great tact. Furthermore, calling other Peruvians by the derogative racial terms of "cholo" or "indio" could be frowned upon.

Punctuality: 15 or more minutes late. Peruvians are generally really unpunctual.

Traditional Breakfast: Usually have a strong breakfast in the mornings, which includes tons of bread, milk and eggs. Fruit juices and coffee are really common. Sometimes, we heat the previous day's lunch to eat as a "reca lento".

Traditional Food and Drink: Foods: Peruvian Food is really famous, delicious and diverse. Dishes like Ceviche and Causa Limeña represent the Peruvian Coast; Chupe de Camarones and Pachamanca represent the Peruvian Andes and, Juanes and Tacacho with Cecina represent the Peruvian Amazon. Drinks: The Pisco Sour is Peru’s national drink and is made using Pisco brandy, lemons, sugar water, egg whites, ice and finished with bitters. Peruvians also like to drink Inca Cola, which is our national soda, and Chicha Morada, which is made from purple corn and it's as ancient as the Incas themselves.

Important Holidays: Most important holidays are basically related with religion, such as Christmas, "Semana Santa" (Holy Week) and the Lord of Miracles day on October 31st. Fiestas Patrias (Peruvian National Holiday) on July, 27th, 28th and 29th are also well celebrated in the country.
Famous Musician and Song: Musicians: Juan Diego Florez - Pervuvian Tenor Los Saicos - First Latin American proto-punk band Yma Sucam - Peruvian Soprano Songs: La Flor de la Canela El Cónor Pasa

Famous Celebrity: Mario Vargas Llosa (Nobel Literature Prize winner 2012), Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (UN Secretary General 1982-1991), Mario Testino (Photographer Claudia Llosa), (Film Director and Oscar nominee), Saint Martin de Porres Gaston Acurio (Chef), Kina Malpartida (Box Champion)

Popular Sports: Volley, surf and box are our most outstanding sports; however, football is among the most popular.

Funny Joke: Most of Peruvians don't live in Machu Picchu, which wasn't built by the Mayans. Also we're not a province of Mexico. We don't have llamas as pets, and we do eat Alpacas, which are similar to llamas.

ASIA

Cambodia

Information provided by: Sowinta Kay and Vimuolea Hang

Population: 14.95 million

Capital City: Phnom Penh, 2,301,725

Political Leaders: King: Norodom Shihamoni and Prime Minister: Hun Sen.

Religion: 95% Buddhist and 5% Christian, Muslim, and other

Fun Fact: Cambodia has many temples, including the great Angkor Wat.

Cambodia went through 4 years of genocide. For more information you can go to a website Vimuolea made in her sophomore year of high school: http://thekhmerrougeregime.weebly.com/

Language: Khmer is the official language while many regional dialects and native languages exist in some provinces.

Delicious – Chgnay

Thank You – Orkun
Common Greeting: We bow with both palms touched. There are also level of putting our hands dedicating to whom we are greeting, for example, for friends, the hands should be at the chest level, and for older-aged people, it should be at nose level.

Conversational Space: One arm’s length between men and women.

Hugging: It is not normal to hug, especially between men and women. It is usually considered as being against culture. Women and men are not allowed to touch each other. Though, nowadays, mostly only traditional old people think in that way as teenagers are too westernized now. Cambodians only hug people who are either really close to you or a family member.

Teacher and Student Relationship: We call our teachers as Professor + name to show respect. In the local government schools, students call their teachers, "Lok Kru (male)" or "Neak Kru (female)" which means Mr. or Mrs. teacher. Students usually stand before speaking.

Manners: When walking in front of elderly people or higher position people, we should bow a bit and when we meet older people, we should greet them always. By making too loud noise when there are visitors, it is rude and there are many more, mainly about how people use their language as we have level of words that shows respecting older people. Touching the head of an older person is considered to be rude or offensive.

Punctuality: 10 minutes early

Traditional Breakfast: Rice or noodles or Porridge or Kuy teav (glass noodles- similar to the Vietnamese Pho but the broth tastes slightly different).

Traditional Food and Drink: Amok (Fish dish), Prohok and coconut or palm drink. Prahok- very salty fermented fish. You don't actually EAT this by itself but it is a necessary ingredient when you cook most of the Cambodian dishes.

Important Holidays: Khmer New Year (mid April), Water Festival and Pchum Ben.

Famous Musician and Song: Sen Sisamouth
Famous Celebrity: If maddox (Angelina Jolie’s adopted son) is considered as a celebrity, that would be it.

Popular Sports: Badminton, Soccer, Khmer Boxing (Labok Katoah)
(The People's Republic of) China

Information provided by: Yixuan Yang, Di Cui, Huichang Zhao, Qian Leixin, Liu Ming, Yi Chunyu, Qiong Yang, Nuoya Wu, Tang Hongyi, Yifan Gong, Siyan Zhang, Yifei Sun, Yin Zun, Jiayin Qu, Liu Xinyu, Yi Ren, Zhenyu Zuo, Lujia Deng

Population: 1,353,821,000

Capital City: Beijing

Political Leaders: Prime Minister Keqiang Li and President Jingping Ping

Religion: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity. Many people are not religious.

Fun Fact: The world's most populous country. It is the single-party governed country. China is the world's second-largest country by land area, and the third or fourth largest by total area, depending on the definition of total area.

Language: Mandarin Chinese is the official language while there are many other dialects.

Delicious – 美味 (Měiwèi) or 好吃 (Hǎochī)

Thank You – 谢谢 (Xièxiè)

Interesting Word – 缘分 (Yuánfèn) is hard to translate well into English. It means 'meant for each other' and it can be used when a couple is still together when they've confronted with a lot of difficulties.

Common Greeting: Chinese hardly kiss or bow in the public but they tend to shake hands with each other especially when two people meet for the first time. Friends may hug each other after not seeing for a long time.

Conversational Space: One arm’s length

Hugging: Hugging is common between two close friends and intimate couples when they meet each other or they're going to leave. They hug to show they miss someone or to wish them well, but people do not see hugging as a way of saying hi.

Teacher and Student Relationship: We tend to call our teachers like this: If my teacher's name is Yixun Li, I would call her 'teacher Li'. Calling their names straight is not polite. We do stand up when we answer questions, and we are also required to raise our hands before we talk first. I think the relationship between teachers and students is pretty serious in China. We hardly treat each other as friends.

Manners: Smiling and saying hi are helpful to show politeness in China. But saying dirty words and spitting is very rude. Too much
close contact may be considered offensive, especially among strangers.

**Punctuality:** 5 minutes early as late arrival is not polite

**Traditional Breakfast:** noodles or porridge or steamed bread and eggs with milk. Soybean, milk, and wontons.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Rice, pepper, vegetables like cabbages, beans and cucumbers, meat like beef, lamb, fish and pork. We drink beer, all kinds of wine, soda, and fruit juices but personally I love mineral water. Hot Pot, bean jelly, and dumpling. Syrup of plum and soya-bean milk.

**Important Holidays:** The Spring Festival, the Mid-autumn Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Lantern Festival.

**Famous Musician and Song:** Jay Chow, Qi Li Xiang

**Famous Celebrity:** Enlai Zhou, Confucius. Li Bai, a famous poet from Tang dynasty.

**Popular Sports:** table tennis, Swimming, pingpong, basketball and badminton.

**Funny Joke:** Doc. Shi: "Fortunately, I am stone scholar, if I were a tile scholar I would surely have my bones broken to pieces." ("Shi" in Chinese means “stone”, but also a typical family name. In the joke, the speaker’s family name is “Shi")

**India**

*Information provided by: *Pradyut Bansal, Raghu Aggarwal, Mugdha Shidhaye

**Population:** 1.27 billion; 13.8 million in Mumbai

**Capital City:** New Delhi, 12 million

**Political Leaders:** President: Pranab Mukherjee. Prime minister: Manmohan Singh

**Religion:** There are several religions, some of them being: Hinduism, Muslim, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism

**Fun Fact:** There are approximately 450 different languages spoken here.

**Language:** Official languages: Hindi and English and each state has its own dominant language

Delicious – svadisht

Thank You – dhanyavad
**Interesting Word** – An interesting word is 'Jugaad'. India is a country with modest resources and people fail to get the most basic amenities. Jugaad, then, is a word that loosely translates to something that is a compromise, something that will get the work done with the scant resources at our disposal. This has led people to strap on diesel engines onto anything with wheels and make travel slightly easier. It speaks a lot about us; we make the best out of a bad situation and survive.

**Common Greeting:** Join hands or bow down and touch the feet of your elders. Amongst friends shaking hands and a hug.

**Conversational Space:** One arm’s length

**Hugging:** Any time between friends and relatives. It is very common. Hugging is uncommon between opposite sexes if they are not well acquainted with each other. Shaking hands and saying “namaste” shows more respect. Hugging is seen as an informal activity and is between friends. We are a community that believes in sticking with our parents so hugging people in the family is common.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** It varies from school to school. But in my school we called them Mr. X or Mrs. Y. In most schools they are called: sir, ma'am or miss and we stand while talking to them.

**Manners:** Politeness is shown by treating others with respect. Slamming the door shut, abruptly hanging up, and not showing any interest can be considered offensive.

**Punctuality:** 5 minutes early

**Traditional Breakfast:** Tea with some snacks

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Too many to list. Usually dal, a vegetable and roti

**Important Holidays:** Republic day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanthi

**Famous Musicians:** Lata Mangeshkar and Kishor Kumar

**Famous Celebrity:** Sachin Tendulkar, Amitabh Bachan, Shahrukh Khan.

**Popular Sports:** Cricket, hockey, football

**Funny Joke:** There is a news anchor here called Arnab Goswami. He is known to go overboard and scream at anyone who comes to his show. "THE NATION NEEDS AN ANSWER" seems to be his argument for everything. Lots of memes are on the internet about him and it's fashionable to poke fun at him these days. "If you ever see a picture of Arnab Goswami with a closed mouth, that camera has a good shutter speed!" is among lots of funny digs at him.
Japan

Information provided by: Midori Yoshino

Population: 127.8 million
Capital City: Tokyo – 13.23 million
Political Leaders: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
Religion: Buddhism

Fun Fact: Japan’s average TOEFL score is one of the lowest in the world.

Language: Japanese. Regional languages are also referred to as “Japanese”

Delicious – Oishi (おいしい)
Thank You – Arigato (ありがとう)

Interesting Word – Itadakimasu (いただきます) = Thank you for the food. We’ll eat it well.

Common Greeting: We bow. Among friends, we wave at each other. We say “Good morning” in the morning, but other than that, we don’t say hi to each other if it is close friends.

Conversational Space: One arm’s length

Hugging: It is common between women more than between men, but it still happens less in Japan than in the U.S. Moreover, it is rarely seen between a woman and a man unless they are a couple.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Some teachers are referred to by name, but very few. Most of the time, we stand before speaking.

Manners: Polite: Talk using respectful language. Rude or offensive: Yawn without covering your mouth.

Punctuality: 5 minutes early

Traditional Breakfast: White rice, Miso soup, and eggs

Traditional Food and Drink: Sushi, Soba (Buckwheat noodles), Miso Soup, Green tea

Important Holidays: New Year’s Day (January 1), Girls’ Festival (March 3), Constitution Day (May 3), Boys’ Festival (May 5)

Famous Musician and Song: Musicians: Yoko Ono, Hikaru Utada, B’z Song: Sukiyaki (Ue o muite aruko)

Famous Celebrity: Takeshi Kitano, Ken Watanabe

Popular Sports: Baseball, Soccer, Sumo
**Funny Joke:** Q. The Japanese superhero “Ultraman” has never had cup noodles. Why is that? A. Because he can only stay on earth for 3 min. (It takes 3 min to cook cup noodles.)

**Myanmar**

*Information provided by: Thet Win Htut*

**Population:** 50 Million

**Capital City:** Nay Pyi Taw although Yangon is the largest city

**Political Leaders:** President U Thein Sein

**Religion:** Buddhism

**Fun Fact:** The country is non-existent to most Westerners.

**Language:** Burmese

- **Delicious** – Sar Kaung Dal
- **Thank You** – Kyay Zu Tin Bar Dal
- **Interesting Word** – "Ar Nar Par Dal" is a respectful way of declining someone's offer, sort of like "I am grateful, but no thanks."

**Common Greeting:** Physical contact is not common. Public displays of affection are usually frowned upon. At local teashops, people make kissing sounds to call the waiters. "Mingalabar" is a simple common greeting.

**Conversational Space:** More than one arm's length

**Hugging:** Hugging between partners of different sex is usually frowned upon in public.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teachers stand just below Buddha and parents. Students annually give respects to and ask for blessings from teachers the same way they worship Buddha.

**Manners:** People smile here a lot to show politeness. Using two hands to give and receive is another way. Clicking your tongue, slapping palm against palm, and bending your elbows at the waist are gestures used when insulting someone.
Traditional Breakfast: Prata, Mohinga

Traditional Food and Drink: Floating snackballs, coconut desserts, sago, sticky rice

Important Holidays: New Year Water Festival, Waso Robe Ceremony,

Famous Musician and Song: "Taung Pan Tal" - Reason

Famous Celebrity: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Bogyoke Aung San,

Popular Sports: Chin Lone (Bamboo Ball)

Funny Joke: satirical jokes about the poor electricity and infrastructures

Pakistan

Information provided by: Beenish Riaz

Population: 177 million; Karachi: 23,500,000

Delicious – Mazaydar

Thank You – Shukriya

Interesting Word – The different ways to say "you": "Tum" is informal "Aap" is formal

Common Greeting: We greet with a simple handshake and with the words "Assalam Wailiqun" meaning "Peace be with you". With friends smiling and waving suffices, if close and of the same sex they can hug.

Conversational Space: One arm's length

Hugging: Men and women not related cannot hug generally. Between friends hugging is common.
Teacher and Student Relationship: Teachers are spoken to if male using Sir before the last name and if female using Miss before the last name.

Manners: Respect known as "adab" is normally paid to elders by speaking only when spoken to and using certain polite forms of all words and grammar.

Punctuality: 15 or more minutes late

Traditional Breakfast: Halwa Puri

Traditional Food and Drink: Biryani, Nihari, Lassi, Kheer, Karai, Haleem

Important Holidays: Eid and Independence Day

Famous Musician and Song: Multiple ghazal singers like Rahat Fateh Ali Khan with the song "Dagabaaz"

Famous Celebrity: Reema (Actress), Imran Khan (Ex-Cricketer), Atif Aslam (Singer, Shahid Afridi (Cricketer)

Popular Sports: Cricket, Football and Hockey

Funny Joke: "Durse dekha to anday ubalreh the, karibh jakhe dekha to ganjay uchalrethey." meaning "Seen from afar we thought there were boiling eggs but upon reaching there we saw that there were bald people dancing."

South Korea

Information provided by: EunGyeong Shin 신은경, Minsuk Kang and Sung Eun Hong

Population: 48,955,203

Capital City: Seoul 서울: 10,442,426

Political Leaders: President: Geun-hye Park (박근혜)

Religion: Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism

Fun Fact: The Korean alphabet is the only alphabet of which the founder is known! King SeJong invented it for the low class people during 1446. Each letter resembles the oral shapes of each pronunciation. Seoul has the most extensive subway system in the world. There is no tipping in South Korea (Which I love the most about my country).

Language: Korean (most people use standard language, but there are lots of different dialects in the countryside)

Delicious – Ma-shi-suh!

Thank You – Go-ma-wo

Interesting Word – Jeong – A stronger feeling than friendship, but less passionate than love.
**Common Greeting:** We should bow when we are greeting older people but when greeting friends we just wave our hand. Shaking hands is also common but only for polite and formal circumstances. Korea has traditional ways of bowing although they are only used during special ceremonies these days.

**Conversational Space:** One arm’s length. Koreans do not care about "personal space" that much; we like to be close.

**Hugging:** Hugging is common but not as much as it is in Western countries. Only family, lovers and close friends hug each other.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** We usually don't call teachers by their name, but just address them as 'teacher'. Teachers call their students by name, but since they cannot memorize everyone we stitch our nametags on our shirts.

**Manners:** We bow and use different vocabularies when we speak. Most rude actions are similar to those in America, but something unordinary is that you should turn your head when you drink with an older person; looking right into their eyes when drinking can be considered rude.

**Punctuality:** 5 minutes early

**Traditional Breakfast:** A bowl of rice, soup, and side dishes

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Kimchi (Korean pickle), Bulgogi (seasoned meat), Bibimbap (mixed rice). As for drinks: Soju, Makgulli and Shikhye

**Important Holidays:** Lunar new years day, Independence day and Lunar Thanksgiving.

**Famous Musician and Song:** Psy-Gangnam style!

**Famous Celebrity:** KiMoon Ban (UN secretary general), Psy (singer), JunHo Bong (Movie director), JiSung Park (Soccer Player), Yuna Kim (Figure Skater)

**Popular Sports:** Soccer, volleyball, badminton, basketball and TaeGwonDo (Korean traditional martial art)

**Funny Joke:** Why is Korean toilet paper so big? A: Because it's HUGE-ey! (hugey means tissue)

**Thailand**

**Information provided by:** Chaturapat Chaowalit (Win)

**Population:** 69.52 million (2011)

**Capital City:** Bangkok: 8.281 million (2010)
**Political Leaders:** King: Bhumibol Adulyadej, Queen: Sirikit, Prime Minister: Yingluck Shinawatra

**Religion:** Buddhism

**Fun Fact:** The full name of Bangkok is the longest name of a place in the world. The full name goes "Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Ayuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit."

**Language:** Thai (Standard thai) Isan, Northern Thai, Southern Thai, etc. (Regional)

- Delicious – (Aa-Rhoi)
- Thank You – (Kob-khun)
- Interesting Word – (Kreng-jai). The closest English word in term of the meaning would be "to be considerate."

**Common Greeting:** We "wai." "a slight bow, with the palms pressed together in a prayer-like fashion."

**Conversational Space:** One arm's length; It depends actually; age, sex, relationship, the appropriateness.

**Hugging:** Hugging is viewed as a way to indicate love, affection. It's not very commonly used in Thailand though, in term of greeting.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Students respect teachers highly. Teachers are referred by their first name, every Thai person is actually, or nickname with the "Khun-kru" in the front as the way to address them. We raise hands to ask questions, and generally we don't need to stand before speaking.

**Manners:** The "wai" is a good one. It shows respect and politeness. Something to keep in mind about the Thai culture would be the belief that the head is considered the highest part of the body, therefore, it would maybe be considered offensive to touch or play with Thai people's heads. The belief goes the same with the feet, the lowest part, so it's not appropriate to pass objects to other people using the feet, in my country.

**Punctuality:** 5 minutes early

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp Soup), Som Tum (Spicy Green Papaya Salad), Tom Kha Kai (Chicken in Coconut Soup), Pad Thai (Thai style Fried Noodles), Khao Pad (Fried Rice), Gaeng Keow Wan Kai (Green Chicken Curry), Kai Med Ma Muang (Chicken with Cashew Nuts), Mussaman, etc. (mostly curry)

**Drink:** Thai iced tea.

**Traditional Breakfast:** Khao Tom (boiled rice) and Khao Lard Gaeng (rice with various Thai food) are pretty popular. Nam Tao Hoo (fresh soy bean tofu milk) and Patongo (Thai doughnut), Dim Sum Dumplings, etc.
**Important Holidays:** Songkran Festival! It's the Thai New Year! It's a great opportunity for a family reunion, and a great water-fighting event! We celebrate it on April 13-15.

**Famous Musician and Song:** (Lao-suuk-fung) by Thongchai McIntyre.

**Famous Celebrity:** Patchrapa Chaichua, Araya Alberta Hargate, Mario Maurer, Nadech Kugimiya

**Popular Sports:** Boxing, Soccer, Badminton, Volleyball

**Funny Joke:** It may need a little bit of Thai language skill to get this one. "Why are Thai cats skinny? Because no matter what people keep feeding them, they always said Mai-ow" Mai-ow, which means "no, I don't want it."

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**Vietnam**

**Information provided by:** Duc Nguyen and Ngan Thi Thuy Nguyen

**Population:** 92.4 million

**Capital City:** Hanoi: 6.4 million

**Political Leaders:** Prime Minister: Nguyen Tan Dung, President: Truong Tan Sang

**Religion:** Buddhism

**Fun Fact:** 92% of vehicles on Vietnamese roads are motorbikes

**Language:** Vietnamese

- **Delicious** – Ngon
- **Thank You** – Cảm ơn
- **Interesting Word** – "tôi", "tớ", "tao", "minh", "trăm" are all "I" in English but each one demonstrate a different specific gesture.

**Common Greeting:** Formal greetings are combinations of shaking hands and using formal words like "ạ" at the very end of the sentences. Greetings among friends are more casual, usually made by waving hands slightly and saying "chào".

**Conversational Space:** Less than one arm's length (close contact)

**Hugging:** Hugging between men is acceptable if two men are close friends and haven't seen each other for a long time. Hugging between women is always acceptable. Hugging between men and women is rarely accepted in public.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teachers are "god-like" and students must obey them by all means. Teachers are always
referred by "thầy" or "cô" before their name. Students usually stand while talking to their teachers.

**Manners:** Children are considered polite when they fold their arms slightly, bow their heads, and add the word "ạ" in the end of every sentence. Adults shake hands and smile to show their politeness. Not performing such gestures can be considered rude or uneducated.

**Punctuality:** 15 or more minutes late. Unacceptably late.

**Traditional Breakfast:** Xôi (sticky rice) or phở

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Phở, bánh cuốn, nem, cha cά, bún chả, bánh chưng, canh mắm

**Important Holidays:** Tết (Lunar New Year)

**Famous Musician and Song:** Musicians: Trịnh Công Sơn, Khắc Việt, Văn Cao, Songs: Tiền Quân Ca, Bức Thư Tình Thứ Hai, Ước gì,

**Famous Celebrity:** Trần Đức Việt (vlogger), Bảo Thy (singer), Ngọc Trinh (model), HKT (boy-band), Hà Anh, Thành Lộc (actor), Xuân Hinh (comedian), Johnny Trí Nguyên

**Popular Sports:** Football (soccer), table-tennis, badminton

**Funny Joke:** Không học thì cấp đặt ra mà ăn à?

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**Africa**

**Ghana**

Information provided by:
Nicole Seyram Manu

**Population:** 24.97 million

**Capital City:** Accra: 4,010,054

**Political Leaders:** President: John Dramani Mahama

**Fun Fact:** Ghana is geographically closer to the center of the world than any other country.

**Language:** English (official) Ga, Twi, Ewe, Fante and Nzema are regional

Delicious – eye de
Thank You – me da ase

Common Greeting: Ghanaians commonly greet by a handshake and snapping of each other's fingers.

Conversational Space: One arm's length

Hugging: Hugging is common among age mates, but not between people of different age groups.

Teacher and Student Relationship: The most common relationship is formal. Students normally stand and greet the teacher when he enters the classroom and they stand to answer questions.

Manners: Akan (the largest ethnic group in Ghana) greet from left to right and greet with the right hand. When done otherwise it is considered to be rude.

Punctuality: It is customary to arrive on time but occasionally some Ghanaians arrive late to events.

Traditional Breakfast: Light breakfast: Kooko (a porridge) and koose (a pastry made from beans and flour). Heavy breakfast: waakye (rice and beans)

Traditional Food and Drink: Traditional drinks: pito, asana, sobolo. Traditional food: eto, kpekple, Tuo-Zafi

Important Holidays: Christmas holiday, Independence day (March 6th), Farmers day, Easter holiday, Eid-ul-Fitr

Famous Musician and Song: Osibisa

Famous Celebrity: Kate Tachie-Menson (Model), Majid Michel (Actor)

Popular Sports: Soccer

Lesotho

Information provided by: John Mohoang

Population: 2.1 Million

Capital City: Maseru: 22 thousand

Political Leaders: King - Letsie III, Prime Minister - Motsoahae Thomas Thabane

Religion: Christianity

Fun Fact: Though Lesotho is a tiny country, it has plenty of fresh, clean water.

Language: English and Sesotho (both official languages)
Delicious – Monate

Thank You – Kea Leboha

Interesting Word – Ubella - This is a verb that describes the action of an eagle when it has its claws out and descents rapidly, usually to get a chicken or chick to prey on it.

Common Greeting: We don't bow. Kissing is very common to show a close relationship between the two people; it is commonly used either by close family relatives or people in an intimate relationship (though not very publicly). Shaking of hands is commonly used in casual greetings, usually between male friends.

Conversational Space: One arm's length but depends on the age, gender and relationship between the two talking

Hugging: Hugging between two males is a bit awkward though males who are very close to one another do hug each other when they meet, usually after a long time. With females, hugging is generally not a big deal.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Teachers are treated with all respect in my country. Teachers are usually referred to by title followed by their surname e.g. Sir or Mr so & so. Usually students stand before speaking in class and also stand to greet a teacher when they enter the class.

Manners: Actions that show politeness include - Greeting the elderly in one's neighborhood when they meet. - Talking to the elderly without one's hands in the pockets - Removing one hat/cap off when greeting the elderly - Males removing their hats/caps off when eating. Actions that are considered offensive include - Going indoors with a hood on and whistling at night

Punctuality: Exactly on time

Traditional Breakfast: Bread and tea

Traditional Food and Drink: Papa (stiff maize porridge). Home brewed beer - usually for men

Important Holidays: Moshoeshoe's day, King’s Birthday, Independence day

Famous Musician and Song: Stlofa - Senkatana (Song name)

Famous Celebrity: Counter Force Ramainoane

Popular Sports: Soccer

Libya

Information provided by: Almutaz Alnaas

Population: 6 million

Capital City: Tripoli
**Political Leaders:** Prime Minister Ali Zidan

**Religion:** Islam

**Fun Fact:** Libya is a big producer of oil to Europe and has the longest shore on the Mediterranean.

**Language:** Arabic Amazighi

- Delicious – Ladeed
- Thank You – Shukran

**Common Greeting:** People often shake hands and shake Alsalam Alikom which means “Peace be upon you”

**Conversational Space:** One arm’s length

**Hugging:** Hugging is not common between individuals who are not close friends or relatives.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teachers are not referred to by names and they like to keep the distance in the relation between them and the students.

**Manners:** shaking hands with a nice smile while greeting being lowered while talking to older people or parents

**Punctuality:** 10 minutes late

**Traditional Breakfast:** salad, eggs, coffee or tea, bread, tuna

**Traditional Food and Drink:** couscous, pasta, rice, bazeen green tea, Turkish coffee

**Important Holidays:** religious Holidays named Eid one after Ramadan and the other after hajj which is when people go to Mecca

**Famous Musician and Song:** Mohammed Hassan

**Popular Sports:** Soccer, Beach volleyball. Swimming

**Senegal**

Information provided by: Ibrahima Dieye and Yacine Diouf
Population: About 14 million

Capital City: Dakar, 4 million

Political Leaders: President: Macky Sall

Religion: Islam (95 percent of the population)

Fun Fact: Wrestling is a popular traditional Sport practiced by young people.

Language: French is the official language. However, we have national languages such as Wolof, Sérère, Pular, and Diola.

Delicious – Thioukhonneu
Thank You – Dieureudieuf

Common Greeting: In general, people shake hands and inquire about casual things. However, if they are greeting a group of people they just say Assalamou Aleykoum, which is an Arabic expression meaning “peace be with you”. The old men will mostly shake hands and ask about the family and life in General. The women will ask the same questions without shaking hands and would sometimes kiss. The youths would mainly use dialects that people of my age only know. We sometimes kiss to say hi. It is nowadays very common.

Conversational Space: There is no social convention about this. However, between people of mixed genders a much greater space is maintained.

Hugging: It is common among friends of the same gender. Hugging between people of opposite genders is not very appreciated.

Teacher and Student Relationship: People use Mr/Mrs followed by the surname of the teacher.

Manners: To show politeness people give up their seats to the elderly and let other people drink first before serving oneself.

Punctuality: 5 minutes early

Traditional Breakfast: Bread, butter, coffee, nutella

Traditional Food and Drink: Food: Ceebou Dieun (rice and fish), Yassa, Thiéré Drink: Bissap

Important Holidays: Aid Al Fitr, Aid Al Adha, Gamou (birthday of the Prophet Mouhammad), Maggal (celebrating a famous religious guide)

Famous Musicians: Youssou Ndlour, Baba Maal, Thione Seck


Funny Joke: There was a man named is Cheikh. Everybody knew and loved Cheikh who was actually quite a nice guy. He was
listening to radio and when the obituary started he heard that a guy named Cheikh died. He threw the radio away and started crying like he never did. One of his friends in the neighborhood came and asked him: Cheikh why are you crying? He replied that he was dead and his family was hiding it from him.

**Zimbabwe**

*Information provided by:* Peace Madimutsa and Caroline Chinhuru

**Population:** 12.75 million people

**Capital City:** Harare, Population: 2 million

**Political Leaders:** President Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai.

**Religion:** Christianity and traditional African religions.

**Fun Fact:** Home of Victoria Falls or “The Smoke That Thunders,” one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

**Language:** Zimbabwe has 16 official languages, with the main ones being - Shona, Ndebele and English

- **Delicious** – zvinonaka
- **Thank You** – ndatenda

**Interesting Word** – "Mutiusinazita" It is a name of a certain tree, and it directly translates to the tree with no name.

**Common Greeting:** When people meet, they shake hands. Then men make a special clap called 'gusvu' as a sign of deep respect. Women do a special bow called 'kutyora nzura' as a sign of respect as well. To a friend, one says, "Sei sei!"

**Conversational Space:** One arm’s length depending upon the situation.

**Hugging:** Common between friends and family and at special occasions to exemplify being together.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teachers are very respectable figures that are considered to be parents by their students. They have the right to beat and practice corporal punishment on students in most schools. One never refers to teachers using first names.

**Manners:** Hitting your chest and bowing your head or taking off your hat when greeting is polite.

It is rude to make a hissing noise with your tongue in front of someone or to throw your arm towards someone motioning them to go away.
**Punctuality:** Highly dependent on the situation, but it is common to be 15 or more minutes late. Generally time is not a very important thing, things like weddings and funerals can be delayed by hours.

**Traditional Breakfast:** "Bota" - a thick grain porridge as an early meal. Then tea, bread and a salty component, e.g. eggs or beans.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Sadza is a traditional food and Mahewu is a traditional drink.

**Important Holidays:** Easter, Christmas, Independence Day, Heroes Day, and Defense Forces Day

**Famous Musician and Song:** Neria, by Oliver Mutukudzi

**Famous Celebrity:** Kirsty Coventry and Henry Olonga

**Popular Sports:** Soccer, Rugby, Cricket, and Volleyball

**Funny Joke:** The man who was President to my Great Grand father is the same man still president now to my brothers’ children; #ruled5generationsofmyfamily

The president and the Prime Minister (Leaders of the two main opposing parties) are out at a picnic with their respective wives, when the well spoken president asks his wife to pass the honey; "Honey, please pass the honey." Not wanting to be outdone the Prime Minister asks his wife to pass the sweet potatoes (Mbabaira), "Mbambi (Poti), please pass the mbambairas (Potatoes)."

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**Europe**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Information provided by:** Ana Dilber

**Population:** 3,839,737

**Capital City:** Sarajevo: 430,000

**Political Leaders:** Chairmen of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Zeljko Komsic, Member of the Presidency: Bakir Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency: Nebojsa Radmanovic, Prime Minister: Vjekoslav Bevanda

**Religion:** Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism

**Fun Fact:** The war that has been lead twenty years ago in my country is still believed to exist by some countries.
Language: Three languages are official (Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian), while there are two official scripts (Latin and Cyrillic script)

Delicious – ukusno

Thank You – hvala

Interesting Word – bolan: a usual saying in my country and it means hey you, but still the translation is not nearly correct.

Common Greeting: Usually shaking hands or the combination of the kiss and hands shaking are the ways of greeting. The most common greeting among friends in my language is cao, hey, or dobar dan (good day), depending on how close this friend is

Conversational Space: Less than one arm's length (close contact)

Hugging: Hugging is very common, and people who know each other and are not necessarily friends usually hug as well. Still, hugging is more often between two women or a man and a woman, but not usually between a man and a man.

Teacher and Student Relationship: In my previous schools the teachers were referred to by their last name plus Mr, Miss, and I would have to be standing while talking, while in UWC I had friendly relationship with my teachers and I would usually refer to them by their name only.

Manners: To be polite: Standing up in the bus so the old person can sit, saying hi to the person you know. Rude: insults, swearing, not greeting people you know.

Punctuality: 5 minutes late

Traditional Breakfast: Cornflakes or a slice of bread with cheese and ham

Traditional Food and Drink: Cevapi, pies, sarma (turkish food), baklava (turkish food), fish, meat in all kind of ways. Coffee and wine

Important Holidays: May 1 - Labor Day; March 1 - Independence Day 7.1. and 25.12. - Orthodox and Catholic Christmas Eid - dates change 1.11. All Saints Day

Famous Musician and Song: The most famous type of music is sevdalinka, which is the mix of Turkish and Bosnian music. It is traditional song that describes love, loss, the death and is mostly sad. There is no specific famous musician in B&H which is know all around the world.


Funny Joke: There are plenty of the jokes from my country, made up with the two Bosnian national joke idols Mujo and Haso.
"Question: How many countries are in Europe? Answer: Three
Question: Which three? Answer: The European Union, EU
candidate countries, and Bosnia and Herzegovina."

**Croatia**

Information provided by: Doroteja Postonjski

Population: 4.2 million

Capital City: Zagreb: 1.2 million

Political Leaders: Prime Minister: Zoran Milanovic

Religion: Catholic, Orthodox, Islam

Fun Fact: Delicious food and amazing homemade wine. Glagolic
letter which was used before Latin alphabet.

Language: Croatian

Delicious – Ukusno!

Thank You – Hvala!

Interesting Word – Friži, means scars but left after a
tough and a deep injury. The word is from southern
dialect of Croatian language.

Common Greeting: Kiss, shake hands and hug

Conversational Space: One arm's length

Hugging: Common, especially between friends and family or even
close family friends, neighbors.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Referred by prof’s surname and
stand before speaking

Manners: Shaking hands and looking directly in the eyes of a
person you are greeting. Not doing this is considered offensive.

Punctuality: 5 minutes early

Traditional Breakfast: Eggs and bacon

Traditional Food and Drink: Gibanica and gemišt

Important Holidays: Christmas, Easter, Liberation Day,
Independence Day

Famous Musician and Song: Miso Kovac, Ako me ostavis

Famous Celebrity: Football (Soccer), Skiing, Handball, Waterpolo

Popular Sports: Goran Visnjic, Rade Serbedzija, Toni Kukoc, Drazen
Petrovic, Janica Kostelic
**Denmark**

**Information provided by:** Maja Bendtsen

**Population:** 5,584,758 (2012)

**Capital City:** Copenhagen: 1,213,822 (2012)

**Political Leaders:** Form of state: Monarchy Government: Coalition of The Social Democrats, The Social Liberals and The Socialist People’s Party Head of state: Queen Margrethe II (since 14 January 1972) Head of government: Helle Thorning-Schmidt (since 3 October 2011)

**Religion:** 90% Protestant

**Fun Fact:** According to legend, the Dannebrog (the name of the Danish flag) fell from heaven during a battle in Estonia; this legend is mentioned in Christiern Pedersen’s Danish Chronicle from the beginning of the 1520s and by the Franciscan monk Peder Olsen c. 1527. This latter relates the event to a battle in 1219, and tradition has maintained that the flag appeared at Lyndanisse on 15 June 1219.

**Language:** Danish

- **Delicious – Laekkert**
- **Thank You – Tak**

**Interesting Word** – Hygge(verb)/hyggeligt(noun) - The word describes the atmosphere created by a setting (and or a combination of people) that makes you feel nice, comfortable and relaxed.

**Common Greeting:** When we greet strangers we just shake hands and say 'nice to meet you'. When we meet with our friends, girls usually hug while boys both shake hands and hug as we ask "hva saa, hvordan gaar det?" (what is up, how are you?)

**Conversational Space:** Less than one arm’s length (close contact). If the person is a stranger you keep the distance that makes you feel more comfortable. Typically one arm's length.

**Hugging:** It is very common to hug your friends and family at random times. It is used to show affection and is usually well received. It is however odd to hug strangers and the receiver might feel uncomfortable.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** The teacher student relationship is based on mutual respect and friendship. It is essential that the relationship is good to achieve a nice classroom environment. If the students feel treated as if they are inferior to the teacher, the teacher will not be respected. Once the students feel free and comfortable with their teacher they will accept the teacher's role as an authority.
Manners: Using a polite language when talking to strangers is very important. Language such as, may I please, excuse me, thank you etc. It is viewed as rude to skip the queue, speak loudly in public, listen to loud music in public, spit in public and honk in traffic for no reason. Generally Danish people prefer not to be bothered or treated unfairly.

Punctuality: Exactly on time. If you are late it is expected that you inform the person with whom you are meeting.

Traditional Breakfast: It is most common to eat cereals such as cornflakes, Müsli or oatmeal or white bread with cheese and marmalade.

Traditional Food and Drink: There is a Danish drink that is usually drunk in the winter period. It is called gløgg and is made of warm wine with different spices such as cinnamon and clove and dried fruits. You usually drink it with something called Æbleskiver which can be described as a ball shaped pancake with apple prepared in a special pan that allows them to become all round.

Important Holidays: Christmas holidays.

Famous Musician and Song: Outlandish - Aicha Aqua - Barbie girl Disneyland after dark (D-A-D)

Famous Celebrity: Hans Christian Andersen (author), Niels Bohr (physicist), Søren Kierkegaard (philosopher), Jørn Utzon (architect), Lars Von Trier (Film director),

Popular Sports: Handball and football.

France

Information provided by: Marion Grégoire

Population: 70 million

Capital City: Paris: 10 million

Political Leaders: President: François Hollande, Prime Minister: Jean Marc Ayrault

Religion: Christianity

Fun Fact: French was the official language of the royal courts of Europe for over 300 years. The former name of Paris was Lutetia.

Language: Official language: French

Delicious – délicieux

Thank You – merci

Interesting Word – Chatoyant, it is an interesting word describing a mix of colours and brightness
Common Greeting: We shake hands with strangers; we kiss with acquaintances and people we are close with.

Conversational Space: One arm's length

Hugging: We hug often between lovers and to say hello to family and close friends.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Quite formal, we call teachers "Monsieur or Madame" and we use a specific grammar setting for demonstrating respect called "vouvoiement".

Manners: Vouvoiement, which is using the second person of plural conjugation to show respect. Calling someone by his/her first name while not being invited to do so is quite rude and if you are too familiar the first time with someone, especially someone older, it is also seen quite negatively.

Punctuality: Exactly on time but it isn't quite so strict.

Traditional Breakfast: Bread with jam or cereals, with tea or coffee with juice

Traditional Food and Drink: Foie gras, wine, bread, beef bourguignon, choucroute, croissant, café gourmand (coffee with little pastries)

Important Holidays: Christmas, 15th August, and also Easter with chocolate eggs hunt

Famous Musician and Song: Jean Jacques Goldman 'Quand la musique est bonne'

Famous Celebrity: Jean Dujardin (humourist and actor), Marion Cotillard (famous actress), Edith Piaf (famous singer)

Popular Sports: Rugby, tennis, tennis, sailing

Germany

Information provided by: Merrit Stueven

Population: 80,400,000

Capital City: Berlin: 3,290,000

Political Leaders: Chancellor: Angela Merkel President: Joachim Gauck

Religion: Christian (Catholic, Lutheran)

Fun Fact: Germany has distinct regions; the majority of the country is not at all what the global image of Germany would suggest.

Language: German
**Delicious** – lecker, köstlich

**Thank You** – danke

**Interesting Word** – schadenfreude: taking joy in someone else's misfortune

**Common Greeting:** Handshake, kiss cheeks with friends

**Conversational Space:** One arm's length

**Hugging:** Hugging is less common than in the US, but it is still common among close friends and family

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** Teacher-Student relationships are quite formal and rarely cross over into the familiar. The formal you form of German is used always to address teachers.

**Manners:** Actions are similar to the US: showing the middle finger etc. is considered rude; nodding one's head is a general polite acknowledgement

**Punctuality:** 5 minutes early

**Traditional Breakfast:** Bread and Rolls with Jam or Sausage

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Beer, Schnitzel

**Important Holidays:** Christmas, Easter

**Famous Musician and Song:** Cro - Easy

**Famous Celebrity:** Heidi Klum

**Popular Sports:** Soccer

**Funny Joke:** Germans don't understand humor. Sorry. (Or I can't think of a joke...)

**Italy**

*Information provided by:* Francesco Nutricato

**Population:** 61 Million

**Capital City:** Rome, 2.8 million people

**Political Leaders:** President Giorgio Napolitano and Prime Minister Enrico Letta

**Religion:** Christian, Catholic

**Fun Fact:** Italy has the best food in the world

**Language:** Italian is the official language in everyday life and in business, although English is taught in all schools and is becoming the new language for business. At a regional level, there are various dialects spoken across the country.
Delicious – Delizioso

Thank You – Grazie

Interesting Word – Qualunquismo: This word reflects an attitude of uncaring and indifference

Common Greeting: You kiss cheeks/ hug to greet people, depending on your relationship to them and their age.

Conversational Space: One arm’s length

Hugging: Hugging does occur between friends and relatives, although it’s not too common. People hug to greet after a long time not seeing each other and to say goodbye, in case they will not see each other for long. People also hug to show support or comfort someone else.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Teacher-student relationships are mostly formal. The use of formal pronouns or titles is mandatory when referring to a teacher. As a student, you do not have to stand, before speaking, but you do have to raise your hand, and wait for permission to speak.

Punctuality: 5 Minutes late

Traditional Breakfast: A typical breakfast would be a cup of milk with cookies or cereals. Coffee is also consumed by most people in the morning, either for breakfast or later on, during a break.

Traditional Food and Drink: At the risk of sounding stereotypical, pizza is probably one of the most common dishes in Italy, and wine is very easy to find at a lunch table. However, international dishes (paella, fast food, sushi...) are becoming more common everyday.

Important Holidays: Christmas holidays are probably the most important in Italy and are usually celebrated within the extended family.

Popular Sports: Football (soccer...) is definitely the most important sport in Italy.

Netherlands

Information provided by: Nina Escrivá Fernandez and Arie Slobbe

Population: 16.5 million

Capital City: Amsterdam: 800.000 inhabitants, with 2.2 milion in the greater metropolitan area.

Political Leaders: Mark Rutte (prime minister), King Willem-Alexander (king, but does not play a very large role politically)

Religion: Atheism, Roman-Catholicism.

Fun Fact: The Netherlands literally means 'low countries', and large part of the country is actually below sea level. A former Dutch
colony was 'New Amsterdam', nowadays known as 'New York'. The Netherlands was the first country to legalize same sex marriages in 2001. - 70% of the world's bacon comes from the Netherlands - 86% of the population speaks English as a second language. - Rotterdam is the second largest port in the world. - The Netherlands has the highest population density in Europe with 487 inhabitants per square kilometer.

**Language:** Everyone speaks Dutch, but there are some dialects too and one language (Fries) spoken only in one Northern province.

- **Delicious** – lekker
- **Thank You** – Dankjewel
- **Interesting Word** – The most used word that doesn't translate into English is "gezellig", which directly translates to cozy, but it really isn't just that!

**Common Greeting:** We kiss three times on the cheek. Among friends we say: Hoi!

**Conversational Space:** People tend to take their private space very seriously and coming to close makes a lot of people uncomfortable.

**Hugging:** Hugging is not very common, even between friends it sometimes is rare. Dutch people are not very touchy and show their affection in other ways. But not all people are the same, and my friends and me do hug!

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** The relationship between teachers and students is often very friendly, but not too much and it really depends on the teacher. We refer to teachers as Mr. or Mrs. plus their last name.

**Manners:** We distinguish two forms of you, and you are expected to use the polite one if speaking to someone older. Also, it is very common to offer your seat to someone older if there are no more seats left.

**Punctuality:** Exactly on time

**Traditional Breakfast:** Bread, often with butter and chocolate sprinkles (hagelslag) or cheese. We also have spreads made of almost everything (cheese, raw meat, tuna or eggs). Lekker!

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Herring (haring)! A delicious raw fish eaten almost entirely at once. Liquorice (sweet AND salt, not very loved by foreigners).

**Important Holidays:** Queensday (30th of April)! Which will be Kingsday (27th of April) starting coming year, since the Queen abdicated and we now have a King. Everyone wears orange, and goes out on the streets!
Famous Musician and Song: Caro Emerald - Night like this Racoon - Oceaan

Famous Celebrity: van Gogh, Rembrandt van Rijn, DJ Tiesto, Armin van Buuren, Anne Frank, Johan Cruijff, Freddy Heineken, M.C. Escher.

Popular Sports: Soccer! Ice skating in winter, and cycling (all the time).

Funny Joke: It is another holiday we celebrate the 5th of December called 'Sinterklaas'. A long-bearded guy with white hair, arrives by boat from Spain, accompanied by his helpers. Every night they walk on the roofs of our houses to put presents through the chimney in the shoes of the children.

Poland

Information provided by: Dagmara Franczak

Population: 38,544,513

Capital City: Warsaw: 1.711 million

Political Leaders: President: Bronisław, Komorowski: Prime Minister Donald Tusk

Religion: Catholicism (93%)

Fun Fact: The best strongmen in the world are Poles. Catholicism is so popular that we have the national Catholic television channel and radio.

Language: Polish. Regional language: Kashubian

Delicious – pucha; pychota; pyszny/a

Thank You – Dziękuję

Interesting Word – załatwić - get something done, studniówka - prom that high school seniors have 100 days before their final exams

Common Greeting: It depends on the relationship. With my family I kiss three times on a cheek. With my friends I hug. With people I don’t know I shake hands.

Conversational Space: More than one arm’s length but it depends on the relationship between two people talking.

Hugging: You hug your friends and your family, but never strangers.

Teacher and Student Relationship: You say in high school Professor (Surname). In middle school you say Mr/Mrs (Surname). In primary school you say Mr/Mrs (First Name). You need to get up when they
are passing by in order to say "good morning". You never sit when they are talking to you until they say you can.

**Manners:** To show politeness you give your seat on a bus/ tram/ metro for an elder person and stand up while talking to elder people. It is rude to use swear words in the presence of elder people and to drink alcohol in the streets.

**Punctuality:** Exactly on time

**Traditional Breakfast:** Scrambled eggs or cereal

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Soups: Barszcz - The vegetarian version is the first course during the Christmas Eve feast and is served with dumplings called uszka (little dumpling ears) with mushroom filling. Sauerkraut can be used as well, depending on the family tradition.


**Famous Musician and Song:** Margaret - Thank you very much.
Fryderyk Chopin, Krzysztof Penderecki, Urszula Dudziak

**Famous Celebrity:** Nicolaus Copernicus, Marie Curie-Sklodowska, Kazimierz Funk, Robert Korzeniowski, Roman Polanski, Izabella Scorupco, John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Jozef Pilsudski, Tadeusz Kosciuszko

**Popular Sports:** Football, volleyball

**Funny Joke:** We have a lot of jokes about Johnny (Polish: Jaś)
During religion class: - Who of you would like to go to heaven? All the children raise their hands up. Only Johnny stays still. - And you, my boy - asks the priest - you do not want to go to heaven? - I want to very much, but I promised my dad that after school I will go home soon!

**Russia**

**Information provided by:** Nikita Yatchenko

**Population:** 143 million

**Capital City:** Moscow: 11.98 million

**Political Leaders:** President: Vladimir Putin, Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation: Dmitry Medvedev

**Religion:** Russian Orthodox Christianity

**Fun Fact:** Well, surprisingly, it’s not always cold and bears do not walk down the streets in Russia.

**Language:** Russian
**Delicious** – Вкусно "Vkusno"

**Thank You** – Спасибо "Spasibo"

**Interesting Word** – Personally I have never been able to translate in English in one word what is meant by Русский Дух "Russkiy Duh". The direct translation is the Russian spirit, but in English this expression doesn't carry a tenth of the emotional and spiritual load that it does in Russian. "Russkiy Duh" is the expression that carries within the reason why Russians are such unique and interesting people, it is our childishness, wisdom, passion for freedom and persistence combined in one heavy expression.

**Common Greeting:** Males always shake hands. However, when a male greets a close friend female (or vice versa), he/she may kiss once on the cheek.

**Conversational Space:** One arm's length. Be friendly enough to be close, but also be polite to allow your partner of communication to have his/her space.

**Hugging:** Usually between close friends. Spontaneous hugging is very rare.

**Teacher and Student Relationship:** The relationship can be described as a carrying monarchy. Teacher is an unquestionable leader, who cares deeply about his/her students and wants them to do very well, that's why they sometimes are considered to be very strict.

**Manners:** Smiling or a simple nod can be viewed as a gesture that signifies one's gratitude or appreciation. Actions that show politeness or considered to be rude are similar to those in the States.

**Punctuality:** Exactly on time.

**Traditional Breakfast:** A thin pancake with sour cream, caviar (quite rare), Kasha, baked or fried buns (small pies) stuffed with meat, chicken or fish. Tea and sweets.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Russians have a vast variety of cultural foods and drinks due to the size of the country. Most unique foods include Beef Stroganov, Bliny, Caviar, A fish (usually salmon or sturgeon) loaf, Kasha (Porridge), Kissel (Fruit dessert soup of sweetened juice) and many more.

**Important Holidays:** New Year, Den' Pobedy (9th of May) and 7th of January (Orthodox Christmas)

**Famous Musician and Song:** КИНО (Kino), "Группа Крови" ("Gruppa Krovi")

**Famous Celebrity:** Maria Sharapova, Grigoriy Leps, Ksenia Sobchak, Nikolai Baskov, Andrei Arshavin
Middle East

Syria

Information provided by: Farah Al Haddad

Population: 21 million (pre crisis)

Capital City: Damascus

Political Leaders:
President Bashar Al Assad

Religion: Islam and Christianity

Language: Arabic is the primary language, but there are other languages such as Assyrian, Kurdish, Circassian, and Armenian.

Delicious – Latheeth or Tayyeb طَلِيب

Thank You – Shukran شُكْرُ

Interesting Word – Tarab - Arabic for a state of ecstasy and surrender one enters while listening, with body and soul, to music.

Common Greeting: Females greet by kissing twice starting with the left cheek, so do males (with other males). Females and males greet by shaking hands with each other.

Conversational Space: Less than one arm’s length (close contact)

Hugging: Not as common as two kisses (one on each cheek) and a hand shake, but it is common among close friends and relatives, especially after not seeing each other for a while.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Teachers are referred to by madame, mister (Ustath) or miss (Anseh). Teacher-student relationships are very formal, and students must stand up when their teachers enter or when they speak to them.

Manners: Standing up when an older person enters the room is polite. Showing the soles of feet/shoes to someone sitting/standing across from you is rude

Punctuality: 5 minutes early but being late is common.

Traditional Breakfast: Pita bread with Hummus, Labaneh, Zaatar and olive oil, fatteh, or halloum cheese with red tea (sometimes
with mint leaves or sage). Some adults would go for Turkish coffee and a cigarette, as lunch is our main meal of the day.

**Traditional Food and Drink:** Kibbeh, and yabra (stuffed grape leaves) is very common. Cumin is one traditional drink I can think of.

**Important Holidays:** We celebrate both Islamic and Christian holidays, Mother's Day, Independence Day, Teacher's Day, and Labor Day. We have a lot of days off from school/work :)

**Famous Musician and Song:** Musician: Sabah Fakhri Song: Yamo - Dureid Lahham (Ghawwar)

**Famous Celebrity:** Syrian drama and theatre have been popular for the past two decades or so. Some famous actors/actresses are: Dureid Lahham, Muna Wassef, and Bassam Koussa

**Popular Sports:** Football and Basketball.

**Funny Joke:** I cannot think of one that I can translate, but we are funny. I promise.

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**Turkey**

**Information provided by:** Kaan Salçın

**Population:** 74 million

**Capital City:** Ankara, Istanbul: 13 million

**Political Leaders:** President: Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

**Religion:** 99% - Muslim 0.4% - Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic 0.6% Others

**Fun Fact:** The famous Trojan Wars took place in Western Turkey, around the site where the Trojan horse rests today.

**Language:** Turkish is the official language, and is spoken by 85% of the population as first language. Kurmanji (Northern Kurdish) by 12% Arabic by 1% Zaza by 1% Others by 1%

**Delicious – Lezzetli** But if you want to say "It was delicious," in order to praise good cooking, you would say "Eline sağlık." (Literally, "health to your hand")

**Thank You – Teşekkürler**

**Interesting Word – Kolay gelsin.** (Literally, "May it come easy") Used when you see someone working on something. It means something like "I hope you finish that work easily."
Common Greeting: People usually clasp hands and kiss on both cheeks when greeting. To show respect, an old person's right hand may be kissed and brought to touch the greeter's forehead. The "I've got your nose" gesture is considered very rude in Turkey. Sort of like "the finger" in the US. Hello: Merhaba Hi/Hey: Selam

Conversational Space: Less than one arm's length (close contact)

Hugging: Hugging is quite common between same-sex individuals. Though, in public, you will very rarely see members of the opposite sex touching, except when they are widely known as “only friends”.

Teacher and Student Relationship: Teachers are commonly referred to as "Hocam" (Teacher) or "... Bey/Hanım" (Mr./Ms. ...). The dialogue in between is often formal.

Manners: Do: -Take a small present when you're on a house visit and make a second offer (of food, etc.) if the first one is turned down. (People usually reject the first offer on the assumption that there will be a second one.) Insist on paying for a meal out with another person Do Not: Eat, drink, or smoke in public places other than in restaurants during Ramadan, point at someone in public, whisper in someone's ear in a small social gathering

Punctuality: 5 minutes late

Traditional Breakfast: A typical Turkish breakfast consists of cheese (beyaz peynir, kaşar etc.), butter, olives, eggs, tomatoes, cucumbers, jam, honey, Sucuk (spicy Turkish sausage, can be eaten with eggs), pastirma (highly seasoned, air-dried cured beef), simit (circular bread with sesame seeds), or poğaça (a type of puff pastry). Turkish black tea is usually served.

Traditional Food and Drink: Shish kebab, döner kebab, etc., İçli köfte - a torpedo-shaped fried croquette stuffed with minced beef or lamb, Çığ köfte - raw meat patties, Sarma - grape, cabbage or chard leaves rolled around a filling usually based on minced meat, Rakı - unsweetened, anise-flavored hard alcoholic drink, Ayran - cold beverage of yogurt mixed with cold water and sometimes salt


Famous Musician and Song: Üsküdar’a Gider iken (Turkish folk song) Tarkan - Kiss Kiss

Famous Celebrity: Dr. Oz, Sertab Erener, Tarkan, Orhan Pamuk

Popular Sports: Soccer, Basketball

Funny Joke: Written on a wall during Taksim Gezi Park protests "It’s six stars now. Now the tanks will come." (reference to the Grand Theft Auto video game series)
Palestine (West Bank)

Information provided by: Muath Ibaid

Population: 11 million

Capital City: Jerusalem

Largest City: Gaza City, 649,221

Political Leaders: President: Mahmoud Abbas. Leader of the political party, Hamas: Ismail Hanyeh.

Religion: Islam, Christianity, Judaism

Interesting Fact: More than 50% of the Palestinian population lives as refugees outside of Palestine.

Language: Arabic. The Palestinian dialect is similar to that of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon

Delicious – “Zakee” or “Lazeez”

Thank You – Shukran

Interesting Word – “Habibi” Literally means “my love” but it can be used towards ANYONE in a friendly way.

Common Greeting: If you see someone on a regular bases you normally shake hands. However, if you see someone after a long time of not seeing them you shake hands kiss. Most common greeting is: 'Al Salamu Alaykum' which means (Peace be upon You), 'Marhaba' which means (Hello) or Salam which means (Peace).

Conversational Space: Less than one arm’s length (close contact)

Hugging: You hug if you see your friend after a long time of not seeing them or if you miss them. It happens between members of the same gender and it is not allowed between different genders.

Teacher and Student Relationship: You have to say 'Ostaz' for a male teacher and 'Miss' for a female teacher before you call their name. They are respected by students and there are not personal relationships between teachers and students normally.

Manners: Younger people have to stand for older people to let them sit in their place. You do not raise your voice while speaking with and older person. Actions that can be considered rude: burping, sitting one leg over the other in the presence of an old person.

Punctuality: 10 minutes late. We call it 'Arab Timing'. We normally use the specific time as 'after 6 PM' or something vague like that.

Traditional Breakfast: Falafel with Hummos and tea

Traditional Food and Drink: Food: Msakhan, Mansaf. Dinks: Tea (shai), Karkadeh.
**Important Holidays:** Muslim and Christian religious holidays. Eid El Feter, Eid El Adha, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Prophet Mohammed's Birthday, the First day of the Islamic year.

**Famous Musician and Song:** Mohammed Assaf (The winner of Arab Idol).

**Popular Sports:** Football (soccer)