



Travel the world

Reading

1 Work in pairs. Are the sentences true or false?

- 1 Restaurants in the UK close early in the evenings.
- 2 Chinese hosts are very generous.
- 3 In Russia, you can rest your elbows on the dining table.
- 4 Thirteen is a lucky number in the USA.
- 5 The colour red has negative associations in all cultures.

2 Scan the text to check your answers.

1

They do things differently here



Travel broadens the mind, but as experienced travellers know, you need to adjust your mindset to enjoy your travels. Different destinations have different cultures and it is easy to make cross-cultural mistakes which lead to misunderstandings.

A quick look at eating customs around the world highlights some typical problems. Anyone expecting to sit down for a meal at 10 p.m. in the UK will find many restaurants closing for the night. Eating in someone's house is no less problematic. Chinese hosts can press guests to eat and drink more than they wish, and it is difficult to say no without causing offence. Refusing coffee in a Muslim household is also considered impolite. To avoid being rude, accept the coffee and a couple of refills: drinking an odd number of cups is politer than drinking an even number.

Be careful how you show your enjoyment of a meal: even simple gestures can lead to problems. Joining the thumb and forefinger in a circle might mean OK in the USA, but in France it can actually mean zero and in Japan, money.

Belching or burping after dinner is a sign of appreciation and thanks in some Arabic cultures, although in the UK this would not be taken as a compliment to the chef. Likewise, resting your elbows on the dining table is frowned upon in Dutch and Russian homes, but is more acceptable in some Mediterranean countries.

Even number and colour associations change from culture to culture. You will find that American hotels do not have a thirteenth floor, whereas in Korea and Vietnam four is thought to be the unlucky number. Red, the colour of good luck and fortune in China, is often associated with blood and anger in many Western societies. For many Europeans, black is the colour of bereavement. However, for the Masai people in Kenya and Tanzania, black represents rain clouds and is a very lucky colour.

So what is the best advice for travellers facing cultural confusion? Perhaps the most useful thing to remember is the old proverb: when in Rome do as the Romans do. Enjoy your trip.

4

Tune in to **READING****Answering comprehension questions**

Use this technique to answer comprehension questions.

- Underline the Wh-word and main content words in each question and predict what information to look for: a name, a number, a place, a reason and so on.
- Scan the text for relevant information.
- Use this information to answer the questions.
- Read the questions again and check your answers.

3 Read the questions carefully and underline the Wh-words and main content words.

- 1 Why should travellers be aware of cultural differences?
- 2 How many cups of coffee should you drink in a Muslim household?
- 3 What does the gesture mentioned in the text mean in different countries?
- 4 Where is it acceptable to belch or burp after a meal?
- 5 Who believes that black has positive associations?
- 6 How can travellers avoid cultural confusion?

4 Scan the text for relevant information and answer the questions in exercise 3.**5 Complete the sentences with words from the text.**

- 1 I am an _____ traveller. I travel to a different destination every summer. (paragraph 1)
- 2 Different cultural customs can lead to _____ . (paragraph 1)
- 3 In some countries it is considered _____ to refuse food or drink. (paragraph 2)
- 4 It is important to use the correct body language and _____ in different countries. (paragraph 3)
- 5 Numbers and colours can have different _____ around the world. (paragraph 4)
- 6 A _____ is a sentence which gives good advice. (paragraph 5)

6 Work in pairs. Describe the habits and customs of your country. Use these ideas.

- Saying hello and goodbye
- Visiting family and friends
- Gestures and body language
- Lucky numbers and colours

VOCABULARY

**Easily confused words****1 Find the words in the text. Do they mean the same in your language?**

experienced (line 1)
actually (line 22)

2 Choose the correct option in each sentence.

- 1 I like telling my travel *stories* / *histories* to friends.
- 2 Let me tell you about an *experiment* / *experience* I had in Japan.
- 3 My company's *politics* / *policy* is that we stay in colleagues' homes when we travel abroad.
- 4 My hosts had prepared raw fish for dinner. I hate it, but to avoid insulting the family, I *pretended* / *tried* to enjoy it.
- 5 I ate as much as I could, but *eventually* / *occasionally* I couldn't eat any more.
- 6 My host was very understanding, but his wife was very *still* / *quiet* for the rest of the meal.
- 7 The evening was not a great *incident* / *success*.
- 8 I felt very *pregnant* / *embarrassed*: I hadn't meant to be rude.
- 9 It's a bit of a *cliché* / *topic* to say the English are polite, but in my case I think it's true!

3 Match the words you did not use in exercise 2 with the definitions.

- 1 from time to time
- 2 government activities
- 3 expecting a baby
- 4 a subject for discussion
- 5 not moving
- 6 make an effort
- 7 an unpleasant event
- 8 accounts of the past
- 9 a scientific test

4 Work in pairs. Write five gapped sentences using words from this section.**5 Exchange sentences with another pair. Complete the sentences they give you.**