**When in Rome………..**

**We asked for comments on advice for visiting foreigners when they come to various countries around the world. Some funny, some surprising, and some downright shocking, but all should help you fit in and avoid some embarrassing situations.**

In **Cuba** it often looks like there's no line, but there is. It's called "el ultimo". When you arrive somewhere you ask "el ultimo?" and whoever is last in line raises their hand. You are now "el ultimo" and you just know who is in front of you. In the meantime you can sit down in some shade.

**Scandinavia** - You don't talk about religion. Got one? Good for you, but that's nothing to bring up/discuss.

We are not trying to be rude, we just don't do small talk. - **Finland**

Mainland **China**: Do not buy traditional Chinese silk clothes from a shop also sells wreaths (no matter how beautiful they are). Those clothes are for dead people, and that shop is a shroud shop. You have no idea how horrifying to see a foreigner wearing them and walking down the street.

**USA**...we are going to talk to you. We like to make small talk with strangers because it sometimes leads to friendships or even just perks of having acquaintances. Once we hear your accent, oh SNAP! We will have a million questions about your country. Some will seem ignorant, some will just be downright funny. Humor us.

**Denmark**: DO NOT STAND OR WALK IN THE BIKELANE! You will get yelled at and/or run over.

I live in **Sweden**.

Don't get too close to me, our personal space is rather big.

If you're taking the bus, do not ever sit down next to another person if there's other free seats.

You take your goddamn shoes off when you're inside your house or someone else’s.

**Australia**

Don't pick up or touch insects - or any other kind of animal that you're not familiar with. You might end up not needing your ticket back. Don't swim in places that have croc, bluebottle/box jellyfish or shark warnings. But most of all, watch out for rips, they are even more deadly. Make sure you slip, slop, slap, seek and slide aka slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on sunnies during spring and summer.

**Vietnam** - commit to crossing the road. I know it looks scary due to the endless scooter stampede but if you just cross at a steady pace, they'll avoid you. Do not try to dodge or make sudden movements, you will get your ass hit and there will be no sympathy.

**England** here. If someone asks 'you alright?' Or 'alright mate?', this is not an invitation to explain how you are doing in any sort of detail. The only acceptable answers are “ Alright”, or 'yeah mate, you?' And 'not bad, yourself?' Anything else is just weird.

A nasal grunt is also an acceptable reply.

Been hearing a lot of northern Europeans talking about bike lanes, so: In **America**, if you rent a bike, you should be aware that even if the bike lane is painted onto the street in a rainbow pattern with flashing neon lights, nobody gives a damn. You are not safe in the bike lane.

**India**

There's lots of little cultural taboos. But one thing I can remember right now is, never refer to someone older than you by their name. If you are young (below 20-ish), you can refer to middle-aged and older people as 'Aunty' and 'Uncle', or 'Sir' and 'Ma'am'. It gets slightly confusing when you are around 20 (like I am) and the person is in their late twenties or early thirties. But yeah. Never call someone older by their name.

DO NOT DRINK THE TAP WATER.

**The Philippines** -When going to a friend's house and the family offers you have dinner with them, it is impolite to say no.

Also, they would insist that you stay over in case you've had too much lambanog and will give you the next best mattress they have.

Before you leave, accept the leftovers they give should you be hungry on your way back home.

**Portuguese** here:
Speak in Spanish with us and you will get punched in the throat

Hahaha not punched, but we will definitely answer in Portuguese, English or "Portunhol" (which is just portuguese with a spanish accent and maybe some spanish words xD)

**Germany**:

our waiters usually earn above minimum wage, so you never tip more than 15%, normally 10% for small amounts and a bit less for larger bills.

on the escalator, if you want to stand, stand on the right side and let others pass left.

if you rent a bike, don't drive like your own granny, drive fast and if you want to pause, get off the bike lane. Also, don't walk on our bike lanes, they are clearly marked (blue signs with a white bike and mostly red paint on the bike lane). If you approach a tram or bus stop, brake and let people get on and off the train.

queue from the right at things like a burger joint so that passer-byes are not blocked. At museums, trains or the airport, queue frontally.

yes, it is common to encounter nude people of all ages in the sauna or at some lakes or even at some few parks in the city. Don't stare and for god's sake don't comment on this.

not everyone here is from Bavaria or thinks Bavaria is great. Likewise, not everyone loves beer and sausages.

and don't mention the war, k?

**Iceland**

Don't drive offroad. This is because the tracks will stay for a long time in the land., perhaps decades.

**Thailand**

When you meet someone you have not seen for a while , they will make a comment about your weight .. Heavier or Skinner .. they're not trying to be offensive .. it's just how they are ..

You can pay the policemen to get out of minor traffic stuff.

If you're a tourist .. expect to pay way more than local when buying something .. a lot of business charges 3x the amount of service for tourist especially westerners. Bring a local with you to haggle!

I live in **Singapore**. Where I'm at, such as fast food restaurants and food courts, there's a common practice known as "chopeing", where one can "chope", or reserve a table by placing a packet of tissues on the table. Tourists who have no idea of this usually take the table obliviously and gets dirty looks from the local who "choped" the table.

Glasgow (**Scotland**) Don't be afraid to ask for directions. When you do one of two things will happen.... 1: We will give you directions using pubs as land marks "You want to go straight ahead past [insert pub name here] turn left and go by [insert pub name here] and it will be on your right." 2: We will start telling you directions and then decide if its easier if we just show you, don't worry its not an inconvenience.

**South Africa**. Yes, it's cool to visit any of our game reserves. You're not really going "on safari" though. Keep your car doors locked at all times when driving around. Keep your bag under the seat or in the boot (trunk), NOT on the seat next to you. If people can see your bag, they will smash your window and steal it. If you go to a mall, make sure your car is locked before moving away from it. People have devices that can jam your key fob and prevent your car from locking. There are ATMs everywhere, but you can use your credit card anywhere - even at flea markets. Despite the crime, people are friendly and will greet you and ask how you are. Smile, greet them, say you're fine, and ask how they are. If someone talks about a "robot", they mean a traffic light.

**UAE**: 1. men never should be shirtless or wearing tank tops (no sleeve) on the street, mall etc... ever. 2. You will be asked "where are you from" every time (it is normal in the country with 90% of expat population), and after people will always loudly wonder if they know anyone from your country or at least know anything about it. 3. you will be called madam/sir by staff in stores, restaurants, cafes etc. 4. DO NOT attempt to go somewhere by walking, when you are in the centre (even though it will look as short distance on the map), you will get stuck at some uncrossable road or with no sidewalk. Just grab a taxi.

**Canada**. Politeness is a must, hold the door open for people, please and thank-you are a given. One exception is Quebec to a certain degree (and keep in mind my father was born and raised there and I'm literally 50% French), depending on the area you are in, if you don't speak French you may have big problems. My ex also grew up in Quebec and when visiting his family he refused to let me go to a current fair at night, saying grown men would literally fight me because I don't speak French (father never thought me). I didn't believe him until his father confirmed it. So, be careful. Also, in my opinion and many others who have been/lived there, Alberta is our Alabama... take that for what you will, but also be careful there if you're coloured or gay.

**Azerbaijan** (I'm an ex-pat): The lines on the road while driving mean NOTHING. People here can turn a 2 lane road into a 4 lane road. Light just turn green? Someone will honk a millisecond after. In gas stations, people pump your gas. You don't get out. There are a lot of local food shops that serve shwarma and kebabs and dolma, but there are also places like Hard Rock and Papa Johns. In shops/museums, people will follow you around (members that work there.) Don't worry, they do that to everyone. Just go about what your doing and don't make a big deal out of it.

**Poland**- if you are from the USA and think using typical hand gestures, pointing, basic language translation will help you, be prepared for an entire country to laugh at you.

**England/UK**: we are pretty reserved. We rarely chat to strangers in public, and don't hug people we don't know well. Despite this, we are friendly and polite, and appreciate the same in return. Servers don't necessarily say "Have a nice day" or similar. Depending on the region, you may be addressed as "love", "dear", or "duck", regardless of age of familiarity. It's just a general greeting. In London, or other large cities, it's unusual to chat to strangers. In smaller towns, it's down to the individual. Most people are cool with it or at least happy to go along with it, though. Despite what you've heard, British cuisine varies from interestingly cosmopolitan, through amazing local specialties, to unpleasantly stodgy. There are plenty of international chains like MacD, Yo Sushi etc, but local specialties are usually a better choice, especially for fish & chips (in coastal towns), English/Scottish/Irish breakfasts, Sunday roasts, cream teas, Cornish pasties, or pie and mash.

Northern Utah, **USA**: Towards the mountains and away from the mountains are directions they mean the Wasatch range though not the Western ones LDS missionaries will be very interested in you , if that's uncomfortable learn to avoid Kids scream and run wild a lot and we're known for having Karens if you complain Generally friendly people but they will bring up the LDS Church a ton Polygamist sightings can happen but they're rare as their compounds are down South of the state save for a few families.

**France**: Parisians are rude, we are (mostly) not. If you met an idiot who snobbed you because you were learning French he was probably a Parisian. Don't worry we hate them too. Regular French people actually love when people try to learn French and are willing to help. Regional cultural identity is strong here, be wary of that. People are "Picard" "Breton" "Corse" more than they are French. We are indeed a bit wary of small talk, don't worry about it too much, you'll eventually find someone willing to chat.