

# **The Cultural Dictionary**

**Of people from culturally and linguistically  
diverse backgrounds**

**Project of the Migrant Resource Centre  
Canberra & region Inc**

**A resource to increase cultural understanding for service-providers in  
the ACT**

## **CULTURAL DICTIONARY REVISED 2003**

Funded by Commonwealth/State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, ACT Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

**Project of Migrant Resource Centre Canberra & Queanbeyan Inc**

**First edition by Sara Khalidi 1997**

**Second edition Revised and edited by Fiona McIlroy 2003**

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this document are a synthesis of information from a range of sources, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Migrant Resource Centre. Due to constraints outside editorial control, not all countries have been included in the Cultural Dictionary.

## PREFACE TO THE CULTURAL DICTIONARY

The wealth of cultural diversity in Australia is arguably one of its major assets. Acknowledgment of difference and acceptance of each person's unique qualities, as well as their particular blend of cultural influences can assist a people to grow in cultural richness and social strength. However, differences are often screened through our own cultural lenses, and our perceptions need to be taken out and examined. The word 'prejudice' stems from Latin - to 'pre-judge'. As we all form attitudes based on the limited understanding we currently hold, we are all prone to prejudice. The key to cultural understanding lies in an open mind. As we do with our computer when it gets overloaded with junk, we need to press the 'Refresh' button; to refresh our assumptions, review our attitudes.

Given the rise in expressions of racist attitudes in recent times, it is vital to remember that general statements about cultural backgrounds can lead to stereotyping. Stereotyping often undervalues individuals and cultures, and can be based on mistaken assumptions. The brief, general descriptions of a culture such as the snapshots in this Cultural Dictionary should never be applied in a blanket way to any individual or group.

The descriptions can never account for the diversity of individuals and groups within any culture. Factors such as age, education, socio-economic class, religion, gender and personal experience shaping the individual cultural identity has a bearing on a person's values and behaviour. Because of this, the Dictionary can only be a first step towards understanding. When in doubt, ask the person for their point of view, needs and preferences.

While we each receive basic cultural conditioning from the environment we grow up in, every culture is continually undergoing change, and within each one there are many variants. It is therefore advisable to learn about each culture from as many individuals as possible to gain a more balanced concept of their needs and strengths.

Conversations, listening and the building of trusting relationships with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are the next important steps toward developing further knowledge and sensitivity. We cannot know all there is to know about another person's culture, but we can extend them respect and interest. Hopefully, the information collected in the Cultural Dictionary will stimulate your interest.



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# PART I

# THE CULTURAL DICTIONARY

# INTRODUCTION

## How the Cultural Dictionary can be used

Australia today is a genuinely multicultural society. An abundance of culturally and linguistically diverse ethnic groups in Australia today contribute to every field of activity. Our cuisine is world-famous for its international flavours, and our daily life is rich with diverse cultural practices, vocabulary and events. With migrants and refugees from more than 200 countries, we now qualify as one of the world's most culturally and ethnically pluralist nations. For social harmony to prevail in this era of regional and international turbulence, it is essential that cultural understanding and mutual respect take top priority.

The purpose of the Cultural Dictionary is to look at the experiences of a diversity of people who may be clients of supported accommodation services. The aim is to provide a relevant resource for service-providers to assist them in delivering more culturally appropriate service. It also provides current contact information to increase liaison and networking between supported accommodation services and key ethnic services in the ACT.

The Cultural Dictionary contains basic information on topics such as population, ethnic composition, language, religion, general attitudes, personal appearance, greetings, gestures, visiting and eating habits, lifestyle, family and marriage practices of people from a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The cultural snapshots are listed by country, and in general, residents from the countries in the book are represented in the ACT. The main English speaking countries are not included, as the focus is on linguistic diversity. However, unfortunately not all the NES countries with residents in the ACT were able to be included within the scope of this revision.

The Cultural Dictionary is a sampling of cultures only. Users need to be aware that cultures are complex and dynamic. National boundaries shift, new nations are formed and minorities sometimes leave their country of origin because of turmoil, persecution or civil war. It is important to recognize that refugees coming here under the Humanitarian Program often originate from an ethnic or religious minority within a country. Therefore the norms of the mainstream culture described in the Cultural Dictionary may not be true for individuals from that country.

The book is intended to be a starting point to facilitate initial communication, and for accessing basic information about differing cultures as a guide to more appropriate service provision.

The Cultural Dictionary does not focus on statistical data. The goal is to bring the people and their dominant cultural mores into view, hopefully encouraging understanding and appreciation between people of different nationalities and backgrounds.

## Background to the Project

In 2001, Australia's resident population was 19,357,594 million persons. (GeoHive: The world's Population Now). Of the total population in Australia, 20% were born in Asia (North-East, South-East and Central Asia). In the ACT, 22% of the population comes from Asia. (2001 Census).

The total population of the ACT is 311,947 (2001 Census). Approximately 21.6% of the population were born overseas (2001 Census) compared with 22.5% in the 1996 Census.

From a total number of 95,600 instances of client support, 15.2% were from linguistically diverse backgrounds Australia-wide. From a total number of 1900 supported clients in the ACT, 15.4% were from linguistically diverse backgrounds (SAAP National Data Collection 2001/2). As can be seen above, this means that people from linguistically diverse backgrounds are under-represented in the SAAP services nationally, with a marginally better representation in the ACT. Like all other services and programs, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program operates within the complex setting of a multicultural and poly-ethnic society, and it needs to accommodate the particular demands of such a society in a positive way.

Reports on the needs of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in SAAP services repeatedly identify the importance of 'being sensitive to the differing needs of non-English speaking background (NESB) people' (Challenging the Future, SAAP Conference 1994), and of ensuring 'accommodation is culturally appropriate



and that the provision of food, sleeping arrangements etc comply with the cultural and religious requirements of clients' (Keeping It In the Family ACT 1995).

The provision of culturally appropriate services is a principle articulated in the 'National Practice Principles' in SAAP Case Management. This statement includes that 'each client receives a service that is sensitive to, and respectful of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and values including the importance of preserving significant networks and relationships.'

Migrants and refugees do not face the same issues or share the same needs. Many people in our community continue to view migrants and refugees as a homogeneous group. This view finds its way into service provision, resulting in inadequate and inappropriate responses. An ethnocentric or culturally blind approach, which assumes all clients share the same value systems and provides only a standardised response, will not meet diverse cultural needs. A culturally appropriate service is one that understands and respects the cultural orientation of the client.

## How the Cultural Dictionary was developed

In response to this need for culturally sensitive service-provision, the ACT SAAP Access & Equity worker, based at the Migrant Resource Centre of Canberra & Queanbeyan Inc, identified the need for a resource that would assist SAAP workers to respond better to the differing needs of people from diverse backgrounds. The original publication by Sara Khalidi came out in June 1997. This involved extensive consultation with ethnic communities and a Reference Group. In 2002, the Migrant Resource Centre was fortunate in receiving funding from the ACT Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services to produce a revised edition of the Cultural Dictionary.

After a tender process, the Migrant Resource Centre selected my consultancy for the revision project. I was requested to draft 20 new entries, and update and consult on revising the existing 60 country entries. Population and ethnic composition were added, along with the numbers for linguistically diverse communities residing in Canberra. Another addition was a list of dates for religious or secular holidays and special national days. Strong food likes/dislikes were noted. The consultation involved communicating by mail with 80 ethnic communities, inviting their feedback on relevant cultural profiles. Individuals and consulate officials were consulted where appropriate. Thirty-eight replies were received (almost half of the respondents), and their feedback has been gratefully received and incorporated. Where further information was needed, telephone contact was made. Consultation also took place with key migrant services, and feedback sought from SAAP service-providers. The project is by nature a fluid consultative process, with many perspectives, and continuous change.

## Census data

Census figures from the 2000-2001 Census in Australia have been used to give a broad picture of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the ACT and Australia. The figures are indicative of the size of ethnic groups in Australia and the ACT, but do not include second-generation residents, and cannot be exact. For one reason, the question about ethnicity allows the respondent to name up to three identified ethnic groups. For another reason, the Census allows a response stating, for example, 'Africa' (not further defined or NFD). The numbers of respondents giving an NFD response would therefore not be counted in the number of people born in a particular country and resident in the ACT. As some of the data from the 2001 Census has not yet been published, I am indebted to Patrick Stakelum, Manager Demographics, Policy Group, ACT Chief Minister's Department for allowing me to use the figures he extracted from the C 2000 database (unpublished data). Statistics were also updated from the DIMIA web-site.

## The Future for the Cultural Dictionary

The number of requests for the Cultural Dictionary from trainers and other community and public sector users has been encouraging. It is hoped that the new edition will be available to a range of users as well as the service-providers for whom it is designed. Another possibility for the future is to make the Cultural Dictionary available on-line, in order to allow for continued updating of entries, new entries and wider access. The editor hopes that this resource will be used throughout Canberra and Australia to stimulate interest in diverse cultures and to increase cultural understanding in society as a whole.

Fiona McIlroy

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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For more information and a catalogue of publications, contact:  
Brigham Young University, Kennedy Center Publications, PO Box 24538, Provo, UT 84602-4538, USA.

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**Ethnic communities contacted by letter:**

ACT Latin Americans Senior Centre Inc  
ACT Chinese Australian Association  
ACT Singapore-Australia Association Inc  
ACT Society of Koreans for Mutual Evolution  
ACT Spanish Migrants Co-ordinating Committee  
Afghan Community of the ACT Inc  
African-Australian Association  
Al-Haadi Welfare Association of Australia Inc  
Alliance Francaise de Canberra  
Arab-Australian Friendship Society Inc  
Argentine-Australian Cultural & Sports Association Inc  
Australasian Federation of Finnish Societies & Clubs Inc  
Australia-Indonesia Association ACT  
Australia-Nepal Friendship Society  
Australia-Chile Friendship Society  
Australia Sri Lanka Association (ACT)Inc  
Australian Sri Lanka Buddhist Association of Canberra Inc  
Australia-Italy Association-Australian Friends of Italy  
Australian-Japan Society (ACT)Inc  
Australian Bosnian & Herzegovinian Community Association  
Australian Croatian Congress  
Australian Thailand Association Canberra Inc  
Bangladesh Australia Association Canberra Inc

BESEDA The Czechoslovak Australian Association of Canberra & Region Inc  
 Burmese Association ACT  
 Cambodian Association of the ACT Inc  
 Canberra Chile Australia Association Inc  
 Canberra Finnish Society  
 Canberra Islamic Centre  
 Canberra Korean Culture and Service Centre  
 Canberra Latvian Association  
 Colombian and Australian Society of the ACT Inc CASA  
 Council of Polish Organisations in the ACT  
 Croatian Community Welfare Centre  
 Croatian Women's Association  
 Cultural Information Centre of Serbia  
 Cyprus Community of Canberra ACT Inc  
 Das Zentrum Australian-German Institute Inc  
 Egyptian Australian Cultural Association  
 Eritrean Community of the ACT  
 Ethiopian Community  
 Fiji Australia Association of ACT Inc  
 Filipino Australian Seniors Association ACT  
 Greek Orthodox Community and Church of Canberra and District  
 India-Australia Association of Canberra Inc  
 Islamic Society of ACT Inc  
 Macedonian Orthodox Community of Canberra  
 Malaysian Club of the act INC  
 Maltese Australian Association Canberra and Queanbeyan Inc  
 Muslim Womens' Welfare Association  
 Pakistan Australia Friendship Association of Canberra Inc  
 Pan Pacific & South East Asia Women's Association Australia Inc  
 Philippine Cultural Society of Canberra  
 Russian Orthodox Community of the ACT  
 Salvadorean Women's Group  
 Samoan Association in Canberra and Queanbeyan Inc  
 Serbian-Australia Social and Cultural Centre  
 Slovenian Australian Association of Canberra Inc  
 The Association of the Age-Free Vietnamese in the ACT and surrounding District  
 The Lao Association (ACT) Inc  
 Tongan Association of Canberra and Queanbeyan Inc  
 Turkish Australian Cultural Association of the ACT  
 Ukrainian Association of the ACT Inc  
 Vietnamese Community in Australia ACT Chapter  
 Vietnamese Women's Association ACT Inc

- The assistance of the following Consulates or Embassies providing further information was appreciated:

Embassy of the Czech Republic  
 Cyprus High Commission  
 Embassy of the Republic of Korea  
 Embassy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
 Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
 Embassy of Iraq  
 Embassy of the Slovak Republic

- The following key migrant services were contacted for their expertise:

Migrant Resource Centre of Canberra & Queanbeyan  
 Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre  
 Companion House assisting Survivors of Torture & Trauma  
 ACT Multicultural Council  
 ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs

# GLOSSARY

The following is a list of some frequently used concepts found in this Cultural Dictionary. They are not definitions; they are explanations of how the terms are used in this document, and the significance they have in regard to understanding the culture.

## Continental Style of eating

This term refers to the style of eating in which the fork is held in the left hand and the knife remains in the right hand. Hands are generally kept above the table, with wrists able to rest on the edge.

## Extended family

As used in the Cultural Dictionary, this term refers to a family unit that includes parents, their children, and one or more relatives. The relatives may include grand-parents, and sometimes cousins, aunts and uncles. Some extended family units are organised with older parents, their married sons and their families, and all unmarried sons and daughters.

## Nuclear family

As used in the Cultural Dictionary, this term refers to a family unit that includes one or two parents and their children. The nuclear family usually lives in a single- family dwelling.

## Poly-ethnic

As used in the Introduction, this term means: of many ethnic origins.

## Staple food

Staple foods are those foods that supply the majority of the average person's nutritional requirements. A culture's staple food is usually a starchy food with high carbohydrate content, such as rice, wheat, millet, cassava (manioc) or corn. As well, staple foods include the meats, fruit and vegetables eaten in large quantities or on a regular basis.

## Western-style

This term usually refers to dress habits, culture, consumer goods, eating customs and other traditions found in so-called first world countries such as Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. Their culture is referred to as *Western culture* because of their common ancient roots, primarily Greek and Roman philosophical, legal, political and social heritage. It usually refers to cultures that have a Judeo-Christian values system and are primarily Christian in orientation.

## Acronyms

**Note: Most acronyms have been explained in the text**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
SAR	Separate autonomous region
NES	Non-English Speaking (country, community or population)

# REFERENCES

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Contact 2002/2003 Canberra's Community Information Handbook  
Community Information & Referral Service of the ACT

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Population Flows: Immigration Aspects February 2002 Department of Immigration & Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

SBS World Guide 2002 10<sup>th</sup> Edition Hardie Grant Books South Yarra Victoria

## Websites and database

<http://onlinedition.culturegrams.com>

[www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

[www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

[www.geohive.com/global/pop](http://www.geohive.com/global/pop)

[www.sbs.com.au/radio](http://www.sbs.com.au/radio)

C database 2000 (Census 2001 unpublished)

# AFGHANISTAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

28,060,591 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 3.48%  
Ethnic groups include Pashtun (38%), Tajik (25%), Hazara (19%), Uzbek (6%). Minor ethnic groups include Aimaks, Turkmen, and Baloch.

### Resident in the ACT

150 born in Afghanistan (Census 2001, unpub.)

### Language

Dari (Persian) and Pashto are the official languages of Afghanistan. Although Pashto has quite an extensive literature, Dari is used for cultural expression and business and government transactions of the many dialects spoken. The Turkish Uzbek, Turkoman, and Kirgiz are most prevalent in the border regions.

### Religion

More than 99 percent of the people of Afghanistan are Muslims, mainly of the Sunni sect. Most of the remainder, notably the Hazara, belong to the Shiite sect. Small colonies of Jews, Hindus and Parsis are scattered in the towns.

### General Attitudes

Afghanistan has a rich cultural heritage, covering more than 5,000 years. The mode of living for Afghans who live outside of the city can be described as that of a peasant tribal society. Kinship is the basis of social life and determines the patriarchal character of the community. Religion plays a very important role in people's lives. Afghans are expressive and emotional and are well known for their hospitality.

### Personal Appearance

Although Western style clothing is worn in Afghanistan, the national dress (Afghani dress) *peran-n-tunban* is also worn on national days or religious days.

Afghans who live in rural areas, wear traditional clothing. Most women completely cover their hair and bodies with a cloth called *chadari*. Men usually wear Western-style clothing. Because the people of Afghanistan are from a mosaic of ethnic and linguistic groups, every ethnic group has its own national dress for men and women.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the customary greeting in Afghanistan. A slight bow or nod while shaking hands shows respect. A man does not shake a woman's hand unless she offers it first. Afghans of the same sex will often kiss each other on the cheek as a greeting and sign of affection. Afghans often ask about the family and the health of the other. Afghans generally stand when someone, especially an older or more prominent person, enters the room for the first time and again when someone leaves. When addressing others formally, professional titles are used.

### Gestures

Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands, but not with the left hand alone. The soles of the feet should not point at any person. Slouching or stretching legs in a group is offensive. Out of respect and to maintain proper distance between genders, men and women do not always make eye contact during conversation. Men and women do not display affection in public, even if married.

## Visiting

Afghanistan is a poor country, but it is rich in traditions and social customs. Hospitality is very important in the Afghan code of honour. The best possible food is prepared for guests even if other members of the family have to go without. A guest is always given a seat or the place of honour at the head of the room. Tea is served first to the guest to quench his/her thirst. Women and girls are always involved in the preparation of food. Afghan philosophy claims a guest is a gift from (or friend of) Allah. Visitors remove their shoes before entering carpeted areas of a home, although this is not often practiced in larger cities. Afghans accept gifts, but they do not open them in front of the giver. If offered gifts, refreshments, or invitations from a friend, it is polite to decline a few times before graciously accepting and thanking the host several times.

## Eating

The traditional mode of eating in Afghanistan is on the floor. Everyone sits around on large colourful cushions, called *toshak*. These cushions are normally placed on the beautiful carpets, a *disterkhan* (table cloth) is spread over the floor or carpet before the dishes of food are brought. Food is usually shared communally; three or four people will share one large platter of rice and individual side dishes of stew (*qorma*), or vegetables. Home made chutneys, pickles, as well as fresh *nan* (bread) usually accompany the food. The traditional way of eating is with the right hand spoons may be used for puddings and teaspoons for tea. Because hands are used in eating, there is a hand washing ceremony before and after meals. Afghans rarely eat in restaurants.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family unit is strong in Afghanistan and provides its members with identity, security, and social organisation. The father is the undisputed head of the household. Large families with many children, especially boys, are preferred. The married sons remain until they are financially independent. Polygamy is permitted by Islamic law, but the man should provide for each wife equally, and he may only take a new wife after receiving permission from his first wives. The elderly are respected and cared for by younger members of the extended family.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating, as practiced in the West, is not common in Afghanistan. Members of the opposite sex are rarely alone with each other unless married, related or engaged. Daughters are usually protected by their families to the point that they do not speak to strangers until married. Boys' schools have been separated from girls' schools, and many girls until recently received no schooling. Afghans love an excuse for a party. Births, engagements and weddings are celebrated in grand style. The birth of the first child, especially a male child, is a big occasion. Afghans view marriage as a union of two families as much as a union of two people. A Muslim holy man usually completes the marriage contract between the two families. Afghanistan has a low divorce rate.

## Diet

The mainstays of the Afghan diet are rice, lamb, and bread (*nan*). Islamic law forbids the consumption of pork and alcoholic beverages. Tea is the most popular drink.

Kebabs or fish grilled over charcoal and served with salads and hot fresh *nan* flat breads are very popular food for picnics.

## Holidays & Special Days

Victory of the Muslim Nation	28 April
Remembrance Day for Martyred and Disabled	4 May
Independence Day	19 August

# ALBANIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

3,551,787 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.88% Another 3-4 million Albanians live in neighbouring countries. 95% of the population is Albanian, descended from ancient Illyrians, 3% Greek, 0.5% Romanians, 0.4% Macedonians, 0.2% Montenegrins, the remainder Yugoslav and Gypsy.

### Resident in the ACT

3 born in Albania (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The Albanian language Shqip is descended from Illyrian. Albania adopted a Latin script in 1908. Two dialects, Gheg and Tosk were spoken in Albania, but the official language (adopted after 1945) is based on Tosk.

### Religion

The majority (70%) of the population is Muslim (Sunni and Bektashi), while 20% are Orthodox Christians, and 10% Catholic.

### General attitudes

For Albanians, the family and ethnic heritage is of high value. Personal honour is also valued. Northern Albanians, particularly in the mountains, are known to be resourceful, courageous and hardy. They honour a tradition called the *besa*, (sworn truce). Continued social and economic turmoil has wearied the people.

### Personal appearance

Traditional, hand-made clothing is still worn in villages. Cotton and wool is preferred. Women in the north wear a headscarf and a *fustancelle* (a full, colourful skirt). Men wear a *xhamadan* (wool vest). Urban professional men wear suits and ties, while women wear dresses and skirts more than pants. Young people wear jeans, T-shirts and sneakers.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Albanians greet each other with a handshake, and a hug for friends. Women greet with a kiss on each cheek. Except for friends, the Albanians use: *Zonja* (Mrs), *Zonjusje* (Miss), or *Zoteri* (Mr).

### Visiting

Visiting gives great pleasure to Albanians, and hospitality is a cultural event. Unplanned visits are frequent. Guests are greeted with: *Mire se vini* or *Mire se erdhet* (Welcome!). Visitors bring gifts for birthdays, but no gift is needed if they are invited for a meal.

Gifts are only opened after the guests have left. Albanian hosts like to walk the guest some way down the road.

### Eating

An Albanian breakfast consists of bread and butter, milk, eggs, jam, cheese and Turkish or espresso coffee. Lunch is usually the main meal, (1-2 pm). Vegetables are followed by rice soup flavour with veal or chicken, and salad. The main course may be *gjelle* (boiled beans with meat) or stuffed eggplants or peppers. Albanians eat with the fork in the left hand, knife in the right. The first toast is made to everyone's health and friendship.



## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Urban families generally have one or two children, while rural families may have three or four. Usually, the father heads the family, while the women take responsibility for household work and caring for children. Men and women have equal social rights, and both parents usually work. Adult children often live with their parents, and take responsibility for the care of the elderly parents.

### Dating & Marriage

Young people make their own choice of spouse, though rural families are still involved in the selection. Urban youth begin dating at about age 16, and go to movies or small cafe bars for social interaction. Men marry after age 26, while women tend to be in their early twenties.

### Diet

The Albanian diet is strongly influenced by Greek, Turkish and Italian cuisine. Traditional dishes include *fasule* (boiled dried beans) cooked with onion, tomatoes and dried salt mutton or *pasterma*. Dairy products include yogurt, cottage cheese, feta and *kach kavall* cheeses. Local fruits include apples, pears, peaches, figs and grapes. The alcoholic drink raki is often served before the main meal, and wine is served during or after a meal. *Burek* (bread stuffed with cheese and spinach) common throughout the region probably originated in Albania. Ice-cream is also popular, and Albanians living elsewhere are well known as ice-cream vendors.

### Holidays & Special Days

New Year	1-2 January
Independence Day and Liberation Day	29 November
Christmas	25-26 December (for Christians only)
Muslim Ramasan Bairam (feast at end of Ramadan)	
Kurban Bairam	

# ALGERIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

32,461,617 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.71%

### Resident in the ACT

6 born in Algeria (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is the official language of Algeria. French was the primary language of business before 1992, but is now only rarely used in the country. Various Berber dialects are spoken in Berber homes and in remote areas but most Berbers also speak Arabic. Arabic speakers constitute 75% of the population, while Berber speakers make up 25% approximately, with French speakers reduced to less than 50,000.

### Religion

Islam is Algeria's state religion; 99 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. The Islamic day of worship is Friday, a day for men to go to the mosque and hear a sermon. There are 60,000 Roman Catholics, and a small Jewish community (less than 1000).

### General Attitudes

Algerians are a formal and traditional people, yet they are quite expressive and individualistic. One is expected to speak one's mind, yet in an inoffensive manner. Although Algerians enjoy good conversation, being overly frank and direct in speech is considered impolite. Expressiveness, courtesy, individualism and formality are key attributes of the Algerian character. In this male dominant society, sex roles are clearly defined. Nevertheless, some women do fill important positions in public and private professions. About ten percent of the labour force is female.

### Personal Appearance

Although Western clothing is common, especially in urban areas, traditional North African Muslim clothing is also prominent. In areas of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) control, the majority of people wear some form of traditional attire, especially women. In public, it is proper to be dressed conservatively. Militants have demanded that women be veiled and are willing to enforce their orders. Even in non-FIS areas, modest clothing is worn by all segments of society.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

In Algeria, as throughout the Arab world, hospitality is a cultural keynote. This is especially true in Algerian Cities, where Arabic custom is blended with equally warm Gallic traditions. Greetings are genuinely cordial and open to friend and stranger alike; they are usually accompanied by a hand shake and frequently an embrace (between members of the same sex). Anything less friendly in the way of a greeting is considered impolite, although many specific greetings are used for various situations. Strangers and acquaintances are addressed by title and family name, but friends and relatives use given names. In small gatherings, it is polite to greet each individual present. Elders are greeted first.

### Gestures

Using the fingers to point at objects or people is considered impolite. Separate use for the left hand is avoided. When handing something to or receiving it from another person, one uses either both hands, or the right hand only. Care is generally taken not to let the sole of the foot point at another person.

## Visiting

Visiting, whether for business or pleasure, is a social occasion in Algeria. Guests are offered refreshments first and it is impolite to refuse them. Algerians visit family members and close friends often and without prior arrangement, but others are expected to make plans in advance. If the visit is strictly for social purposes, it is customary to bring the host a small gift.

## Eating

Although Algerians generally eat with utensils, some foods are still eaten with the hand, especially dishes prepared with rich sauces where bread is used as a scoop. When the hand is used, only the right hand should touch food. Algerians are complimented when a guest leaves a little food on their plate, as this is a sign of the host's ability to more than adequately provide for their guests.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The Algerian family is an important, private and male-dominated entity, often including three or more generations (grandparents, married sons and their wives, and unmarried children) under the roof of a single home. There is, however, a definite trend in urban areas toward a smaller nuclear family unit. Mothers are expected to care for the children and the household while the fathers are responsible for family income and discipline. Children are expected to honour their parents, obeying them in youth and taking care of them in their old age.

## Dating & Marriage

Algerian youth meet openly at universities, public places and on special occasions, but they do not date in the Western tradition. Marriage represents the linking not just of individuals but of families. Consequently, matchmaking is often a family affair, and romantic love is seen as something that grows with time after marriage. Women generally marry in their early 20s, and men a few years later.

## Diet

Native Algerian cuisine is found in great variety in both city and rural environments. Urban cuisine matches the best in the world and has a strong Gallic flavour. Popular are lamb and chicken dishes, stews and pastas. *Couscous*, a pasta-like semolina cooked with lamb or chicken and vegetables, is perhaps the most popular Algerian dish. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcoholic beverages.

## Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Ben Bell's Overthrow	19 June
Independence Day	5 July
Anniversary of the Revolution	1 November
Religious days according to Islamic or Christian calendar	

# ARGENTINA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

37,959,620 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.15%  
Foreign-born citizens constitute 6.8% of the population, and the largest indigenous Indian groups are Andean Colla (35,100), Chiriguan (23,700) and the Araucan Mapuches in Patagonia (21,600).

### Resident in the ACT

223 born in Argentina (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

While Spanish is the official language of Argentina, many people speak some English. German, French, and Italian are also widely spoken, as are several indigenous languages. Argentine Spanish also contains many distinct phrases and terms not used in other Spanish-speaking countries.

### Religion

Roughly 90 percent of the people belong to the Roman Catholic Church; approximately 2 percent are members of various Protestant churches, another 2 percent are Jewish, and the remaining 6 percent belong to other religious organisations.

### General Attitudes

Argentines are proud of their nation. Prosperity, family, education, and personal relationships are important values to Argentines. Urban Argentines tend to be cosmopolitan, progressive, and outgoing. Those who live in rural areas are more conservative and traditional. Throughout the country, it is important to show respect to the elderly and to honour friendships.

### Personal Appearance

While dress may differ considerably from region to region, it is generally conservative. In Buenos Aires, European fashions are popular and readily available. In other areas, dress may reflect regional culture. Older women seldom wear pants but the younger generation prefers dressing more casually.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

It is customary to address people by a title (*Señor*, *Señora*, Doctor, among others) when being introduced. A handshake and slight nod show respect. Women are most likely to kiss each other, but a man and woman may greet in this manner if well acquainted. A person might wave and smile at an acquaintance too distant to greet verbally; it is not polite to call out a greeting. When approaching someone such as a police officer or customs official for information, one should always greet the official before asking any questions.

### Gestures

It is improper for a man and a woman to show affection in public. During conversation personal spaces tend to be less than in some cultures, and people might touch each other or stand close when speaking. Yawning without covering the mouth, as well as placing one's hands on the hips, is impolite. Eye contact is considered important in conversation. Hats are removed in buildings, houses, elevators, and in the presence of women.

### Visiting

Argentines often visit friends and relatives without prior arrangement. People enjoy having guests in the home, and usually offer them refreshments. Espresso-style coffee is typical. Invited guests are not expected to arrive on

time, as punctuality is not as important as the individual person. Guests will not offend hosts by arriving up to thirty minutes late. Visitors greet each person of the group individually; a group greeting is inappropriate. Dinner guests often bring a small gift such as flowers, candy, or pastries to their hosts. Guests are not seated until the host directs them to do so. Compliments about the home, meal, or host's family are appreciated. When leaving, a guest again addresses every person present. The host usually opens the door for guests when they leave.

## Eating

Three meals are eaten each day. The main meal is traditionally served at midday. The evening meal is often served after 9 pm. Argentines use the continental style of eating. Hands (but not elbows) should always be above the table, not in the lap. Using a toothpick in public is considered bad manners, as is blowing one's nose or clearing one's throat at the table. Eating in the street or on public transportation is inappropriate.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Families tend to be rather small, averaging two children. The responsibility of raising children and managing household finances falls mainly on the mother, and she, in turn, exerts great influence in the family decisions. More women are working outside the home, but they presently comprise less than 30 percent of the work force. Men are often occupied with work in the evening. Children are central to the family and receive a great deal of attention. Families will sacrifice much to give their children a good education. Until 1987, divorce was illegal in Argentina, but it is now increasing.

### Dating & Marriage

Group activities between boys and girls begin at about age 15, when girls have their most important birthday which marks the end of their childhood. Young couples' favourite activity is dancing. Serious relationships develop slowly over several years; most couples marry between 23 and 27 years of age.

### Diet

Beef is the staple of the Argentine diet. A favourite way to entertain is the *asado* (barbecue) on weekends. Other foods include baked stuffed beef and *empanadas* (meat or vegetable pies). A preferred winter stew is *locro* (made of meat, corn, and potatoes).

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Anniversary of the 1810 Revolution	25 May
Occupation of the Malvinas	10 June
Flag Day	20 June
Death of Gen. Jose de San Martin	17 August
Discovery of America	12 October
Roman Catholic celebrations and other religious days	

# AUSTRIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

8,176,989 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.24%

### Resident in the ACT

581 born in Austria (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is High German, but each region has its own dialect. Dialects are more pronounced in rural areas. A minority in southern Austria speak Croatian. Linguistic minorities include 60,000 Turks, 32,000 Slovenes and Croats, 23,000 Slovaks, 19,000 Hungarians and 10,000 Czechs. English is a required language in high schools and is spoken by many people.

### Religion

Some 85 percent of all Austrians are Roman Catholic, while 6 percent are Protestant. The other 9 percent belong either to various other Christian churches, Jewish faith, or to no denomination.

### General Attitudes

Austrians are known for their *Gemütlichkeit*, a relaxed and happy approach to life. A good-natured sense of frustration and bittersweet attitude toward reality are considered unique national traits. Although a relaxed people, Austrians are committed to hard work. They value cleanliness, neatness, and order. Litter is rare. People love to learn and engage in conversation. There is a deep regard for the environment, and Austrians take pride in their country's beautiful landscape. Cultural arts are important to all segments of society, as Austrians are extremely proud of their culture's contributions to Western civilisation. Austrians are not Germans and should not be referred to as such; it can be considered an insult.

### Personal Appearance

Austrians generally wear European clothing fashions. They take pride in dressing well, even if they are only going grocery shopping. It is important to dress properly for all events. Folk costumes are often worn on formal occasions and for celebrations. Each area has its own particular costume.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Austrians shake hands when greeting and parting. Even children shake hands with adults when greeting, as this is an important social courtesy. In Vienna, a man may still kiss the hand of a woman when introduced to her. Professional titles are important among the adult population and are used whenever known. Otherwise, titles such as Mr, Miss, and Mrs or Ms are combined with family names when addressing acquaintances and strangers. Close friends and young people use first names.

### Gestures

Hand gestures are used conservatively in polite company, as verbal communication is preferred. It is impolite for adults to chew gum in public. Motioning with the entire hand is more polite than using the index finger. Touching the index finger to one's forehead for temple is an insult. Yawns and coughs are covered when they cannot be avoided.

## Visiting

Austrians enjoy entertaining in their home and having guests. It is impolite to drop by unannounced. Invited guests should arrive on time. Punctuality is important to Austrians. Customarily, guests remove their shoes when entering a home. However, this tradition is not practiced in many homes today. Guests remain standing until invited to sit down. Hosts customarily offer the best seats to their guests. Men stand when a woman enters the room or when talking to a woman who is standing. Invited guests bring flowers, candy, or a small gift. Gifts are given to the wife, or perhaps the children, but not the husband- even if the gift is for the family.

To show courtesy to the hosts, guests do not ask to use the telephone, nor do they offer to help make any preparations. When guests leave they are accompanied outside to the gate. Hosts remain until the guests are out of sight. It is polite and generally expected for guests on foot to turn once or twice while walking away and wave to the hosts.

## Eating

Eating habits are changing in Austria. For example, the main meal is served in the evening rather than midday and afternoon tea is no longer common. At the same time, certain traditions remain strong, such as keeping hands above the table during the meal, not gesturing with utensils, and not placing elbows on the table while eating. It is impolite to begin eating until all persons at the table are served. Austrians eat in the continental style, with the fork in the left hand and the knife remaining in the right.

When guests are present, the hostess will nearly always offer second helpings, but a polite (Thank you, no) is accepted.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Austrian families are usually small, having one or two children. However, rural families are often a bit larger. Most Austrians expect to marry and have a family. Both parents generally work outside the home, with women comprising nearly 40 percent of the labour force. In such cases, married couples tend to share duties related to the household and children. Some homes, especially in rural areas, maintain a more strict patriarchal family structure.

## Dating & Marriage

Austrian youth begin associating in groups. When they start getting together as couples, they usually only date one person at a time and the relationship is generally considered serious. Boys and girls pay their own expenses, with one or the other offering to pay for both only on special occasions. Eating out, going to movies, and dancing are favourite activities. Couples often decide to live together before or instead of marriage. The typical age for marriage is between 25 and 28 years. A civil ceremony must be performed for marriage to be legal; church wedding is optional.

## Diet

Austrians love good food and have a rich and varied cuisine drawn from the various cultures that once comprised the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Specialties vary by region but include such favourites as *Wiener Schnitzel* (breaded veal cutlet), *Sachertorte* (a rich chocolate cake with apricot jam and chocolate icing), *Knodel* (moist potato dumplings), and *goulash*. A typical day begins early with a light breakfast of coffee or hot chocolate, rolls, bread, and jam or marmalade. Later in the morning, some eat a second, heartier breakfast, including goulash or hot sausages. The main meal can be at midday or in the evening. It usually includes soup, meat (often pork) with potatoes or pasta. Afternoon tea may include sandwiches, pastries, and coffee. Austrians enjoy beer, wine, herbal teas, apple juice with sparkling mineral water, fruit juices, and soft drinks.

## Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
National Holiday	26 October
All Saints Day	12 November
St Nikolaus Day	5 December

# AZERBAIJAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

7,804,339 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.32%  
Ethnic composition is Azeri (90%), Armenian (2.3%), Russian (2.5%), Dagestani (3.2%) and 2% other minority.

### Resident in the ACT

0 born in Azerbaijan (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Azeri is similar to modern Turkish and is written in the Latin alphabet, although it has also been written in Arabic and Cyrillic scripts. Many Azeris can speak Russian.

### Religion

Azerbaijan is traditionally an Islamic nation. Religious worship was outlawed during the Soviet era. Today, people can practice their religion freely, praying at home and attending a mosque as they please.

### General Attitudes

The attitude of Azeris as a nation has changed over the years. Conditioned to view themselves as Soviets after World War II, the people still felt separate from Russians. The nation experienced a revival of native literature and history in the 1970's that has provided the basis for Azeri feelings in today's political climate. A desire for national prosperity, love for the motherland and pride in the native language and culture are strong and are being fostered.

### Personal Appearance

Men and women generally wear Western clothing. However, rural women sometimes wear traditional clothing that includes a long, pleated skirt, a long-sleeved blouse and a *charshab* - a long piece of cloth wrapped loosely around the skirt. Young women cover their heads with light kerchiefs or an *orpack*, a small piece of cloth that wraps around the head and shoulders. Older men usually wear the traditional *papah*, a high round lambskin hat.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When greeting each other, men shake hands. Women do not shake hands. Female relatives or friends might hug and kiss. One often asks after the health of the other's family. People of the same age call each other by first names. It is common to use "uncle" and "aunt" as forms of address with the person's given name (ie. this does not necessarily imply any family relationship).

### Gestures

Shoes are removed before entering mosques and homes. When an older person enters a room, those present stand to greet them. It is impolite to cross one's legs, smoke or chew gum in the presence of one's elders. It is impolite to speak loudly to one's colleagues. The right hand is used in handshakes and other interactions; it is rude to use the left hand unless the right hand is busy. One may point at objects, but not people, with the index finger. Shaking the index finger while it is vertical is used to reprimand or warn someone. The index finger is also used to attract a listener's attention. The thumbs-up gesture is used for "fine" or "OK". Rounding the finger to touch the thumb tip and form a circle is obscene.



## Visiting

Visiting relatives or friends is popular in Azerbaijan. Hospitality is part of the culture. Friends and family visit without prior notice. Guests are often invited for a meal or “tea”. Tea is a mid-afternoon affair that includes pastries, fruit preserves (not jam), fruit, candy, and tea. At other times any guest will be offered tea and some sweets. Visitors often take gifts to their hosts, such as flowers, confectionery or pastries. A wrapped present is not opened in the presence of the giver.

## Eating

People usually eat three meals a day. For breakfast, tea with bread and butter, cheese or marmalade is common. Dinner, eaten in the afternoon, includes a meat or vegetable soup, followed by *pilau* (pilaf), a meat dish, potatoes or macaroni. For supper, people usually eat the same as for dinner, without the soup. The fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right. In most traditional homes, the cook prepares the plates in the kitchen for each person. In other homes, serving dishes are placed on the table. Guests do not serve themselves, they are served by others. In cities, men and women eat together at large social gatherings, but they eat separately in rural areas. Eating in restaurants is not common. The host pays the entire bill and the tip.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Azeris value family over the individual and family needs come first. Men are protective of the women in the family. Parents feel a lifelong commitment to provide their children with financial support, even after their marriage. Rural Azeris tend to live in extended families. The father is the undisputed head of the family. Married sons and their families live with their parents until financially independent, and all members of the family are loyal to and dependent on the group. This tradition is less evident in the cities, where nuclear families are more common. Rural parents usually build a house for their married sons, and urban parents might buy them apartments. Unmarried children generally live with their parents, regardless of age. Adult children are expected to care for their aged parent. Grandparents help care for grandchildren when necessary.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating in the Western sense is not common in Azerbaijan. If urban men and women go out, their relationship is expected to lead to marriage. Premarital sex is strongly discouraged. Urbanites choose their spouses but rural Azeris are expected to follow their parents' wishes regarding a mate. To become engaged, a man sends a formal proposal to the woman's parents through an older relative.

## Diet

Azeris are proud of their cuisine. The most popular Azeri dish, *pilau*, is made of rice that has been steamed for a long time and is topped by a variety of foods, such as chicken, lamb, dried fruit or milk. Kebab is grilled pieces of meat on a stick. *Piti* is a lamb broth with potatoes and peas cooked in clay pots in the oven. *Dovge*, (yogurt, rice, and herbs) is often served after the main meal at celebrations. Dinner ends with sherbet or tea, *murebbe* preserves and pastries.

## Holidays & Special Days

Day of Commemoration	20 Jan
Independence Day	28 May
Republic Day	28 May
National Salvation Day	15 June
National Independence Day	18 Oct
Constitution Day	12 Nov

# BANGLADESH

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

134,060,405 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 1.59%

Ethnic composition is Bengali (97.7%), Bihari and tribal, mainly in the Chittagong Hills. These include Chakma, Murung, Tippera and Buddhist Mru people. Jalalabadis comprise 6 million altogether.

### Resident in the ACT

403 born in Bangladesh (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Bangla, the official language, is also spoken in India's West Bengal. People with a university education usually speak English.

### Religion

Bangladesh has the second largest Muslim population in the world; more than 85 percent of the population are Muslim. Most Bangladesh's are Sunni Muslims. Hindus (13 percent) make up the other major religious group. Jalalabadis practice a form of Sufism, living in a Territory that was divided between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

### General Attitudes

A calm and serious face is considered a sign of maturity. Therefore, while Bangladeshis might not smile in public, they are not being unfriendly. It is not customary to thank someone for a favour. Bangladeshis value the group over the individual, so family needs come first. Friendships are expected to be strong and durable. Society is male dominated. Social classes play an integral but diminishing role in Bangladesh. Bangladeshis are proud of their artistic tradition, which is much older than their young country.

### Personal Appearance

Although many men wear Western clothing, especially in urban areas, women generally wear a traditional *saree* - a long piece of printed cloth wrapped around the body in a special way. Jewellery is important to a woman's wardrobe; it also serves as financial security. Women do not usually wear pants. Adults do not wear shorts.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

One does not shake hands, kiss, or embrace a member of the opposite sex in public. In addressing people, Bangladeshis add different suffixes to names to show not only respect, but also closeness. The terms "sister" and "brother" are used commonly for friends and colleagues as for family members. Age difference is the key factor in determining how to address another person.

### Gestures

Eye contact during conversation shows sincerity. In general, it is impolite to cross one's legs or to smoke in the presence of elders, regardless of what the older person does. Bangladeshis are also sensitive about one's foot touching books or other reading materials. It is polite to point with the chin, but impolite to whistle or wink in public. Beckoning with the index finger is very rude.

### Visiting

Bangladeshis visit each other often, usually in the late morning or late afternoon. For social occasions, most people avoid being the first or among the last to arrive. When people are invited to an event, but cannot go, they still say they will try to attend. Saying "No" may be interpreted as not valuing the host's friendship. The entire

extended family is expected to be invited. Not gifts are expected of dinner guests, but dinner invitations are usually reciprocated.

## Eating

Bangladeshis generally do not use knives and forks at home, but spoons are used to eat sweets. Food is eaten with the right hand, which is washed after each meal. *Shu'ra* ( a sauce) is often served with meals. Food is not passed around the table; rather, plates are taken to a main dish for serving.

## LIFE STYLE

### Family

Due to economic necessity, extended families often share the same dwelling, but the nuclear family is becoming more popular with the younger generation. Children, especially sons, are expected to care for their elderly parents. Bangladesh has no social security system or nursing homes. Grandparents or older siblings are responsible for child care when the parents are away or working.

### Dating and Marriage

Dating is unknown. When men and women go out together, as do a small number of university students, the relationship is expected to lead to marriage. Sexual relations outside of marriage are strongly discouraged. Women are often married before they are 18, especially in rural areas. Men marry after they finish education or have some financial security. Marriage is often arranged through a *ghatak* (matchmaker), who could be a relative or family friend. If a man and woman get to know each other on their own, the man sends a formal proposal to the woman's parents through an older relative. Although divorce and polygamy are legal, both carry a negative stigma.

### Diet

Rice is the main staple food. Spicy food is preferred. Food is often marinated in *shu'ra* (made from chopped onions and spices marinated in warm cooking oil).

### Holidays & Special Days

Shaheed Day & International Mother Language Day	21 February
Eid-al-adha and Eid-al-Fitr	Lunar calendar
Christmas, Easter	
National Independence Day	26 March
Bengali New Year's Day	14 April
Durga Puja	15 October
National Revolution & Solidarity Day	7 November
Victory Day	16 December

# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

3,994,571 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 1.38%

### Resident in the ACT

405 born in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Bosnian, a Slavic language that used to be known as Serbo-Croatian. According to ethnic and political affiliation, Bosnians may speak Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian. At school, both Cyrillic and Latin scripts are taught, which are used in the Federation and Serb Republic.

### Religion

While medieval Bosnia was Christian, the Ottoman Empire introduced Islam to a significant number of the people (40%). The Muslims are referred to as Bosniacs, Catholics (15%) are identified as Bosnian Croats, and Eastern Orthodox (31%) are considered Bosnian Serbs. Before 1990, one third of the population had mixed marriages and identified as Yugoslavs. Since 1990, religious activity has increased.

### General attitudes

Bosnians are regarded as friendly, warm and outgoing. They enjoy *merak* (a relaxed pace of life). Each major group emphasises different traits. For example, Bosnian Serbs consider themselves proud and heroic, Bosnia Croats emphasises their courteous behaviour, and Bosniacs consider themselves as having warm personal relationships. *Ceif* means to act spontaneously for enjoyment.

### Personal Appearance

Western-style clothing is worn by most people, and urban residents pay special attention to their appearance and labels or brand names. Natural fibres are preferred over synthetic, while silk and furs are popular among some affluent people. Women often dye their hair. Some people in rural areas combine traditional with Western clothing. Berets and headscarves are traditional. Religious Bosniac women wear long skirts and full headscarves.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

On meeting, Bosnians usually shake hands. Younger people greet older people first, and offer their seat on public transport. Friends add the kiss- once on each cheek for Bosnian Croats, and three times for Bosnian Serbs. On parting, Bosnians might say: *Do vidjenja*, or the more informal *Vidimo Se*.

### Gestures

It is considered impolite to beckon with the index finger or shout in public. Friends wave to each other in the street. Bosnians usually offer older persons a seat on the bus. Eye contact is used in daily conversation, and is a particular point of etiquette when people raise their glasses for a toast.

### Visiting

Family and friends are fond of visiting, especially at weekends. People frequently sit for hours over a cup of coffee and a cigarette or some *rakija* (brandy), showing the leisurely pace of life. People drop by without notice. Invited guests often bring flowers, coffee, wine or chocolates. A first-time visitor is almost obliged to bring a gift. Gifts are usually not opened in the guest's presence. Flowers are given in odd numbers, even numbers being strictly for funerals.

Bosnians generally take off their shoes before entering a home. Hosts serve coffee at the beginning and end of a visit. *Meze* is a spread of pies, dried meats, cheese and salads offered for arranged visits. Bosniacs tend to stay only briefly when offering sympathy or congratulations. Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats tend to stay and eat.

## Eating

The day begins with black, strong coffee, leading to breakfast at midmorning. Lunch in the midafternoon is usually soup, meat with a vegetable, salad and dessert. Supper can be served at about 8pm. Bosnians eat with the fork in the left and knife in the right hand. Traditionally, especially in rural areas, pies are eaten with the hands. Hands remain above, and elbows off the table. It is not polite to speak with the mouth full, but friends can share off the same plate. When entertaining, more food is offered than can be eaten. Guests need to decline more than once.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

A rural household consists of grand-parents, parents and two or more children. The grandfather or father has a dominant role. Urban families have one or two children, with the grand-parents less involved. Both husband and wife usually work and share decision-making. Children may be cared for by family members, baby-sitters or child-care. Parents often continue to support children into adulthood with housing or money. In turn, children are expected to care for their elderly parents.

### Dating & Marriage

Young couples go out to fairs, cinemas, cafes, dance and disco clubs. Rural youth gather in town squares. To be legally married, there must be a civil ceremony. Many also have a religious ceremony. Rural marriage celebrations often mean days of feasting, and large tents for guests.

### Diet

Pies are the centrepiece of the Bosnian menu. *Burek* or meat pie, *zeljanica* or spinach and cheese pie, cabbage pie and many more abound. Breakfast pies are served with cheese or cream, and smoked sausage. For lunch Bosnians eat a hearty soup, with vegetables and meat. Other favourites are chicken and stuffed peppers. Devout Muslims do not eat pork, whereas other Bosnians enjoy pork. It is a custom to slaughter a pig for the family in November. Part of the meat is kept for Christmas and the rest is dried or smoked.

Bosnian cooking is influenced by Turkish and Greek cuisine. Sweets include baklava, a layered pastry with crushed nuts. *Tufahija* is boiled apple stuffed with nuts and sweet cream. Though Bosniacs consume less alcohol than most, *rakija* is found all over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### Holidays & Special Days

Day of the Republic	9 January in RS and 1 March in the Federation
Statehood Day	25 November
Christmas Day	25 December
Orthodox	7 January
Ramasam Bairam end of the holy month of Ramadan	
Hadzijski Bairam	
Jews	Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanash

# BOTSWANA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

1,596,086 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.47%

The Botswana people comprise up to 94% of the population. The eight inter-related ethnic groups include Basswani, Kweta and Ngwaketse located around Gaborone. The Kgatla, Malek and Tlokwa inhabit the Namibian border region; Khoikhoi and Ndebele are other groups, and of course the Bushmen live in the Kalahari.

### Resident in the ACT

15 born in Botswana (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Botswana is a landlocked country in southern Africa. Although English is the official language of government and secondary education, Setswana is the national language spoken by most people. Tjikalanga (also called Ikalanga) dominates in the northeast.

### Religion

Religious freedom is protected under the constitution, but Christianity is accepted as an official religion in the sense that the school day and official functions begin with prayer. Today, Catholics and Protestants comprise about one-fourth of the population. Another major congregation is the Spiritual Healing Church. Many rural people (up to half of the total population) continue to follow indigenous beliefs exclusively.

### General Attitudes

Society is founded on traditional law, with the community as the core of Tswana life and the chief as the symbol of unity. Each individual is expected to benefit the community. The more a person achieves, the greater that person's status with the group. Anything that can benefit the group is valued. Working family members are expected to support those without jobs, and people are expected to house travelling relatives for as long as necessary.

### Personal Appearance

Western dress is common in most areas. Despite the heat, urban men wear business suits and ties and women wear dresses or a skirt and blouse. Rural women often wear a wrap over their dresses to protect them from dirt. Mothers carry their babies on their backs in fabric slings. Married women cover their heads with a kerchief, both sexes typically have very short hair. Cleanliness and neatness are important throughout the country.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greetings are important; to fail to greet someone is rude. Formal verbal greetings, accompanied by shaking the right hand while supporting one's elbow with the left hand, are used among Setswana acquaintances and when greeting an elder or one of higher social status. Elders and those approaching greet first. Greeting customs vary for other ethnic groups. For example, among the Kalanga the younger person always greets first. Young children greet elders by extending both hands or clapping; the elder responds by kissing both hands and saying Are you well? Children may be named for some circumstance related to their birth and also given a pet name by which they are known at home. Traditionally, the father's first name becomes the child's surname. Now, the child takes the father's surname.

## Gestures

Hands may be pressed together in front of one's chest before accepting a gift with both hands. Botswana use a variety of gestures to suggest "no", "no thanks," or that something is all gone. Respect for elders during conversation is best shown by looking down toward the ground rather than into their eyes. Public displays of affection are inappropriate.

## Visiting

Relatives visit one another as often as they can. Because personal relationships are valued, unannounced visitors are welcomed into the home. Guests are offered water or a drink at first, anyone who arrives at mealtime is expected to eat with the family, usually helping with meal preparation. Guests who are not hungry are expected to try offered food and take some home.

## Eating

Eating habits vary between urban and rural settings, but sharing is the common denominator. For most, family meals involve eating from common bowls or plates. Children share a bowl between them. Everyone usually leaves a little food behind to indicate the meal has been filling. Drinks are never shared; each person has a cup. Smelling the food before eating it implies something is wrong with it. Leftovers are kept for later or given to departing guests.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Botswana historically lived in large villages with their agricultural and grazing lands at a distance. With women at the lands and men at the cattle posts, families were apart much of the time. Then during colonial times, many men began working in South African mines. Later, the youth moved to cities in search of work. Families remained tied through an extended family network. Today, although few men now work in South Africa, a continuous search for employment keeps families separate. For instance, married couples who are teachers might work across the country from one another. With men so often absent, women remain primarily responsible for the family, agriculture, and entrepreneurial pursuits.

## Dating & Marriage

Living away from home villages (for work or schooling) has dramatically changed the way young people interact. It was once rather restricted, but the youth now meet at discos and other sites. Because of the expense and obligations involved in formal marriage, more than half of all couples live together rather than marrying. Those who do marry may choose rites under either civil or customary law. Customary ceremonies involve two days or more of eating, drinking, dancing, and speeches. When a couple becomes engaged, the two families begin negotiations regarding the *bogadi* (bride price), which the groom's family will give the bride's family sometime in the future.

## Diet

Porridge made from sorghum, maize, or millet in the northeast is a staple food. It is served soft and often soured for breakfast, and thickened for the midday and evening meals. A popular relish is made of onions, chicken stock, and tomato sauce. Goats and chickens are raised for meat. Cattle are slaughtered for special occasions such as weddings and funerals.

## Holidays & Special Days

President's Day	15-16 July
Botswana Day	30 September-1 October
Religious holidays	

# BRAZIL

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

176,591,260 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.91%

The indigenous Indian population is less than 1%. Ethnic groups include Parakanas, Txukurramae, Kreen-Akrore, Yanomani (decimated by disease spread by northern road), Gaviao, Arara, Nambiquara, Guayajara, Satere Mave, Xavante Yoruba. At the last Census, 53% were white Brazilian, 22% were mulatto, 12% mestizzo, 11% black and 0.8% Japanese.

### Resident in the ACT

164 born in Brazil (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Portuguese is Brazil's official language. English, German, and French are popular second languages. Although Spanish is also understood by Portuguese speakers, some Brazilians may be offended when deliberately spoken in Spanish.

### Religion

Brazil is traditionally a strong Roman Catholic country. 73 percent of Brazilians are Roman Catholics, and some 20 percent belong to various groups, mostly Protestant. In the north east, many practice Afro-Brazilian religions that combine tribal beliefs with Catholicism.

### General Attitudes

Brazilians are friendly, warm, and free-spirited. They are also outgoing and enjoy being around others. Brazilians are often opinionated and will argue for their conviction with a vigour that may seem like anger, but is not. Brazilians tend to view time more as a sequence of events rather than hours and minutes. People are polite in crowds and shoving is considered discourteous.

### Personal Appearance

Brazilians prefer to wear European fashions, specifically Italian and French, in the cities. The people are very fashion conscious, especially women and wear the latest styles. Shoes are well kept and polished. Manicures and pedicures are popular.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Brazilians greet each other with a handshake; good friends often embrace. Women often kiss each other on alternating cheeks. When joining or leaving a small group, it is polite to shake hands with all who are present.

### Gestures

The "OK" sign, with the thumb and index finger forming a circle, is an offensive gesture. The "thumbs-up" sign is used to show approval. To beckon, all fingers of the hand wave with the palm facing down. To get someone's attention from a distance, people say "Psssst". Whistling at people is considered rude. Using a toothpick in public is rude if not done with discretion by covering the hand holding the toothpick with the other hand.

### Visiting

Brazilians enjoy visiting with one another. Their tropical climate allows for much time outdoors, including chatting outside late into the evening. When invited to a home, guests generally arrive several minutes late. If invited to dinner, a gift of candy, wine, or a small figurine is appropriate. One is generally expected to stay at least two hours. It is rude to ask personal questions, such as about age or salary.



## Eating

Brazilians eat in the continental style. People wash their hands before eating and refrain from touching food while eating. One's mouth is wiped each time before drinking. After-meal conversation often takes place over a cup of strong black coffee

## LIFE STYLE

### Family

Families are traditionally large and may include the extended family. The elderly who cannot care for themselves live with their children because it is improper to send them to a nursing home. The family is led by the father. The mother does have an influence in decisions however, especially those affecting the home. Children usually only leave home when they marry and rarely before. Men may leave early for employment reasons, but it is not uncommon for them to live at home until they are 30 if unmarried. Family members are very reliant on each other for assistance and enjoy being together. Women and young people often work to help and support families.

### Dating & Marriage

Group dating starts at about age 14. Serious dating and engagements may last as long as two or three years. Traditional families expect the young man to ask the girl's father for permission to be her boyfriend. Weddings may include two ceremonies: a legal civil ceremony and optional religious ceremony. Wedding parties are lavish and elegant, with much food, drink, and music.

### Diet

Breakfast usually consists of *cafe com leite* (coffee with milk), bread, cheese or marmalade, and butter. Lunch and dinner are the main meals and may include beans, rice, meat, salad, fruit, potatoes, and bread. The people drink plenty of coffee and *mate*, and herbal tea. Brazilian food is very tasty. In some provinces foods are often spiced with palm oil.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Independence Day	7 September
Our Lady Aparecida	12 October
Proclamation of the Republic	15 November
<i>Carnaval</i>	5 days preceding Ash Wednesday

# BULGARIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

7,590,020 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate -1.14%

Of the total population, 85% are Bulgarians, with significant numbers of Turks, Gypsies and Macedonians. There are a small number of Armenians, Romanians, Greeks, Russians and Tartars.

### Resident in the ACT

37 born in Bulgaria (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Bulgarian, and nearly all inhabitants speak it. About half of the Turkish population speaks Turkish as its mother tongue. Bulgarian is a Slavic language that uses an alphabet first developed in the ninth century by Cyril and Methodise. English is now the most popular language for children to study, followed by German and French.

### Religion

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church claims a membership of more than 85 percent of all Bulgarians. Muslims make up about 13 percent of the population. Orthodox monasteries are held in high regard for their religious and artistic significance.

### General Attitudes

Bulgarians are generally optimistic about the future. The youth are particularly interested in Western pop culture. An entrepreneurial spirit is being fostered; a person who owns a business is considered wealthy. Bulgarians generally respect those who are open, strong, capable, gregarious, good humoured, loyal to family and friends, and forthright. Family and group concerns are very important and play a role in individual decisions. Bulgarians take pride in their heritage and culture. People are interested in politics, both domestic and international, and try to be well informed.

### Personal Appearance

European and American fashions are popular, but clothing is expensive. Women usually wear a skirt and blouse or sweater and high heels to work. Women are more concerned with their appearance than men, always making an effort to be well dressed and well groomed in public. Professional men wear suits and ties to work. Hats, boots, scarves, gloves, and winter jackets or fur coats are worn during the cold winters.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When meeting someone, Bulgarians usually shake hands. The handshake might be accompanied in formal situations by "How are you?" Handshakes are not used when saying "Good morning", "Good evening" or "Good day". Close female friends might kiss each other on the cheek. First names are used in informal settings. Otherwise, titles and family names are used to address people when joining a small gathering. It is polite to greet each person individually, beginning with the elderly. It is not common for urban people to greet strangers while passing on the street, but this is considered polite in rural areas.

### Gestures

"Yes" is indicated by shaking the head from side to side, and "no" is expressed with one or two nods of the head. Hands are not generally used to replace or emphasise verbal communication. It is impolite to point with the index finger. It is impolite for men to cross an ankle over the knee. In a line or crowd it is not impolite or uncommon for

one to touch or press against another person. Bulgarians often touch while conversing, and female friends might walk arm in arm down the street.

## Visiting

Socialising is an important part of Bulgarian life. Friends and neighbours commonly drop by for a short visit without prior arrangement, but it is more typical for an invitation to be extended. Hosting friends for afternoon coffee and cake is popular, as is inviting them over for dinner. People often socialise at a cafe. Guests in the home are usually offered refreshments and drink first, even if not invited for a meal. Invited guests often bring flowers for the hostess, a bottle of alcohol for the host, and candy for the children. Women usually enter the home before men. In rural areas, guests remove their shoes upon entering the home; this courtesy is also practiced in many urban homes. Evening visits usually start after 8 pm and may last until after midnight. Bulgarians enjoy showing hospitality to guests and having long conversations, so it is rude to leave early. Eating and dancing are typical parts of an evening visit in urban areas.

## Eating

In addition to three meals a day, Bulgarians might have a mid-morning snack and afternoon coffee. The continental style of eating is most common. Conversation is expected and everyone waits for all to finish before leaving the table. Napkins are placed on the table, not in the lap.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family unit is strong and supportive of its members. The elderly are often cared for by their adult children. Unmarried adults live with their parents until they get married. Young couples often live with one set of parents until they are able to get housing for themselves. Most urban families do not have more than two children, while rural families are slightly larger. Women receive three years of maternity leave. Because urban women usually work outside the home, grandparents play an important role in child care. Men traditionally do not help with household duties, but the younger generation is assuming greater responsibilities.

## Dating & Marriage

The youth associate in groups at first. One-on-one dating does not usually occur until people are in their twenties. Favourite activities involve getting together at a cafe to drink and talk, going to a movie, dancing at discos, or relaxing in the park. Most Bulgarians expect to marry and have children. The average age for women to marry is between 18 and 25. Rural men marry in their twenties and urban men in their thirties. A legal civil ceremony is often followed by a church wedding.

## Diet

Bulgarians eat pork, fish, or lamb with most main dishes. Dairy products such as yogurt and cheese are common ingredients in many dishes. Popular main meals include moussaka (a casserole with pork or lamb, potatoes, tomatoes, and yogurt) and *nadenitsa* (stuffed pork sausage). Various cakes and baklava (a thin, leafy pastry with a syrup and nut filling) are also enjoyed for dessert. Meals are usually accompanied by a soft drink, alcohol, or coffee.

## Holidays & Special Days

Spring celebration	1 March
Liberation Day	3 March
Education Day	24 May

# BURMA (MYANMAR)

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

42,331,556 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.60%

The majority of Burma's people are Bamar (from which the name Burma is derived) or Burmese, but the Mon, Shan, Kachin, Karen, Chin, Rakhine and Kayah are also main ethnic groups, some of whom have come to Australia as refugees.

### Resident in the ACT

294 born in Burma (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Ethnically diverse, Burma is a nation of many races - some 135 ethnic groups, with their own languages and dialects, make up its population of nearly 45 million. It is impossible to mention more than a few of the races, for Burma is an anthropologists' paradise. The Burmese people call their own language Bamar or Myanmar and it is the main language spoken throughout the country. About 70 per cent of the people of Burma speak one or other of the Burma Group of languages while the percentage of those speaking Burmese is estimated at ninety. Despite the diversity and geographic separation the national groups share with each other a wide variety of social customs and culture. The Burmese language vocabulary contains a large number of Pali and Sanskrit words. The earliest Burmese writing was the Myazedi Stone Inscription, which is a four-sided stone inscription constructed in 1113 A.D. during the Pagan Period. The inscription is written in Myanmar, Pyu, Mon and Pali and was discovered in 1887.

### Religion

Burma has earned the rightful reputation of being the "Land of Pagodas" for throughout the length and breadth of the country, the dominant feature of any landscape is a pagoda, towering over the crest of a hill, nestling in a valley or standing beside the brink of a river. The majority of the Burmese people (89.5 %) are followers of the form of Buddhism known as Theravada. The remaining are Christian, Muslim and Hindu. Religious intolerance or discrimination on grounds of religion is rare throughout the long history of Burma. There is a complete absence of class consciousness among the people. Buddhism has been thriving in Burma since the 11th century, or perhaps even earlier. In the morning, long lines of Buddhist monks can be seen in the towns and villages making their alms rounds, receiving whatever food offered by the people. At the pagodas, there are always worshippers young and old, offering flowers, counting prayers on a string of wooden beads. When a boy reaches his teens, or sometimes earlier, a boy will become a monk during the school holidays, for periods ranging from a few days to a week or more. He will shave off his hair, wear a yellow robe, live in the monastery and learn whatever scriptures he can. Parents and grandparents take pride in being able to hold a great feast after the novitiation ceremony. Many girls, too, will enter meditation centres or shave off their hair and become young nuns in a nunnery during their school holidays.

When a Buddhist marries, a feast may again be held for the attending monks. Another feast may be held each time a child is born. And when a person dies, there will also be many offerings to the monks and scriptures recited in a ceremony organised by the remaining family and relatives to help the deceased on the way to another existence or rebirth. In the Buddhist home, there is always a shrine either in the front living room or upstairs if the home has two storeys. The shrine may be on a shelf high up on one wall, or a tall cupboard in which a Buddha image is kept. It is usually gilded with gold leaf (gold beaten to paper thinness) or gold paint. When one enters the shrine room, footwear must be removed, in the same way as when one goes to the pagoda or monastery, as a sign of respect.

### General attitudes

Given the Buddhist teaching of non-violence toward all creatures, animals, even insects as well as humans, the Burmese people are often quite forgiving in their attitude toward others. They generally prefer non-violent change.

## Greetings

Placing the hands in front at chest level, palms together, indicates respect. A slight bow of the head accompanies this gesture. Monks are at the top of the social ranking of people deemed worthy of respect. Next come parents (mother and then father), teachers and elders. These people should be deferred to and never contradicted directly, in order to avoid awkward situations from developing, however, unwittingly. The Burmese people are known for their gentle friendliness, which is due, to a considerable degree, to their Buddhist heritage.

## Dating & Marriage

Burmese Buddhist wedding is strictly a civil or non-religious ceremony. There are two phases to a wedding - the nuptial and the reception. The nuptial usually takes place in the home, the reception at home or in a hotel. The nuptial ceremony and reception are sometimes combined in a hotel. Following the wedding reception, is the wedding dinner which is only for close relatives and friends of the family who are invited specifically. Also, the offering of merit meal to monks is performed to gain merit for the couple at the beginning of their married life.

## Diet

The Burmese cuisine is not well known internationally. It includes influences from China, India and Thailand. Rice is the Burmese staple, with vegetables and chicken, pork fresh-water seafood and mutton often cooked in a curry or soup. Desserts include palm sugar sago, and semolina or rice pudding.

## Holidays & Special Days

Independence Day	4 January
Union Day	12 February
Peasants' Day (Anniversary of 1962)	2 March
Armed Forces Day	27 March
Workers' Day	1 May
Martyrs Day	19 July
National Day	3 December

## Festivals in Burma

The Burmese people are said to have a penchant for theatre and festivals. The two are intertwined, for whenever there is a major festival, there will be a theatre of sorts to provide entertainment for the people. Conveniently, in Burma, the rainy season, which makes merry making rather inconvenient, ends at the same time as the end of the Buddhist Lent, which represents the period when the Lord Buddha went into meditation just before attaining enlightenment. The end of the Buddhist Lent, during October, is also the joyous Thanksgiving Harvest (the Festival of Lights).

# CAMBODIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

12,867,273 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 2.25%  
Approximately 93% are Khmer, 4% Vietnamese and 3% Chinese.

### Resident in the ACT

228 born in Cambodia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The Khmer language comes from an older language called *paali*, which developed as a successor to Indian Sanskrit. The closest languages to modern Khmer are Thai (Thailand) and Lao (Laos), both of which share several common words. Khmer has 26 vowels and 33 consonants.

### Religion

Except for the Cham minority, which practices Islam, Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists. It is a general belief that a man should have the opportunity to have a monk's education for at least three months, if not several years, even if this is a drain on family and national resources. Monks generate no income.

### General Attitudes

Buddhism generally shapes the lives and perspectives of Cambodia's people. Cambodians are traditionally known as optimists. The group or community (often defined as the extended family) is more important than the individual, as are ancestors and rulers. The individual generally has limited privacy and rights, and is expected to act for the good of the community.

### Personal Appearance

Western-style clothing is fairly common in Phnom Penh, although it is simple and not always the most modern. Traditional clothing for men and women is common. Each is a large, rectangular piece of colored cloth that is wrapped around the hips like a skirt or kilt down to the ankles. A *krama* is a large scarf that is used as a hat, a small blanket, or even a baby carrier. Young women may wear small coloured hats.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Cambodians greet one another by placing both hands together in a prayer position at chest level without touching the body. The higher the hands are placed, the greater the sign of respect, although they should never be held above the level of the nose. This gesture is accompanied by a slight bow to show respect for persons of higher status or age. Persons holding or carrying something may simply bow their heads slightly. Shaking hands is not common in Cambodia; indeed, it embarrasses women if offered. Although there are many terms used in greeting, one common greeting is *sok sebai*.

### Gestures

Rules governing gestures come from Buddhism. While sitting, one should not point the feet towards a Buddha image or any person. To Buddhists, the head is the most sacred part of the body. One does not touch another person's head (even a child's), and one generally avoids sitting or standing on a level more elevated than that of an older person. Raising the voice is a sign of a bad personality. It is very improper to embarrass another person in public. Waving the hand is a friendly gesture, as is an "open" or friendly face, good eye contact, or a smile. In communication, one must be careful to clearly distinguish between a "yes" that a person is listening, and a "yes" meaning the person understands.

## Visiting

Among friends and relatives, visiting is frequent and usually unannounced. People remove their shoes when entering a home or a place of worship and religious education. A house guest may be greeted with a bouquet of jasmine flowers placed on their desk or table. Cambodians are extremely hospitable and friendly in general, although they are cautious about inviting strangers into the home. Guests are given the best place to sit and the best portion of food.

## Eating

Cambodians eat with chopsticks, spoon or their fingers depending on the food and family custom. Cambodians enjoy dishes that have been influenced by Indian, Chinese, and European cuisine. In general, Cambodian food is blander and consists of more fish and gravies than food in Thailand or other neighbouring countries.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is important to the Khmer people. The average family has four children and is often willing to adopt orphans or care for foster children on behalf of another family in need. Multiple generations usually live together or near one another. The elderly are cared for by their children. Because so many men died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia has a large number of orphans, widows, and single-parent families. Single mothers try to remarry. Those who do not find another spouse tend to gather in small clans of women and children for mutual aid and companionship. Khmer tradition allows for a man to take more than one wife (including widows), but this is rarely practiced because of the economic burden involved.

## Dating & Marriage

Khmer girls are shy and often lack self-assurance. Improved feelings of self-worth often come with marriage. While boys and girls are generally able to choose their spouses, dating is organised so that a girl's exposure is limited to certain choices. Khmer do not intermarry with other ethnic groups.

## Diet

There are two basic dishes in Cambodia: soup and rice. A bowl of soup may have any combination of fish, eggs, vegetables, meat and spicy broth. Rice is the staple food of Cambodia. Seafood and fish are also common.

## Holidays & Special Days

Liberation Day	7 January
Revolution Day	17 April
King Sihanouk birthday	31 October
Independence Day	9 November
Front Day	2 December
Buddhists celebrate festivals by lunar calendar	

# CHILE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

15,560,049 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 1.13%

An estimated 92% of the population is mestizo, of mixed European and Indian descent. The only indigenous group of any size is the the Mapuche border people.

### Resident in the ACT

700 born in Chile (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish, called Castellano, is the official language. However, as in all South American countries, some terms common to Chile will not have the same meaning elsewhere. English is taught in schools. Small minorities also speak German (southern Chile), Italian and Mapuche, an Indian language.

### Religion

Most Chileans profess a Christian faith. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. Most other people belong to various Protestant groups or other Christian churches.

### General Attitudes

The Chilean people are friendly, both among themselves and with strangers. The people are known for their sharp and witty sense of humour. This and their cultural and educational refinements have earned them the distinction of the "British of South America". Chileans take pride in their literacy, their nation and their heritage. Confidence and optimism are commonly expressed by people when asked how they view Chile and its future. There is a strong middle class in Chile and education enables many of the poorer people to excel and build a better life. Chileans respect the elderly.

### Personal Appearance

Fashions follow European styles. Appearance is quite important to individuals; even in rural areas, it is important to be neatly and cleanly dressed. Sloppy or tattered clothing is considered in poor taste to many Chileans.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greetings in Chile are very important because they stress that an individual is welcome and recognised. The *abrazo* is the most common greeting among friends and relatives. It consists of a handshake and a hug, sometimes supplemented with a kiss to the right cheek for women or family members. A handshake is appropriate when meeting someone for the first time. Eye contact is very important when greeting someone. Men stand to greet a woman entering the room. The Chilean people show significant outward affection to friends and relatives. The *abrazo* is repeated with each individual when one leaves a small social gathering of friends or family. Titles are important when addressing people.

### Gestures

Eye contact and correct posture are important during conversation, while excessive hand gestures are avoided. Yawns are suppressed or politely concealed with the hand. One does not beckon people with hand gestures. Items, including money, are handed, not tossed to other people. Respect and courtesy are important to the Chileans.



## Visiting

Contrary to some areas in South America, guests wait outside the door of a home until invited inside. Dinner guests often bring flowers, wine, or bread for the host family. It is appropriate to greet the head of the family first. Chileans appreciate guests who show genuine interest in their family, especially their children.

## Eating

Chileans converse freely at the table. The hostess is complimented on the meal. Both hands are kept above the table at all times. It is impolite to ask for second helpings. Even if they are offered, the guest is expected to decline. It used to be considered bad manners to eat food, except for ice cream, while walking in public. It is impolite to leave directly after eating; guests should stay for conversation.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is important in Chile, including the extended family. While men have tended to dominate private and public life in the past, recent years have seen a change in the attitudes to women in the home and professional world. Approximately 30 percent of the labour force is female. While the father takes the lead in the family, the mother has considerable influence in decisions. The relationship between the husband and wife is characterised by reciprocity, with the man performing courtesies for the woman and vice versa. It is customary for a child to bear two family names; the last name is the mother's family name and the second last name is the father's family name. People either use their full name or go by their father's family name, which is the official surname.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people begin dating by the time they are 16. Group dating is emphasised early on. Men marry from age 22 onward and women between 18 and 23. Couples often date from one to three years before getting engaged. Divorce is not recognised by the Catholic Church but legal means of cancelling or nullifying a marriage are available.

## Diet

Many national dishes are prepared with fish, seafood, chicken, beef, beans, eggs and corn. A common meal is soup or *cazuela* made with meat, beans, corn, pumpkin and potato. The main meal is eaten at midday. A lighter meal is eaten between 8.00 and 10.00 pm. During the afternoon it is customary to have teatime.

## Holidays & special days

Christmas Day, Lent, Easter, Ascension	
Battle of Iquique	21 May
St Peter's Day	29 June
National Day	11 September
Independence Day	18-19 September
Columbus Day	12 October
All Saints Day	1 November

# CHINA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

1288,090,055 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.13%  
There are at least 55 minority ethnic groups in China.

### Resident in the ACT

2045 born in China, excluding Taiwan Province and SARs (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Standard Chinese (putonghua), based on the Mandarin dialect, is the national language and is spoken by more than 70 percent of the population. Other dialects are also spoken, including Wu (in Shanghai), Min, Yue (Cantonese), and Kejja. Each of the 55 minorities speaks its own language or dialect. In some cases, education and all official transactions may be conducted in the local minority language. Chinese does not have a phonetic alphabet; it uses characters to express words, thoughts, or principles. A Romanized alphabet Pinyin is used to help teach Chinese in school and for international communication. While up to 50,000 characters exist, only about 8,000 are currently in use. It requires knowledge of 1,500 to 2,000 characters for basic literacy.

### Religion

While the government officially encourages atheism, the people may exercise religious beliefs within certain guidelines. The Bureau of Religious Affairs was reinstated in 1979. Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, and Christians all practice their religion. All temples and churches are open to the public. While the government allows religious groups to print materials, hold meetings, and worship, activities are carefully monitored. Unauthorized activities can lead to imprisonment or other restrictions. Christianity is growing in China, and some estimates state that up to 5 percent of the population is Christian.

### General Attitudes

Chinese are noted for good manners, hospitality, and reserve. Confucianism, the ancient philosophy of social order, still has a great influence on attitudes and actions. The elderly are respected. The Chinese are very proud of their nation's long history, and of past Chinese achievements. Foreign visitors should respect this and refrain from negative comments about China. The principle of *guanxi* binds friends and associates in committing a friend to do what he can for another friend when called upon. To violate *guanxi* is to "lose face" (to lose reputation or honour), another important principle in Chinese society. Keeping face means avoiding embarrassment, failure, defeat, or contradictions. Society is changing in China as economic opportunities expand. The goal of most families, for which they generally save for many years, is to build their own homes. Having a house is a symbol of a better life. Most people also want their children to be well educated, attend a university, and to have greater prosperity than themselves.

### Personal Appearance

Chinese attire is conservative and usually simple. In the past, most wore the same style pantsuits because of government policy. Reforms in recent years, however, have led to a wider selection of clothing. Many women wear dresses. Bright colors, Western-style suits, jeans, and jackets are increasingly popular. Nevertheless, styles are not always as modern as in other nations and "Mao suits" are still common. Ethnic minorities wear traditional clothing reflecting their cultural past and the climate in which they live. Despite poor living conditions, the people keep their homes, streets, and towns clean and tidy.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The Chinese nod politely or bow slightly when greeting another person. A handshake is also acceptable, especially in formal situations or to show respect. A greeting common to foreigners is *Ni hao ma?* (How do you do?). While

many Chinese accept this term and use it, there are also various, more traditional terms. The Chinese tend to be formal in their introductions; they use the full titles of their guests but are less precise identifying themselves. Chinese names usually consist of a one-syllable family name, followed by a one or two-syllable given name. A person is either addressed by the full name or by a title and family name. In lieu of professional titles, the Chinese equivalents of Mr and Mrs are used. Thus, Wang Jian-Jun can also be called Mr Wang, but never simply Wang and rarely ever Jian-Jun. In place of titles, the terms *Lao* (old) and *Xiao* (young) might be used between friends to show special respect.

## Gestures

Except in crowds when physical contact is unavoidable, the Chinese do not like to be touched by people they do not know. A smile is preferred over a pat on the back or a similar gesture. This is especially important when dealing with older people or people in important positions. The Chinese use their open hand to point rather than one finger. To beckon, all fingers wave with the palm of the hand facing down. In some regions, it is common for people to spit in public after clearing their throat. The government has tried to curb this behaviour with fines, but because it is a custom necessitated by health conditions, it remains common.

## Visiting

Invitations are usually extended for formal occasions, but otherwise it is common to drop by unannounced. When invited, one is generally prompt. Being more than a few minutes late is impolite. Guests conduct themselves with restraint and refrain from loud, boisterous speech and actions. Valuable gifts are usually not accepted from strangers, but small gifts may be given by friends. In fact, friends often bring gifts such as tea, cigarettes, fruit, chocolates, cakes, or wine when they visit. Hosts rarely open wrapped gifts until visitors leave. People enjoy gathering for discussions, playing card and table games.

## Eating

Chopsticks are used for all meals in China. When finished, a person places the chopsticks neatly on the table; they are not left in the rice bowl. Food is placed at the centre of the table and may include more than one type of main dish to be eaten with rice. Some food is taken to be placed in the rice bowl, which is then held close to the mouth for eating. Bones and seeds are placed on the table or a dish, but never back in the rice bowl. At formal banquets, guests have a short, friendly speech prepared to respond to a host's remarks. Tipping in restaurants is traditionally considered an insult-something a superior does for an inferior.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Historically loyalty to the family unit has always been important to the Chinese. During the Cultural Revolution, the state tried to shift loyalty to the government and families were often split by work or study assignments. Family planning policies limited couples to one or two children, imposing fines or sterilization on violators.

## Dating & Marriage

Chinese customs stress moral purity. Intimate relations and public displays of affection are discouraged. To help the family planning program succeed, young people are encouraged to marry late. In fact, college students are forbidden to marry until after graduation. The sanctioned age for marriage is 22 for men and 20 for women. Those who marry before that age are not eligible for some of the same benefits as those who wait. Weddings are simple. A couple first seeks permission from the local governing unit. If granted, a legal contract is recorded without a wedding ceremony. The couple then joins family and friends in a marriage celebration. Wedding rings are traditionally not a part of marriage, but they are becoming more common. The woman retains her maiden name and does not take the family name of her husband.

## Diet

Generally, there is not a wide variety of food available throughout the country, except where private enterprise is encouraged. What the people eat depends largely on what is produced in the region where they live. Chinese cuisine is internationally popular and recognized for its nutritional qualities.

## Holidays & Special Days

International Women's Day

8 March

Labour Day  
National Day  
Chinese New Year Spring Festival  
Lantern Festival  
Dragon Boat Festival

1 May  
1, 2 October  
February (Lunar calendar)

# COLOMBIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

41,234,112 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.64%

### Resident in the ACT

65 born in Colombia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The majority of Colombians speak Spanish, the official language. Among 80 indigenous groups, 40 languages are spoken. In some areas, the dialect shares official status with Spanish, and people are bilingual.

### Religion

Almost 90% of the Colombian people are Roman Catholic. Protestant and other Christian denominations are growing in membership. Many indigenous people retain beliefs from traditional worship systems.

### Attitudes

Colombians take pride in their rich and diverse culture. The country's varied regions, climates and sub-cultures enrich its food, music, dance and art. They are also known for their *rumbero* spirit, an ability to work hard and play hard. Colombians are forward-looking and confident for the future.

### Personal Appearance

Dress is conservative and fashionable in Colombia. Appropriate attire for the occasion is essential. In urban areas, men wear suits and ties. Suits are lighter in colour near the coast. Women wear comfortable dresses, and urban young people dress casually. Indigenous peoples often wear traditional clothing, for example the wraparound dresses, ponchos and bowler hats.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Men shake hands with everyone when entering a home, greeting a group or leaving. Women kiss one another on the cheek if they know each other; otherwise they offer a verbal greeting or handshake. Close friends or relatives greet each other with a hug or abrazo. Kissing on the cheek is usual among young people. It is customary to use formal titles such as Senor, Senora, Doctor. Colombians generally have two family names, the last being the woman's and the man's second last. However, the father's family name is the official surname.

### Gestures

While conversing, Colombians tend to use their hands expressively, particularly if the discussion becomes heated or animated. Maintaining eye contact and standing close are important. If one backs away or interrupts, this is considered rude. People beckon others with the palm down, waving fingers or the whole hand. Smiling is important to indicate goodwill. Colombian men open doors, and offer seats for women and older people.

### Visiting

People often sit on their verandahs, and chat with passers-by. Friends and relatives visit without notice, especially in rural areas where telephones are not available. However, it is polite to make arrangements if you do not know someone. Colombian hosts are gracious, usually offering refreshments such as coffee, fruit juice or soft drinks. Dinner guests usually arrive up to thirty minutes late. Alcoholic drinks such as rum or beer are offered before and after dinner. Etiquette is valued. On formal visits, visitors wait till they are guided to a seat. Hosts often accompany guests to the door and down the street.

## Eating

Good manners and courtesy is very important to Colombians when at the table. Pleasant conversation is welcome, and a feeling of goodwill is encouraged. If one is offered more food, it is polite to refuse if it may be considered overindulging.

It is considered polite to keep hands above the table. One should offer food to others before taking it oneself.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Family unity and support is highly valued in Colombia. Family members share their good fortune with other members of the family. Divorce is relatively uncommon, largely due to the influence of the Catholic Church. The family unit usually consists of mother, father and two to four children. Children traditionally live with their parents till they marry. Families support each other through their life span.

Urbanisation is changing roles with the extended family. One third of the workforce is now female.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating begins around 14 or 15 years of age, depending on family custom and region.

Going to movies, restaurants, and discos are popular activities. Sports and shopping at the mall are also attractive for youth. On the night before the wedding, the groom may hire a small band to serenade the bride. Marriage ceremonies generally follow the Catholic traditions, with mass included. The reception will always involve music and dancing.

### Diet

Breakfast foods vary from region to region. They include juice, coffee, hot chocolate, fruit eggs, bread or *changua* (potato and egg soup). A mid-morning snack, *merienda*, may include *empanadas con carne* (meat turnovers) or bread and a drink. Lunch is the main meal for the day. Many businesses close so the family may gather for lunch. Supper is usually not till 7 or 8pm. Staple foods include soup, rice, meat, potatoes, *salad and beans*. *Favourite national dishes include arroz con pollo*, (chicken with rice), *frijoles con chicharron* (pork and beans). A cornmeal pancake is called *Arepa*.

### Holidays & special days

Christmas and New Year's Day	
Epiphany	6 January
St Joseph's Day	19 March
Easter	
Feast of St Peter and St Paul	29 June
Independence Day	20 July
Dia de La Raza	12 October
All Saints Day	1 November
Independence of Cartagena	11 November

# CROATIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

4,419,903 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 1.48%  
The population is predominantly Croat, with a small Serbian minority.

### Resident in the ACT

1709 born in Croatia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language of Croatia is Croatian. Although Albanian, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, Slovakian and Slovenian may be spoken by their respective groups in parts of Croatia.

### Religion

The majority of Croatians are Roman Catholic. However, other Croatians may follow the protestant, Jewish, Orthodox or Muslim faiths.

### Personal Appearance

It is important for clothing to be neat and clean. In general, adults do not wear shorts in public, except for recreation or on the coast. Women typically wear skirts and dresses more often than pants. In the workplace, it is customary for women to wear dresses. Urban men wear suits and ties for special occasions as do many professionals and businessmen.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the most common greeting in Croatia. Along with a phrase such as *Dobro jutro* (good morning), *Dobar dan* (good day), or *Dobra vecer* (good evening). When friends and relatives greet, they embrace and kiss each other on both cheeks. In formal situations, a man waits for a woman to extend her hand. In formal greetings, the family name is preceded by *gospodine* (Mr.), *gospodjo* (Mrs.), *gospodjice* (Miss.), or a professional title. The younger person commonly greets first.

### Visiting

Croatians enjoy visiting one another to socialise. Most visits are arranged in advance, but unexpected guests are also welcomed. When invited to a home, guests bring a gift to the hosts. It is usually a bottle of wine, sweets, or an odd number of flowers. Gifts are unwrapped in the presence of the giver, whom the hosts thank. It is impolite not to accept refreshments.

### Eating

Breakfast is light and usually accompanied by black coffee. Lunch is the main meal of the day and consists of soup, meat or fish (depending on the region), salad, bread or potatoes, and a dessert. In urban areas, dinner usually consists of cold cuts, bread, and eggs. Rural people might have this or a cooked meal. While eating, hands are kept above the table.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Rural Croatian families traditionally include grandparents, parents, and two or more children. The father or grandfather has a dominant role in the family. Urban families usually have two children. Both husband and wife

work and share in the decision making. Children are expected to care for their elderly parents. Adult children often live with their parents until they marry or are able to support themselves.

## Dating & Marriage

The youth begin dating around age 15, beginning with small groups. Rural people get married in their early twenties and urban dwellers in their late twenties to early thirties. To be legally married, one must have a civil ceremony. Having a church wedding before the civil one has become popular since Croatia achieved independence in 1991.

## Diet

Seafood and vegetables are most popular in coastal towns. Dishes made from chicken, beef, fish, pork, and lamb are common throughout Croatia. Wine is the most popular drink with a meal. Also popular are beer, mineral water and fruit drinks.

## Holidays & Special Days

Statehood Day	30 May
Day of Anti-Fascist struggle	22 June
Christmas, Easter, Lent and other religious days	
Muslim holidays	



# CYPRUS

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

768,905 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate 0.59%. The population consists of 85% Greek Cypriot and 12% Turkish Cypriot, 3% other.

### Resident in the ACT

133 born in Cyprus (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official languages are Greek and Turkish. In social exchanges, an informal Cypriot dialect is used.

### Religion

The vast majority of Greek Cypriots are Greek Orthodox, while most Turkish Cypriots are Sunni Muslims.

### Personal Appearance

Traditional costumes are worn at folk festivals and special events, including formal visits. Generally, people dress according to occupation, ranging from urban white collar to rural peasant cotton pants, skirts and vests. Informality is the norm.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Cypriots are expressive in their greetings. Men hug or slap male friends on the back or shoulder. Women kiss friends on both cheeks. New acquaintances greet each other more formally, whereas friends use first names.

### Gestures

Cypriots can indicate 'no' by tilting the head back or shaking it from side to side. Hand movements are used expressively to accompany verbal conversation.

### Visiting

Visitors from outside Cyprus often note that Cyprus seems to be a place where 'everyone knows everyone else, or is related' This familiarity is reflected in an air of casual and informal friendliness. Dropping in without notice is a common occurrence, although due to time pressures in the city, this is changing. Guests are expected to eat and drink freely when pressed, to avoid hurt feelings.

### Eating

Lunch is still the main meal of the day, followed by a rest in the heat of the day. Eating with fingers is acceptable with some parts of the meal, eg bread and dips.

It is considered impolite to leave the table before others have finished.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

One should not bring dishonour on the family. Parents strive to provide the young couple with a home, and perhaps a car. However, since the move to urban living, relatives are not always close in proximity. The women still rule

over the house domain, and the men preside over the political arena. Children are a high priority both in the family and community.

## Dating & Marriage

Arranged marriages have largely disappeared, but some parents still exert strong influence on the choice of spouse. Marriage is seen to be normal, so not marrying is considered to be unusual. Young people go out to dances, cafes and bars in the city, but in rural settings they would gather in the town square.

## Diet

Fresh salads and plain yoghurt accompany most meals. The main meal consists of vegetables cooked many ways, including *yahni*, made from olive oil, tomato and onions. When eating out, people often order *meze*, which is a large collection of smaller dishes, dips and salads. The main course will usually be grilled meat or fish. Cyprus is almost self-sufficient in food production, resulting in an abundant supply of fruits and vegetables.

## Holidays & Special Days

Christmas, New Year, Easter, Assumption Day	
Green Monday	10 March
Greek Independence Day	25 March
Anniversary of struggle for Liberation	1 April
Youth and Sports Day	19 May
Cyprus Independence Day	1 October
Greek National Day	28 October

# CZECH REPUBLIC

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

10,254,606 (Estimate 2002) Growth rate -0.07%

### Resident in the ACT

143 born in the Czech Republic (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Czech belongs to the Slavic group of languages. The central European nation is ethnically quite homogeneous. The only noticeable minority is Roms (Gypsies), who are bilingual. Many Czechs speak German, French, Russian or English as a second language, depending on their generation. Younger Czechs generally use English as a second language. The Czech Republic came into existence first in 1918, and then on 1 January 1993 the division of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

### Religion

Czechs are historically Christian, with the main Catholic Church culture. However, the influence of Protestantism well before Luther, and later modern political developments established them to one of the lowest number of religious affiliations. Many Czechs identify as atheist. The Czech Brethren claims 2 percent of the population as members.

### General Attitudes

Czechs value modesty, humour, education, cleverness, social standing, and sometimes cutting corners. Professionals are respected. The long tradition of highly industrialised nation formed a skilled nation of manual workers. This brought a very individualistic approach to life, forming strong opinion and wishes. But society's emphasis is still on conformity and cooperation.

Historically the nation always adopted new trends, and encouraged arts, music, and sport, pursuing ties to Western European culture. Czechs are avid theatre and art goers, and pride themselves on participation. Czech migrants therefore join in and adapt easily into local society and activities.

### Personal Appearance

European fashions and formal dress is common on the streets, at work and in shops. The youth wear the latest styles. Jeans and T-shirts or sportswear are popular even with older people. Village people are adapting quickly to modern trends.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When strangers meet courtesy prevails. Acquaintances and friends shake hands firmly with a verbal greeting. A young person greets an older person politely. Women are always politely acknowledged by men. A man usually waits for a woman to extend her hand before shaking. To show respect, one addresses both men and women by their professional titles prefixed by *pan* (Mister) and *pani* Mrs) for a woman. First or Christian names are used only among friends.

### Gestures

People maintain eye contact while conversing. The conversation is emphasised by gesturing with hands, and Czechs often beckon and point with their index finger. Noisy speaking, particularly laughing too loud is considered impolite in society.

## Visiting

Czechs consider the home to be private. Friends visit quite frequently for small talk with coffee and drinks. Most first-time visitors are invited for a more formal coffee visit to get to know one another. An invitation for guests to share a meal at home is usually formal. Invited guests usually bring flowers to the hostess. Out of respect for the hostess, most Czechs remove their shoes before entering the house, and leave them in the hall entrance. It is an honour to be invited to a home for a meal. Friends often enjoy socialising in pubs, coffee houses, and wine bars.

## Eating

Czechs eat three meals a day and often a mid-morning snack. For most families, lunch is the main meal. Dinner and breakfast are light. The head of the household is served first. People eat in the continental style. Hands, but not elbows, are kept above the table. Most Czechs do not eat out often.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Urban and rural families nowadays are usually small, with rarely more than two children. Rural families in the past tended to be larger. Both parents generally work outside the home, but women are also responsible for the household and children. Grandparents often help with child care, especially when young couple is just starting out. Parents feel responsible for their adult children until they are financially independent. At the same time adult children expect to take care of aging parents.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people tend to date socialising in their sphere of interest. Following European trends, most men are married by the age of 30, with women marrying a few years earlier. A church wedding after the civil ceremony is becoming increasingly common. The divorce rate is relatively high.

## Diet

Unfortunately the high fat eating culture survived into the modern low physical activity way of life. Tasty meals close to French and German traditions are served in large portions. Lunch usually begins with a hearty and nutritious soup, followed by a main dish of meat and potato or bread dumplings, and finally sweets. Many desserts are made from fruit.

A common dish is *vepro-knedlo-zelo* (pork roast, dumplings, and sauerkraut). Many other meals are based on cream sauces, and other combinations by choice. Breakfast usually consists of rolls, coffee cake, butter, jam, and coffee. Ham, salami, cheese and sausages with rolls are popular snack foods, while beer is the number one beverage followed by common soft drinks and bottled water.

## Holidays & Special Days

National Liberation Day	8 May
Cyril & Methodius Day	5 July
Jan Hus Day	6 July
Founding of the Republic	28 October
Velvet Revolution Day	17 November
Other religious holidays, and patron saint's days	

# EAST TIMOR

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

952,618 (Estimate 2002 US Census) Two thirds of the population (2001) is under 30 due to recent conflict, and the majority are female.

### Resident in the ACT

16 born in East Timor (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Portuguese and Tetum, the local language, are both official languages. Bahasa-Indonesia and English are also used in commercial and government spheres. English is often used in academic and non-government spheres. In school, it is still debated whether to focus on written Tetum, or Portuguese.

### Religion

The majority of East Timorese are Roman Catholic (91%), and there are a small percentage affiliated with Hindu, Buddhist and Protestant faiths. Local religious traditions are blended with the practice of Catholicism. Religion is very important in East Timor.

### General attitudes

The people are very proud of the independence of their country after a long struggle. They are sometimes shy with strangers, but very loyal to people considered friends. As a people, East Timorese are known to be easy-going and casual in their daily work and interactions, with a love of music, dance and children. Older people are respected and revered. It is normal to ask how old a person is, as the older you are the more respect you earn.

### Personal appearance

East Timorese dress in casual clothing, including loose pants and patterned shirts for both men and women. In villages, people wear hand-made cotton clothing that suits the outdoor work. Dresses for special occasions are sometimes woven and embroidered. In rural areas for formal occasions, women wear woven sarongs and shawls 'tais'. In the city, formal Western dress is favoured. Western suits and slacks are worn in government offices, but the heat keeps men's dress to shirts and pants; skirts and tops for women.

## CUSTOMS & COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greeting people, including strangers, is normal. However, first names are not used unless one is considered a friend. 'Mister' is often a form of address for strangers.

Hello is *ola*, and it is not uncommon to hear *Ba nebe?* or 'where are you going?' In the street, the greeting for strangers is *Bon dia* Good day! Or *Boa tarde* Good afternoon.

First names or nicknames are not used until a level of familiarity is recognised. It is usual to add Mister or Miss to a first name to show respect. *Mana* or *mama* (older brother or sister) is also common. When a nickname is used, it is often created by substituting the first syllable with 'A', for instance Jose is shortened to *Aze*. Children usually greet strangers as 'uncle or auntie' *tiu* or *tia*, since they may be expecting everyone they know to be related in a distant way. A nod and a smile are the usual form of greeting between strangers. Physical contact between people of the opposite sex is not encouraged.

### Gestures

Body language is vital to East Timorese, including facial expressions. While reserved at first, people are animated in discussion.

## Visiting

Visiting informally between friends and family is enjoyed. An invitation is usual for new acquaintances or strangers. Before entering a room or house, it is polite to ask: 'Can I come in?' or '*kolisensa?*' Greet everyone in the house, paying special attention to older people and children. Any offer to help with cooking, or washing up will be refused. One waits till one is invited to sit down, or begin eating and drinking. If you do not wish to eat the food, take one or two bites and then politely refuse. Gifts of sweets for the children, coffee or cigarettes are welcome.

## Eating

Typically, breakfast is served by 7am, lunch between 12 and 2.00pm, and dinner between 6 and 8pm. The fork is often held in the right hand to eat. It is improper to eat or hand things to people with the left hand. Coconut juice and lemonade are common drinks, along with coffee. Most people eat at home or at the houses of friends or family. Street stalls are common in the larger towns.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The extended family is paramount in the lives of East Timorese, though families have been split by the recent conflict, and many fathers are not present. Children are cared for by many family members. Older people are looked after when they are too frail to garden and clean. God-parents are also very important members of the family. The baptism of a child is a very important ceremony for the whole family.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people do not generally date in couples until they are engaged. They go out in groups together, or with a sibling to chaperone. It is almost unknown to live together before marriage. Marriage is the norm, and de facto relationships are frowned on. Divorce is not permitted by the Catholic Church. However, de facto relationships occur, especially in rural areas. The person concerned is politely referred to as 'second' wife or husband.

Weddings are celebrated with a church ceremony, and in the villages the tradition may include the system of dowry or *berlaki*. Traditionally a man's family gave several head of horses or buffalo. However, since the stock numbers are depleted, it is no longer required to give a dowry. It is also acceptable to turn to the family for assistance after marriage.

Women carry the responsibility for the household cleaning, cooking and child-care.

## Diet

The East Timor diet is affected by short supply of many staples since the conflict. The cuisine shares elements of Chinese, Portuguese, and Indonesian. Rice accompanies most meals. Other staples commonly found are cassava, potato, yam and corn. Many meals are spicy, and coconut milk is used. A popular meal is beans and corn. A meat meal on the menu is *tukir*, consisting of lamb traditionally cooked inside bamboo with lots of spices. A dish traditional to villages along the coast outside Dili is called *saboko*. Saboko is made from sardines mixed with tamarind sauce and spices, firmly wrapped in palm leaves and cooked on a fire. There are some local fruit without English names. Palm wine and palm alcohol are consumed in local bars and in villages. Restaurants are mainly frequented by tourists and officials.

## Holidays & special days

Christmas and Easter	
Independence Day	20 May
Assumption	15 August
Feast Day of their patron saint	
All Soul's Day	2 November

# EGYPT

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

71,107,829 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.69%

### Resident in the ACT

228 born in Egypt (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is the official language in Egypt, although English and French are used in business and education. The written language differs from the spoken Egyptian dialect used in daily life. The Cairene dialect is the standard for spoken Egyptian; the people are extremely proud of it. They like to use it for wordplays, jokes, clichés, and riddles. Cairene is therefore both the spoken language and an integral part of Egyptian culture.

### Religion

Over 90 percent of all Egyptians belong to the Sunni branch of Islam. Islamic philosophy is deeply rooted in the minds, hearts, and behaviour of the people. Islamic scripture, the Qurán (Koran), is considered the final, complete word of Allah. Muslims accept and revere all major Judeo-Christian prophets from Adam to Jesus, but they proclaim Mohammed to be the last and greatest. Although Egypt is officially a secular state, Islamic principles are very much a part of its laws, business relations, and social customs. The Islamic day of worship is Friday, a day for men to pray at the mosque. Women pray at home or in a separate part of the mosque. Islam is practiced every day through dress and dietary codes, praying, and constant references to Allah's will or blessings. Muslims pray five times daily, always facing Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Other religious groups are also found in Egypt, including a significant minority of Coptic Christians (over seven million), whose religion dates to its separation from Rome in the fifth century.

### General Attitudes

Egyptians generally prefer a relaxed and patient life. Egyptians are expressive and emotional, and are well-known for their marvellous sense of humour. This has helped people endure difficult economic and living conditions with great composure. Part of Egyptian humour is a love for riddles (especially during the month of Ramadan), jokes, sarcasm, and wordplays. Egyptians often identify with community groups, to the point that personal needs become secondary to those of the group. The Islamists see greater devotion to Islamic principles in schools, government, and the arts as the answer to Egypt's problems with poverty, government corruption, and other social ills. Both sides of the debate have strong followings throughout the country, but the Islamists seem to be building strongholds in many religions.

### Personal Appearance

Dress standards in Egypt are modest and traditional. Traditional women completely cover their hair and bodies, except their faces and hands. Men wear modest clothing and skullcaps, and sometimes grow a beard. A beard can be a sign of religious faith, but it can also express membership in certain political organizations. In large cities, modest Western-style clothing has become popular.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Warmth in personal relations is important to Egyptians and greetings are often elaborate. Because social classes play a key role in society, phrases used for greetings depend largely on the differences between the individual's social classes. Generally, however, friends of the same sex shake hands and kiss on the right and left cheeks. If the greeting comes after a long absence, the kisses may be repeated more than once and even end with a kiss to the forehead. Men greet women with a handshake only if the woman extends her hand first. Otherwise, the greeting is verbal. First names are not used unless one is invited to do so. Good friends exchange first names in

informal settings, but they may add a title to the first name in formal settings. To thank someone for a compliment, one responds with an equally respectful compliment on the same subject or wishes Allah's (God's) blessings.

## Gestures

Physical distance between members of the same sex is closer and much farther apart between members of the opposite sex. In fact, good friends of the same sex may walk hand in hand in public. Yet except for married or engaged couples that walk arm in arm, a man does not touch a woman in public. It is impolite for the bottom of one's foot to point at another person; also, feet should not be propped on a table or chair in the presence of others. Pointing at a person is impolite, as is walking in front of a praying person.

## Visiting

Because personal relationships with friends and relatives are so vital, visiting is one of the most important pastimes in Egypt. Not visiting for a long period is a sign of the relationship's insignificance. Married children often visit parents on Fridays and holidays. If a gift is given, it is passed and received with both hands or only the right hand, not the left. Alcohol is prohibited by the Islamic religion, so it is not given as a gift to Muslims. Business visits usually begin with light conversation over coffee or tea to establish trust and confidence. Visitors to a mosque remove shoes before entering and wear clothing that covers the entire body.

## Eating

Egyptians prepare elaborate and expensive meals when they have guests. Sometimes a person will not eat everything on the plate because leftover food is a symbol of abundance and a compliment to the host for providing so well. Or, in restaurants, food is left as a sign of wealth (one can afford to leave food behind). Finger food is eaten with the right hand.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Families are extremely important in Egypt. In most homes, a girl is protected by her brothers and may even be accompanied by them in public. Traditionally, a man's honour is based on how well he protects the women in his care. In rural areas, a girl may discontinue her schooling when she comes of age. It is customary for extended families, including families of brothers and sisters, to live under the same roof. Increased urbanization, however, is changing this tradition toward a home with only a nuclear family. Still, close ties are maintained, and cousins are often as close as siblings. The thought of putting the elderly in a rest home is repulsive to Egyptians; children expect to support their parents in old age. Parents often play a key role in planning the future of their children, with their influence ranging from the choice of profession to the selection of a mate. Egyptians value this support as a source of emotional security.

## Dating & Marriage

Although attitudes toward dating are changing in Westernized circles, dating is not widespread. Moral purity is highly valued in a woman, and is usually a key requirement in the marriage contract. Traditionally, marriages were arranged between heads of families, often with little input from the couple involved. Now, however, individuals have more say as to whom they wish to marry. Because marriages join not just two people but two families, both families are heavily involved in wedding preparations.

## Diet

Egyptians eat rice, bread, fish, lamb, chicken, turkey, and stuffed vegetables. Tahina (sesame seed paste), tomatoes, yogurt and cucumbers are also eaten with meals. The Qur'an prohibits the consumption of pork and alcohol. Traditional foods include *fava* beans prepared as fowl or *ta'miyya*, and flat Egyptian bread. Meat is expensive and eaten only occasionally, sometimes just once a month. Bread, usually unleavened, is eaten with every meal.

## Holidays & Special Days

Proclamation of the Republic	18 June
Revolution Day	23 July
Armed Forces Day	6 October



Popular Resistance Day  
Victory Day  
Muslim holidays

24 October  
23 December

# EL SALVADOR

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

6,391,946 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth Rate 1.85%  
Spanish-Indian mestizo (approx. 94%), Indian 5%, white 1%.

### Resident in the ACT

149 born in El Salvador (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish is the official language, although Nahua and other Native American languages are spoken by many. English is often spoken among the educated.

### Religion

El Salvador is a largely Catholic nation, with close to 75 percent of the people belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. About 20 percent practice a variety of other Christian faiths, including a range of Protestant religions.

### General Attitudes

Salvadorans are known for their hospitality to visitors. The people love their country and are proud of its accomplishments. Salvadorans are hardworking individuals who care for others.

### Personal Appearance

Because of the warm climate, summer clothing is suitable all year. Business representatives wear suits. During winter months, light jackets are sometimes necessary at night. A neat and clean appearance is important.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the customary greeting, but sometimes a slight nod of the head is also used. The use of titles shows respect, which is particularly important when greeting the elderly. The first name or family name alone is used only among close acquaintances. Placing an arm around the shoulder of another is a common way to show friendship and friends often stand close while conversing. Women who have not seen each other in a while will exchange hugs.

### Gestures

It is poor manners to use extensive hand or head gestures in conversation or to express feelings. Yawns should be avoided or covered with the hand. It is not appropriate to point feet or fingers at anyone. Only close friends are beckoned with a hand wave.

### Visiting

Visitors are expected to show dignity, courtesy, warmth, and friendship. It is appropriate to stand when a woman enters the room and when meeting other people. Salvadorans appreciate sincere compliments about their homes, children, gardens, or country. Small gifts may be exchanged with first time visitors.

### Eating

It is polite for guests to try some of every dish that is served. Leaving a little food on the plate is considered good manners. Men generally stand when a woman leaves the table. Guests compliment the host or hostess on the meal, something which assures the hosts that the guests feel welcome.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Salvadorans have close family ties, which include caring for the elderly. The father is the head of the family, which has an average of five members. However, single parent families are also common, with a large number of children being born to unwed mothers. The majority of families belong to the peasant class (*campesinos*, who work on the land but do not own it) and the “blue collar” working class. While most of these families have electricity, many do not have telephones, cars or televisions.

### Dating & Marriage

Group dating begins at around age 15. Traditionally, it was not proper for a couple to be seen in public unless engaged or married, but this has changed significantly in urban areas, with trends more closely matching those in industrialised nations. In most cases, wedding ceremonies follow Catholic traditions.

### Diet

Salvadorean food is more spicy than that of many other Latin American countries. Most people eat black beans (*frijoles*), refried beans, thick tortillas, rice, eggs and fruit. A typical lunch is *pupusa & chilate*.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
San Salvador Festival	4-6 August
Independence Day	15 September
Discovery of America	12 October
First Call of Independence	5 November
Religious festivities	August
Other religious holidays	

# ERITREA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

4,518,943 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 3.84%

### Resident in the ACT

14 born in Eritrea (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Eritrea has no official language. Tigrinya, Arabic and English are all government, working languages. Tigrinya is spoken by highlanders, and is related to Tigre, spoken by people in the western and eastern lowlands. They use an ancient Ge'ez script.

Like Arabic, they are both Semitic tongues. Arabic is widely used in commerce.

### Religion

About 40% are Muslim, and 40% Christian. Some Eritreans practice traditional animism. Most Christians are Orthodox. Inter-marriage and the unity of religious leaders contribute to the country's religious freedom and tolerance.

### Attitudes

Eritreans can be optimistic, hard-working, committed people who love their country and their independence dearly. One reason why resolution was difficult to achieve in the recent war is the strength of national pride. Violent crime is rare in Eritrea. They believe in cooperation and friendliness. Self-sufficiency is also valued.

### Personal Appearance

Eritreans wear Western-style clothing. Pants are worn by women and girls.

Highland Christian women wear white cotton dresses with a woven border at the hem, or embroidery on the bodice and skirt, with a matching shawl. Hair is customarily braided in tight narrow rows up front, but hanging free behind. Highland men wear a long-sleeved knee-length white shirt over white trousers. Work clothing is less decorated, made of heavy duty off-white cotton.

Muslim men wear *jalabiyas* (long gowns) and embroidered caps with turbans.

Women cover their dresses with black or colourful cloth called *lujiet*. Women use henna as a skin conditioner, and hair dye.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The forms of greeting vary by region and ethnic groups. Highlanders greet with a handshake. Nudging right shoulders during a handshake is a custom for villagers. Urban dwellers shake hands and 'kiss the air' while touching cheeks three times. Verbal greetings always involve inquiring about one's wellbeing. A general greeting is Salaam. Muslims grasp and kiss each other's right hands, asking *Kefelha?*

While friends use nicknames, Eritreans call people by surname. The use of second-person plural shows respect. Boys and men often hold hands in friendship.

### Gestures

Eritreans use only the right hand for eating and gesturing. A hand held high is a greeting, while a hand waved back and forth is a negative signal. Fingers snapping shows one is in agreement. When beckoning, one waves all fingers

with palm facing out. Pointing at people is considered impolite. Young girls keep their knees together uncrossed, elbows on their knees to show respect.

## Visiting

Visiting among friends and relatives is common without invitation. Guest are often asked to join the family in a meal. Guests are always served tea or coffee. Eritreans enjoy the prolonged conversation offered by the tea and coffee ceremony.

When visiting on special occasions, townspeople often take villagers a gift of tea or coffee. Villagers take gifts of local produce or firewood. For some events, men and women socialise separately. A heavy, barley porridge *ga'at* is served at gatherings to welcome new babies. When someone dies, friends and relatives gather for the burial, and cook for the grieving family for 21 days.

## Eating

In the highlanders, children and adults eat separately. Other Eritrean families eat together, though when guests are present, children may eat separately. The hostess serves the guests and eats later with the children. Before the meal begins, the oldest man takes a piece of bread, blesses it and offers some to each person. Diners eat at a low table from a communal tray, taking only the portion in front of them, and using the right hand.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is regarded as more important than any of the individuals within it. Family members will sacrifice for the good of the group or future generations. A family unit includes grand-parents, parents and four or more children. After marrying, a son and his wife generally live with his parents a couple of years. Nomadic people have portable homes, while villagers have stone, mud or cement homes with thatched or metal rooves. The homes are always kept clean and neat.

## Dating & Marriage

In Eritrea, almost all marriages are arranged. Among the monogamous Tigrinya, parents suggest marriage partners to increase alliances. The couple usually makes the final decision whether to marry. The bride in some remote villages is often ten years younger than the groom. In the cities, the bride will have normally completed secondary school before marriage. Among Muslims, wedding festivities include the bride's arrival by camel, and guests sit on mats to eat from bowls. The practice of taking multiple wives is declining.

## Diet

The Eritrean diet is traditionally varied. However, the war affected availability of certain foods. The preferred meal is meat (chicken, goat, mutton, or beef) cooked with onion, garlic and pepper, spices and butter. *Shuro* is a typical meal of garbanzo bean flour and spices. Lentils and other vegetables are spiced, and eaten for lunch or dinner. Breakfast may be tea served with unleavened bread *k'itcha* and honey. Orthodox Christians eat no animal products on Wednesdays and Fridays.

## Holidays & special days

Christmas	7 January
New Year's Day	1 January
Independence Day	24 May
Martyr's Day	20 June
Anniversary Start of Armed struggle	1 September
Muslim end of Ramadan	Eid el Fitr

# ETHIOPIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

68,270,480 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 2.70%

### Resident in the ACT

71 born in Ethiopia (Census 2001unpub.)

### Language

Amharic, a Semitic language related to Hebrew and Arabic is the official national language and is used in commerce and administration. Tigrinya is the most widely spoken daily language and Orominga is also used. The liturgical language (Geéz) of the Ethiopian Orthodox church has produced a large and vibrant literature of considerable importance. English is taught in most schools, making it the most widely understood foreign language.

### Religion

About 40 percent of the population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox church (Christian), a leading influence in Ethiopian culture since the fourth century. Christianity's legacy can be seen in many ancient structures, including churches in Lalibela carved from stone in the 13th century. The Oromo of the southeast and northwest are mostly Muslim. Much of the remaining population follows traditional religions such as animism, which stresses the reverence of all living things.

### General Attitudes

All people of Ethiopia, whether Christian or Muslim, tend to be somewhat complacent and passive, enduring adversity with stoicism unknown in the Western world. They also tend to be quite formal in their dealings, not only with strangers, but with each other. A strong sense of individualism pervades the Ethiopian personality. Individuals are expected to stand up for their rights and desires. Genuine concern for others and courtesy are noticeable personality traits of Ethiopians. Ethiopians are proud of the fact that they escaped colonization in the 19th century when much of the rest of the continent was held by Europeans.

### Personal Appearance

In larger cities, most people wear Western-style clothing under the traditional white shamma (toga). Men in some ethnic groups wear turbans. Women generally wear dresses. Full native dress is still worn by many, particularly on holidays. Conservative dress is a must for visitors.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Like most Semitic peoples, the Amhara place great emphasis on formal but very courteous greetings to both friends and strangers. Shaking hands with one or both hands, though more gently than the Western handshake, is common between members of the same sex. Friends often embrace each other formally but warmly. Members of opposite sex do not greet each other physically.

### Gestures

Pointing is generally considered rude. One never uses the left-hand to give or receive items; the right-hand or both hands are used. It is an insult to refer to a person as *Galla*, a name once used for the Oromo people. Trilling the tongue is an expression of excitement or happiness.

## Visiting

The Amharic home is a highly private and personal domain. Visits are not made without invitation. If one is going to a home for the first time, a small gift is in order. Visitors are expected to accept any refreshments or food offered. Conversation should avoid highly personal topics and is best kept casual.

## Eating

Amhara hosts take pride in offering guests the best meal they are capable of providing, whether at a public restaurant or in the home. Visitors are often given more food than they are able to eat. Leaving some food on the plate is polite because it indicates the host's ability to more than adequately provide for guests. As is the custom in the Semitic world, food is eaten with the fingers of the right hand (never the left).

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The Amharic family is strongly patriarchal, a pattern typical throughout Ethiopia. Sons usually bring their brides to live with or near their father's family, and three or more generations in the male line frequently live under one roof. Age is highly respected in Ethiopia, and the elderly are cared for by their children. Only a small percentage (6 percent) of the population is older than age 60. A woman's duties and privileges are well-defined both within the home and elsewhere, and women often lead sheltered lives. Families are very private.

## Dating & Marriage

Western-style dating is not common in Ethiopia as traditional norms are still strong in most areas. Because marriage represents the union of two families, the choice of spouse is most often arranged by the families. While the individual has some freedom in the decision, most abide by traditional methods of finding a mate. Marriages tend to last long and divorce is not common.

## Diet

The Ethiopian diet includes lamb, goat, and fowl. Ethiopians do not usually eat pork, turkey, or ham. Common foods include *injera*, a fermented bread made of *teff* flour, and *wat*, a spicy stew made with beef or chicken. Strict religious dietary and fasting customs, especially for Muslims, also affect the menu. For the many people who have limited access to food, a daily diet consists of grains and relief supplies.

## Holidays & special Days

Battle of Adowa	2 March
Victoria Day	6 April
May Day	1 May
Downfall Communist regime	28 May
Popular Revolution Commemoration	12 September
Christian & Muslim holidays	

# FIJI

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

860,247 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.41%.  
Approximately 50% Fijian Melanesian-Polynesian, 45% Indian origin and 5% other.

### Resident in the ACT

561 born in Fiji (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

English is the official language of Fiji. Fijian and Hindustani are widely spoken. Fijian can be written in two different ways, one of which is more phonetic than the other. For instance, the letter "b" is pronounced with an "m" sound before it, as in the case of the town Ba. Its name can be written *Ba* or *Mba*, but it is pronounced "mbah". Hindustani is an Indian language. However, the Hindustani spoken in Fiji is called *Fiji Bat* or Fiji Talk, and differs slightly from the Hindustani spoken in India. English spoken among the people often includes words and phrases from both Fijian and Hindustani, as well as other languages.

### Religion

At last census, 52.9% of the population were Christian, 38.1% Hindus, Muslims 7.8% and Sikhs 0.7%. Methodists and Roman Catholics predominate. Indians are mostly either Hindu or Muslim and the Chinese are either Christian or Buddhist. There are also some Sikhs and Christian Indians. The people often celebrate festivals of other religions. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. Religion plays a major role in the lives of all Fijians.

### General Attitudes

Fijians are generous, friendly, and easygoing. Daily life in Fiji is relaxed and casual. Some call it the "Pacific Way". People enjoy life. The community is important, as is evident in community ceremonies, cooperative building projects, and community pride. The custom of *Kerekere* dictates that a relative or neighbour can ask for something that is needed, and it must be willingly given without expectation of repayment. Although the Fijians have abandoned their tradition as fierce warriors for a more peaceful life, they remain proud of their cultural heritage and traditions. Ethnic tensions exist between Fijians and Indians. The two groups do not regularly mix, and are political opponents.

### Personal Appearance

Light, casual clothing is worn throughout the year, but public attire is fairly conservative (no bathing suits), especially for women. In traditional villages, women do not wear shorts or pants. Daily clothing for Fijian men and women is most often the *sulu*, a medium-to-long wraparound cloth made of colourful cotton. Indian men wear long pants and shirts. Indian women wear a sari (wraparound dress) or a *salwaar kameez* (pants with a matching, long tunic). Fashions in the larger urban areas are changing due to Western influence.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The most common way to say hello among indigenous Fijians is *Bula!* (pronounced *Mboola*, meaning health). For more formal meetings, a handshake might be added. Indian Fijians shake hands and say *Namaste* when they greet. Fijians are friendly and will go out of their way to greet whomever they meet. When passing a rural Fijian house a person is greeted with *Mai kana* (Come eat). In this casual society, it is common to address most people by their first names. When people are related or have an established relationship, they may greet by reference to that relationship rather than using their first names. For example, close friends may address each other by *itau* (a traditional friendship), and male cousins might use *tavale* (cousin). Chiefs are addressed by the title *Ratu* before their first names.



## Gestures

Among Fijians, tilting the head down while speaking to someone shows respect. One indicates agreement by raising the eyebrows, closing the mouth, and making an “mm-mm” sound. A “thumbs up” gesture means “good” or “Okay”. Pointing directly at someone while speaking to them is considered rude. Standing with hands on hips is thought to be aggressive or brash. Pointing the bottom of one’s foot at another person is considered impolite. Among Fijians, it is especially offensive to touch someone’s head (except for a child’s). Beckoning is done by waving all fingers of the hand with the palm facing down. Staring is offensive. Physical displays of affection, even between married couples are frowned upon.

## Visiting

Visiting is an important part of social relations. Most visiting is done unannounced and guests are welcome. It is customary to remove one’s shoes when entering a home. Sitting cross-legged on a mat-covered floor is common in a Fijian home, but Indian homes have furniture. A chief or guest sits in a place of honour. It is impolite to stand higher than those who are sitting, so one takes care to also be seated or to walk in a stooped position when others are seated. The people of Fiji are hospitable; they enjoy sharing a visitor’s company and visits may last a long time. Refreshments are nearly always offered, including tea, juice, or food. It is impolite to refuse them. Both ethnic Fijians and Indians drink socially. *Yaqona* is prepared in a *tanoa* (a special wooden bowl) and drunk from a *bilo* (coconut shell). When a stranger enters a Fijian village, he seeks out the chief or village headman to ask for permission to enter and visit, and is expected to present some *yaqona* to him.

## Eating

Traditionally, neither Fijians nor Indians used eating utensils, but spoons and forks are becoming more common in urban areas. In Fijian villages, breakfast consists of tea drunk from tin bowls and possibly rice or any leftovers from the previous night’s dinner. For all meals, Fijians spread a cloth on the mat-covered floor, sit cross-legged, pray, pass a bowl of water around for washing hands, and eat from tin plates and bowls. The water bowl is again passed after the meal. Women and girls usually eat after the men and boys. Food is shared in Fijian villages. For large feasts and special meals, food is still cooked in the traditional manner in a *lovo* (ground oven).

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The Fijian people are family oriented and the father acts as head of the home. Families can be large. The elderly are usually cared for by their children. Villages are composed of families that form clans, or *mataqali* (land holding units). This extended family system has a collective or communal way of living. *Kerekere* plays an important role in family relationships. Subsistence chores are shared between men and women. Men are engaged in spear fishing, gardening and construction, while women do line and small net fishing, as well as the cooking, weaving of *ibe* (pandanus mats) and collecting wild food. Cooking is done in a smaller separate structure. Indians usually live in furnished tin, cement or wood homes. Urban dwellers of any ethnic group often live in Western-style homes.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating is traditionally nonexistent in Fijian culture, but Western influences are changing society so that dating is found in some areas. Affection is not shown in public. The ethnic Fijian man chooses his own wife and a grand wedding ceremony is held, accompanied by a *solevu* (a great feast). In high chiefly Fijian families, the parents must still approve their children’s future spouses. Indian parents have customarily arranged their children’s marriages, but this practice is also changing with Western influence.

## Diet

The mainstays of the Fijian diet are boiled taro and cassava, starchy roots that can be grown in the family garden. There are some leafy vegetables and many tropical fruits (papayas, mangoes, pineapples, bananas). Many dishes are prepared in *lolo* (coconut milk). Seafood, chicken, pork and beef are all eaten in Fiji. Foods are rarely deep-fried, but are steamed, boiled, or roasted instead. Indian cuisine is often made with curry and is spicy. *Roti* is a daily Indian staple.

## Holidays & Special Days

Bank Holiday	31 July	Independence Day	10 October
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# FINLAND

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,186,855 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.16%

### Resident in the ACT

644 born in Finland (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Over 93% of the population speaks Finnish, a Finnish-Ugric language coming from a language family different from Scandinavian languages. It is closely related to Estonian. Finland recognises Sami, the tongue of the indigenous minority Sami. English is popular as a second language. Swedish is the second official language, spoken by 6% of the population.

### Religion

Up to the end of the 19th Century, every Finn had to belong to either the Lutheran or the Orthodox Church. In 1889 the ACT on Nonconformity made the position of other Protestant churches official, and membership permitted. Baptists and Methodists were the first to be recognised. The Government has an official policy of religious neutrality. However, about 89% of Finns belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Other Christian groups include the Finnish Orthodox Church, and 9% of the population is not affiliated with any religion. In Australia, there are a number of Pentecostals.

### General attitudes

Finns adopt a high ideal of loyalty and reliability, honouring their promises and agreements. People are generally reserved, and value punctuality. They are proud of their cultural heritage, especially in the light of the national identity having survived centuries of foreign domination. In 1917, Finland was finally declared an independent Republic. Finns are also proud of their clean natural environment. Women are expected to participate in careers, political life and the social arena as well as the family.

### Personal Appearance

The Finns dress fairly casually. Young people reflect the trends, but are not overly fashion-driven. Formal dress is worn on special occasions, and colourful native costumes are sometimes seen at festivals and weddings. They often involve a striped, layered dress, with apron, bonnet and cap for women. The men wear a peaked cap, woollen cap or felt hat.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Both men and women shake hands and make eye contact when greeting. It is unusual to embrace when greeting people. Often one simply nods and says *hei* or *terve*. To say goodbye, one says *hei heir* or *nakemiin*. During introductions, the first name is used if it is informal, the surname if it is a formal setting. Titles are reserved for formal events. Finns tend to think carefully before speaking, and expect others to do so. Small talk is not valued.

### Gestures

Finns use very few gestures when speaking. It is, however, impolite to talk with hands in one's pockets. It is considered important to maintain eye contact during conversation. One covers the mouth when yawning.

## Visiting

As the Finns respect privacy very highly, an invitation to the home is an invitation to friendship. It is a meaningful gesture. Visitors are expected to be punctual, and they normally take flowers, wine or chocolates to the hosts. A visitor will be served coffee, cakes and cookies. On formal occasions, guests wait until the host has taken the first sip before drinking. On special occasion, a guest may be invited to share a sauna. This is a particular pastime originated and enjoyed by Finns. In fact, a good way to engage a Finn in lively discussion is to ask about the benefits of a sauna!

## Eating

On formal occasions, visitors are shown their seats for dinner. Table conversation may span many topics. Finns eat in the continental style, with the fork in the left hand, knife in the right. When going out to restaurants, one dresses conservatively.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

An average Finnish family has one or two children. Women receive up to 11 months maternity leave, with the option for some paternity leave. An increasing number of men share household responsibilities, and women hold a substantial number of seats in Parliament. Young people become independent early, moving out with the aid of housing subsidies.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating begins in groups at about age 15, when individuals may go to movies or dances. Young people typically choose to live together before marriage, or remain in an 'open marriage'. Sometimes marriage takes place when children arrive. The children may bear either the father or mother's surname, if both parents have kept their original surnames. It is possible, though uncommon, for a man to take his wife's surname at marriage.

## Diet

Finnish cuisine has been influenced by many cultures, from French to Russian. It also maintains a variety of Finnish specialities. These are based on seafood, wild game and vegetables. Reindeer is on the menu, especially further north, along with salmon. Wild berries are commonly used in desserts and liqueurs. The smorgasbord or Finnish buffet is called *poronkaristys*. Open-faced sandwiches on rye bread are often eaten for breakfast and snacks. Milk and coffee are the most popular drinks. Pastries are plentiful. A sweetbread called *pulla* comes in many forms, flavoured with cardamon. *Makkara* (sausage) is roasted over a fire or sauna heater.

## Holidays & special days

Christmas Eve December 24 (Finns exchange gifts and gather for celebrating arrival of Santa Claus, who is believed to live in Finnish Lapland))

Boxing Day, New Year's Day	1,2 January
Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday)	
Vappu Labour Day or May Day	1 May
Ascension Day	May
All Saints Day	1 November
Midsummer summer solstice or Juhannus	(Saturday closest to 21 June)
Independence Day	6 December

Finland Festivals (16) are held between June and September, including art, music, dance, opera, theatre.

# FRANCE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

59,845,818 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 0.37%

### Resident in the ACT

429 born in France (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The French government has emphasised the French language so much that almost everyone in France speaks French (99%), despite the different nationalities represented. Even regional dialects have lost their importance in recent years. English is the most common foreign language.

### Religion

The majority of the French (nearly 90 percent) are Roman Catholic. The 1 percent of the population who are Muslim are generally of North African origin.

### General Attitudes

The French believe success is judged by educational level, family reputation and financial status. They are among the most patriotic people in the world, which is illustrated by their attempts to limit the influence of other cultures in France. While French attitudes have traditionally been dominated by Paris, there seems to be a growing decentralisation in administration as well as attitudes. The French are reserved and polite. Political and social trends have caused the French to re-examine their national identity. Society debates issues related to the central government's structure, education, immigration, economics and even language.

### Personal Appearance.

The French in general take great care to dress well and fashionably, whether they are wearing formal or casual attire. French fashions influence the rest of the world. Professional attire tends to be formal.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Shaking hands upon greeting and parting is customary. An aggressive handshake is considered impolite. Generally, a woman does not offer her hand to a man but waits for him to initiate the greeting. Among friends, it is normal for women to be kissed (by both men and women) on both cheeks. Greetings are usually combined with the person's name or a title and always precede any conversation or request. First names are used between friends and close colleagues; otherwise, titles are important and customary.

### Gestures

Slapping the open palm over a closed fist is vulgar and should be avoided. It is improper to speak with the hands in the pockets or to chew gum in public.

### Visiting

The French are formal in their visiting customs and people do not often visit unannounced. Guests do not enter a home unless invited inside. A thank you note is often sent the day after one has been a dinner guest.

## Eating

Etiquette is important. Both hands remain above the table at all times. Elbows are not placed on the table. A man may rest his wrists and a woman her forearms, on the table edge. When eating out, the person who invites or makes the suggestion is the one who pays.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

While the nuclear family is still the most important unit of society, many people are now moving away from their extended families to work or study. Still, many children remain at home until they finish their education. Class distinctions are still fairly visible. In cities, most people live in apartments. The average family has fewer than two children.

### Dating & Marriage

The average age for beginning to date is around 15. In France, social class, wealth and level of education are important in the choice of a mate. Many couples chose to live together before getting married or as an alternative to formal marriage. Many couples choose not to have children.

### Diet

The French *cuisine* is legend; cooking is considered an art. Regional traditions are strong. There are several types of cooking, ranging from hearty, inexpensive fare to sophisticated dishes with costly ingredients and complex sauces. *Nouvelle cuisine*, which emerged in the 1960s, was a reaction to this heavy style of cooking. It features lighter ingredients, smaller portions and an artistic presentation. Although resisted by the French, fast food is gaining in popularity and most kinds are available. French breads and patisserie are well-known abroad, for example *croissants*, and *baguette*.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Liberation Day	8 May
National Bastille Day	14 July
All Saints Day	1 November
World War Armistice Day	11 November
Other religious holidays	

# GERMANY

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

83,329,261 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 0.27%  
The largest minorities are Turkish (2.1 m), Yugoslavs (1.35m), then Greeks, Poles and Austrians.

### Resident in the ACT

2437 born in Germany (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

German is the official language. However, the German taught in school and used in the media is often not the German spoken daily. Various dialects have a strong influence in most areas. English is widely understood and many Germans from the former East Germany speak Russian.

### Religion

Germany is essentially a Christian, but secular society. About 37% of the population (mostly in the south and west) are Roman Catholic and about 45% (mostly in the north and east) are Protestant, reflecting old regional divisions.

### General Attitudes

Germans have a reputation for being industrious, thrifty, and orderly. They have a strong sense of regional pride, a fact that the federal system of government recognises and accommodates. Most Germans have a strong classical education because of the nation's rich heritage in music, history and art and they expect others to appreciate that heritage.

### Personal Appearance

Clothing styles are similar to those in Australia, but with a distinctively European flavour. Traditional regional costumes are often worn during festivals and celebrations. Cosmetics are worn sparingly. Sloppy or untidy attire is inappropriate in public.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the most common form of greeting. A man waits for a woman to extend her hand before shaking it; in mixed company he shakes a woman's hand before a man's. In groups, several people do not shake hands at once; crossing someone else's handshake is inappropriate. By tradition, only family members and close friends address each other by their first names. Others use titles and surnames, although this is changing among young people.

### Gestures

Pointing the index finger to one's own head is an insult to another person. Instead of crossing one's fingers for luck, German's 'squeeze the thumb' between the index and the middle fingers. Only the thumb tip is between the fingers; allowing it to protrude is an offensive gesture. In some areas, public displays of affection are not appropriate.

### Visiting

Punctuality is appreciated, but it is not an insult for guests to arrive a few minutes late. Dinner guests often bring an odd number of flowers to the hosts. Flowers are unwrapped before they are given. Guests usually stand when the host enters the room and remain standing until offered a seat again. It is also courteous to stand when a woman enters the room. Spontaneous visits, even between neighbours, are not very common. Arrangements are usually made in advance.

## Eating

The continental style of eating is used. Hands are kept above the table with wrists resting on the edge. Potatoes and fish are not cut with a knife because this indicates they are not fully cooked. It is considered wasteful to leave food on the plate. Most Germans prefer their drinks without ice, as cold drinks are not considered healthy.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The father is generally the head of the family. Both parents often work, more so in the east than in the west. Large families are not common, even in rural areas. The average family has only one or two children. While order, responsibility and achievement are still traditional family values, a greater variety of lifestyles exists today, especially among those in the west. Most young people prefer to live away from home once they become wage earners or go on to university.

### Dating & Marriage

Boys and girls socialise with each other on a casual rather than a formal basis. Young people usually marry in their late twenties. It is common for people to live together before or instead of marriage. Legal marriages are performed and religious ceremonies are optional.

### Diet

While regional dishes vary among Germans, potatoes, noodles, dumplings, sauces, cakes, and pastries are common. Every region has its own kind of *wurst* (sausage). Ethnic foods, especially Turkish, Greek and Italian, and fast foods are popular. The main meal is traditionally served at noon and a lighter meal (*Abendbrot*) eaten in the evening, usually open faced sandwiches.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
National Day	3 October
Other religious holidays	

# GHANA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

20,370,119 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 1.79%

### Resident in the ACT

130 born in Ghana (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

English is the official language of Ghana, partly because of the country's colonial association with Great Britain and partly because there are so many ethnic languages that just one of them could not effectively serve as the official language. English is used in the schools, business, and government. There are movements to make several local languages official as well. The Twi dialect of Akan is the language most commonly used on a daily basis to communicate between ethnic groups. Most Ghanaians are at least bilingual.

### Religion

Traditional African beliefs and practices still play a major role in the lives of the people of Ghana. These are inseparable from the life and culture of Ghanaians and are retained regardless of any other religious affiliation. About 52% percent of Ghanaians belong to various Christian churches (37% Protestant, 15% Roman Catholic), 13% percent are Muslim, and the rest of the population maintain their traditional beliefs.

These traditional beliefs are characterized by a belief in a Supreme Being who has created all things and given various degrees of power to all living (animate) and nonliving (inanimate) things. Out of respect for the Supreme Being who cannot be approached directly, traditional Ghanaians often communicate with him through intermediaries. Intermediaries can include animate or inanimate objects, as well as the spirits of ancestors. People especially seek guidance through their ancestors. Because of this, ancestor veneration is an important aspect of the culture and worship. These traditional beliefs are often referred to by outsiders as "animism" because of their emphasis on showing reverence for living things.

### General Attitudes

Ghanaians are very warm, friendly, and sociable people. They are polite and open, even with strangers. They tend to take life at a more relaxed pace, viewing time as a series of events rather than a matter of hours or minutes. People are more important than schedules. Ghanaians are proud of their status as the first sub-Saharan colony to gain independence from a European power.

### Personal Appearance

Ghanaian dress is modest, neat, and generally conservative. Casual dress is the rule for most occasions, although a suit and tie, or dress are required for more formal occasions. Shorts are not acceptable public attire. Western dress is normal in urban areas, but officials often wear traditional *kente* cloth robes on ceremonial occasions. Women usually wear a traditional, long, wraparound skirt, separate top, and head scarf. This traditional attire can be very elaborate and colourful.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Because of pronounced differences between ethnic groups, greetings vary area to area. English greetings and hand-shakes are common. Indeed, a handshake is important when greeting most people. Before beginning a conversation, a general greeting such as "Good morning" "Good afternoon", or "Good evening" is necessary. Most greetings are in the dominant local language and are followed by questions about one's health, family welfare, journey, and so forth. Titles and family names are used to address new acquaintances. Friends and family members often use given names. Children refer to any adult that is well known to the family as "aunt" or



“uncle”, even when they are not related. By the same token, adults of the same age might refer to each other as brother or sister, regardless of their relationship, and will use “aunt” and “uncle” for respected older people.

## Gestures

Courtesy is important. It is impolite to gesture with the left hand. When yawning or using a toothpick, a person covers the mouth. It may be considered improper by some, especially Muslims, to pass or receive items with the left hand. Either the right hand or both hands should be used. Among Muslims, and some other groups used to sitting on the floor, it is improper to allow the sole of one’s foot to point at another person. Generally, feet are not placed on chairs, desks, or tables-especially those being used by another person. It is impolite and an act of defiance for a child to look an adult in the eye. It is common and appropriate for friends of the same sex to hold hands while walking or speaking. It does not signify anything beyond friendship.

## Visiting

In a society where friendly social relations are important, visiting plays a key role in everyday life. Friends and relatives visit one another frequently, often unannounced, and appreciate the visits of others. Ghanaians work hard to accommodate their guests. Most visits occur in the home. It is polite to at least take a small gift for the children. Some hosts prefer that their guests remove their shoes when entering the home. Guests are nearly always served drinks and often other refreshments. It is impolite to refuse these offers. Visitors are usually welcome to stay as long as they wish. It is polite to avoid visiting during mealtime, but an unexpected guest would be invited to share the meal. Visiting is most popular on Sunday, and many people like to dress up for the occasion. When a visit is over, guests are accompanied to the bus stop or taxi stand or given a ride home. It is impolite to let them leave on their own.

## Eating

Ghanaians usually eat meals with their right hand. A bowl of water is provided at the beginning of the meal, in which each person washes the hands. Food is scooped and formed into a ball with the right hand before being eaten. Water is also passed around at the end of the meal for diners to wash their hands.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Family structures vary from one ethnic group to another. Some groups have a matriarchal family organization, in which inheritance is passed down through the wife’s family rather than the husband’s. In these groups, the chief responsibilities for the family fall on the women. Others have male-dominated structures. Polygamy (having more than one wife) is also practiced by some Ghanaians. All elderly members of the family are deeply respected and exercise a great deal of influence on family decisions. Ghanaians normally sacrifice their own desires and ambitions for the sake of the family unit. Funerals are very important and last three days. For those people involved, everything else comes to a stop and all attention is directed toward funeral-related activities.

## Dating & Marriage

Many marriages are still arranged by families, although the children have the right to reject undesirable arrangements. More Westernized practices of dating are also found among a growing number of urban youth. Marriage in rural areas (and to some extent in urban areas) may also follow tradition, which allows a man to take more than one wife. Still, the Christian marriage with its monogamous restrictions is becoming prevalent. Traditionally, the groom pays the bride’s family a “bridal token” to indicate responsibility for the new bride.

## Diet

The diet consists mainly of yams, cassava (a starchy root), maize, plantain, and rice. Ghanaians enjoy hot and spicy food and most of their meals are accompanied by a pepper sauce made with meat, fish, or chicken. Fish is most common due to cost. Popular dishes include *fufu* (a dough like combination of plantain and cassava), *ampesi* (a green vegetable dish), and palm or peanut oil soups and sauces. Ghana also produces a variety of tropical fruits and vegetables to supplement the diet.

## Special days and Holidays

Independence Day

6 March

Labour Day  
Anniversary of 1979 coup  
Republic Day  
Revolution Day

1 May  
5 June  
1 July  
31 December

# GREECE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

10,653,663 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.21%

### Resident in the ACT

1274 born in Greece (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Greek is the official language of Greece. Turkish is spoken by 1% of the population and English and French are widely understood.

### Religion

About 98% of the people belong to the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church, which is the official religion in Greece and quite powerful. About 1% of the population (mostly of Turkish origin) are Muslim.

### General Attitudes

While women have gained greater prominence and rights in the last generation, Greek society is still male dominated. Men consider it a matter of honour to fulfil personal obligations to their families and others. They may attribute their failure to external circumstances rather than to personal inadequacies. Also, a man may praise the food served in his home as especially good, or be the hero of his own tales. Such self praise is not considered bragging. While Greece's older generations value family, religion, tradition and education, the younger generation tends to view status and friends as very important. Greeks like to "pass" time, not to "use" it. That is, they may not be prompt in keeping appointments and they consider it foolish to set a specific length of time for a meeting. Greeks are very proud of their cultural heritage, which they view as being central to Western civilisation.

### Personal Appearance.

Conservative dress is preferred. Traditional costumes are worn at folk festivals and on special occasions.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greeks are often expressive in their greetings. Friends and relatives hug and kiss when they greet one another. Otherwise, people shake hands. Young men often slap each other's back or arm at shoulder level instead of shaking hands. Close friends and family members are called by their first names, but acquaintances and strangers are addressed by their title.

### Gestures

To indicate 'no', one can either tilt the head backwards or side to side. To indicate 'yes', one nods the head slightly forward. A Greek may smile not only when happy but sometimes when angry or upset. A puff of breath through pursed lips may be a sign to ward off the jealousy of the 'evil eye' after a compliment has been given or received. Hands are used a great deal in conversation, both to accompany and replace verbal expressions.

### Visiting

It is very common for friends and relatives to drop by unannounced in small towns. This happens less often in large cities, but only because schedules are more hectic. Greeks enjoy having friends to their homes for dinner or for special occasions. If Greek hosts insist several times about anything (that a guest stay longer or eat more, for example), they usually mean it and guests try to accommodate them so as not to hurt their feelings.

## Eating

Traditionally, the main meal of the day is lunch, served in the early afternoon. Due to changing work schedules, however, lunch is becoming less important, and dinner is the largest meal. It is impolite to leave the table before everyone has finished eating, or to leave food on the plate.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

It is vital that no member bring shame or dishonour on the family. If one's parents die, the family's older siblings usually help the younger finish their education and get out on their own. The elderly are respected, addressed by courteous titles, served first and have much authority. Greeks care for their elderly parents at home when possible. If the parents must live in a home for the elderly, their children take care of all the arrangements and make frequent visits. Children are treated with firm discipline but their parents spend a large portion of their income to clothe, feed and educate them. Parents believe it is their duty to provide for a good education. They will always help their children, married or not, if they are able. Some newlywed couples live with their parents or in-laws until they can afford a home of their own.

### Dating & Marriage

Traditionally, the man asks a woman's parents for permission to marry her. If the parents approve, the two date and become better acquainted during a long engagement. Such formalities have become rare, except among rural people. Young people socialise as they do throughout Europe and it is common for a couple to live together before or instead of marriage. The average age for marriage is between 20 and 26 for women and between 25 and 35 for men.

### Diet

While tastes vary between urban and rural dwellers, certain foods are common to all Greeks, such as lamb, seafood, olives and cheese. Olive oil, garlic, onions and spices are widely used in cooking. Greek dishes such as *souvlaki* have become popular in Australia as fast foods. Everyday dishes include *moussaka*, bean soup, eggplant, stuffed tomatoes and pasta.

### Holidays & Special Days

Independence Day	5 March
Labour Day	1 May
Ochi Day	28 October
St Basil's Day	1 January
Greek Orthodox religious special days	

# GUATEMALA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

13,425,371 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 2.60%  
56% of the population are Latino, mixed Spanish-Indian descent, and the remaining 44% are Indian, from Maya descent, in 21 separate groups.

### Resident in the ACT

3 born in Guatemala (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish is Guatemala's official language, but each indigenous group speaks its own language.

### Religion

Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion in Guatemala, although many indigenous groups have combined it with their Mayan beliefs. About 45 percent of the people are now Protestant.

### General Attitudes

Guatemalans are polite and humble. They value honesty, family unity, personal honour, work, and education. Optimism is less common than the acceptance of misfortune. Personal criticism is taken seriously and should be avoided. Punctuality is admired but not strictly observed because people are considered more important than schedules.

### Personal Appearance

In cities, People generally wear Western-style clothing. However, the rural Maya have retained traditional dress. Each group's clothing has unique qualities, but basic features include a *faja* (woven belt worn by both sexes), wraparound skirts for women, and knee or calf-length trousers for men.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When meeting for the first time, people greet with a handshake. A younger woman will kiss a male friend, but older women only kiss relatives. In small groups, it is important to greet each individual. Guests greet hosts individually, regardless of the size of the group. When addressing others, using a title shows respect.

### Gestures

Guatemalans beckon by waving the hand downward and in. To point, people most often purse their lips in the direction of whatever they are indicating. Personal space during conversation is relatively close, although touching is not common.

### Visiting

Visiting friends and relatives is important to building strong relationships. Not visiting frequently can be an insult, as it reflects the relationship's value. Socialising also takes place outside the home; friends and relatives may meet at the market, community meetings, church, or water well. Frequent visitors do not usually bring gifts to the hosts, but anyone staying more than a day will give flowers, chocolates, or something for the home. The longer a visitor stays, the nicer the gift given. Hosts often send food or something from the garden home with their dinner guests.

## Eating

Most people eat three meals a day. Tortillas are often used as a scoop for some foods. Other foods are eaten with the hands, but utensils are otherwise used at most meals. Hands are kept above the table, not placed in the lap. Upon finishing the meal, each person at the table (even the cook) often thanks all others at the table. When guests eat, they finish everything on their plates and wait for the host to offer more food. If additional food is offered, it is first politely declined, but then always accepted and eaten completely.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The extended family forms the basis of society and exerts significant influence on an individual's life and decisions. The father is the head of the family, but the wife controls the household; she is considered the heart of the family. Unmarried adults live with their parents unless they must go elsewhere for work. Adult children in Guatemala are responsible for the care of their elderly parents. One-fourth of the labour force is female. Although apartment living is often necessary, people prefer the privacy of homes.

### Dating and Marriage

Urban youth begin socialising in groups around age 15. A girl's honour is important ; a proper couple is "chaperoned" by younger siblings or cousins. Women often marry by age 20, earlier in rural areas, and men by 24. Common-law marriages are accepted.

### Diet

Corn tortillas are eaten with every meal. Other foods include black beans, rice, tamales (cornmeal or rice dough stuffed with meat and tomato sauce), and fried *platanos* (bananas) with honey, cream, or black beans. Meats are often stewed, and sauces are important. Papaya and breadfruit are among the many fruits eaten in Guatemala.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Independence Day	15 September
Columbus Day	12 October
Revolution Day	20 October
Other religious festivals and holidays	

# HONG KONG (S.A.R)

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

7,303,334 (US Census 2001)

### Resident in the ACT

993 born in Hong Kong (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language of Hong Kong is Chinese. English is still the language of commerce, as it was the official language up until 1997. The official dialect is Yue (Cantonese) from Guangdong. Chinese written script has been standardised for centuries, but the simplified script from mainland China is beginning to become popular in Hong Kong.

### Religion

There are diverse elements in the Chinese religious heritage. The law in Hong Kong guarantees religious freedom. Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism all contribute to the religious life of Hong Kong residents. Ancestor worship and folk practices are widespread. Inside many homes one finds decorated boxes with photos of departed loved ones, incense sticks, and offerings of fruit.

Marriages and funerals involve special ceremonies. About 10% of the Hong Kong population identifies with a form of Christianity.

### General attitudes

Hong Kong is known as 'The Pearl of the Orient', due to its scenic beauty and the energy of its people in building a major trade centre. Hong Kong Chinese people are influenced by the Confucian ethic, setting out proper family and social relations. The actions of an individual are seen to reflect on the family and society. 'Saving face' is an important element of social interaction. Most residents identify with Hong Kong first, then China.

### Personal Appearance

Modesty and cleanliness is important in the public arena. Hong Kong residents wear a wide range of dress styles, though there is an emphasis on style. At home, casual clothing is worn.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

It is common to see both Chinese and English forms of greeting in Hong Kong. Ethnic Chinese shake hands with non-Chinese. People politely inquire about the health of the family or the business affairs. Nicknames are used for friends or relatives. Otherwise, the Chinese address each other by full name or title. A Chinese family name comes first, followed by a given name. Many Hong Kong Chinese adopt a Western name. These names are often added before the family name, eg Johnny Leung Wai Po.

### Gestures

Though it is tradition to sit with hands in the lap and feet on the floor, many modern Hong Kong residents are more relaxed. Crossing legs can offend some people. Winking can be in bad taste and have bad connotations. To point, an open hand is best. Chinese beckon with the palm down and all fingers waving. It is impolite to touch a person's head, and to talk loudly.

## Visiting

Entertaining visitors is a popular activity in Hong Kong, though due to busy schedules and small homes, dining out in restaurants is common. When visiting a home, it is wise to call first, to ensure the resident is there. Visitors are treated with respect and attention. Food may be prepared specially and conversation tailored to their interests. On first-time visits, a consumable gift is appreciated. People offer and receive a gift with both hands. Sometimes, a final round of tea gives a signal the visit is coming to a close. It is polite to serve others first, with tea or food. The best portion of food goes to others, whether host or visitor.

## Eating

The use of chopsticks is prevalent in Chinese dining. Though Chinese like to share food with the family, work schedules make this difficult. Dishes of food are typically placed in the centre of the table, and diners help themselves with chopsticks. Placing the rice bowl close to the mouth is proper. Talking too much is impolite at the table. The cosmopolitan nature of the Hong Kong cuisine means that people enjoy a wide range of food.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

With one of the lowest divorce rates in the world, Chinese family loyalty and obedience is extremely strong. One child is the norm, and while the extended family is traditional, the nuclear family unit now prevails. Most people live in high-rise apartments. It is difficult to afford other types of housing. Women are still responsible for the household, although both men and women work outside the home. Professional couples often employ a live-in domestic help.

## Dating & Marriage

Couples enjoy dining out, movies, picnics and shopping malls. Young people usually wait to marry till they can have their own apartment. Parents' approval of partner choice is important. All marriages must have a civil ceremony, and Christians also have a church wedding. A traditional wedding includes a large banquet for family and friends. Some arrive early to play *mahjong*. The bride wears a traditional red and gold Chinese wedding dress (*cheongsam*) but changes twice during the proceedings. The groom wears a Western suit.

## Diet

Rice is the staple food. Most of the food in Hong Kong is imported. Fried rice usually includes a little pork, chicken, prawn and vegetables. *Congee* is a rice dish with the consistency of porridge. Several kinds of *dim sum* (dumplings) are popular. Oranges and melons are popular fruit for juicing. The wide variety of food available means a varied diet.

## Holidays & special days

Holidays reflect both the lunar and Western calendars.

The Chinese New Year

Ching Ming in spring

Chung Yeung in the autumn

Easter, Christmas

HKSAR anniversary

1 July

Chinese National Day

1 October



# HUNGARY

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

10,062,780 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: -0.32%

### Resident in the ACT

483 born in Hungary (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Magyar (Hungarian).

### Religion

Roughly two thirds of the population is Roman Catholic. Various other Christian groups make up the other third, including about 20% Calvinists and 5% Lutherans.

### General Attitudes

During the Communist era, Hungary was considered one of the most prosperous and open countries in Eastern Europe. It was the first to announce sweeping reforms and was able to accomplish them without violence or serious upheaval. The people earnestly wish to become part of an integrated Europe. Accompanying pride in their heritage and past achievements, however, is a historical tendency for pessimism. Even if one's neighbours are worse off, a Hungarian will express doubt about his or her own future or condition. Hungarians value independence, a strong and stable family, education, security (be it a job, home or social benefits), property (a home, a garden, and a car) access to or ownership of summer cottages and travel outside of Hungary. People admire professionals but do not generally admire the wealthy.

### Personal Appearance

Clothing styles in urban areas generally follow those in Western Europe. Conservative suits are worn by businessmen. Traditional costumes are seen only in rural areas and during special celebrations.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Adults commonly greet each other with a firm handshake. A man usually waits for a woman to first extend her hand. Close women friends may hug and kiss each other lightly on the cheek. People often introduce themselves by their surname first. Greetings on a first-name basis are usually limited to close friends and relatives. However, adults address young people by the first names and youth address each other by first names.

### Visiting

While close friends, relatives and sometimes neighbours may make short unannounced visits, most are arranged in advance where possible. First time visits by acquaintances are usually short. Hungarians enjoy socialising in the home but also frequently meet at restaurants, coffee houses and tea rooms.

### Eating

Breakfast may be a light meal, with only rolls and a drink, or may be heartier and include eggs, salami, cheese, yoghurt and even hot peppers. Lunch is often the main meal in rural areas; in urban areas, dinner is the main meal. It is impolite to leave food on the plate.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The average Hungarian family has three people (father, mother and a child). Urban families tend to be smaller than rural ones. The father maintains a dominant role in the family. Both parents usually work. Men share some household responsibilities but traditionally take on the outdoor chores. Adult children often live with their parents until married. Aged parents are generally cared for by their children, who may live in the same house or nearby.

### Dating & Marriage

Most Hungarians expect to marry and have a family. Urban newlyweds tend to be older than rural couples. Traditional weddings were very big three day affairs but these are rare today.

### Diet

Hungary's location in central Europe makes it a prime gathering point for many ethnic culinary specialities. One of the most famous Hungarian dishes is *goulash*, a stew of meat, potatoes, onion and paprika. Paprika is used in many dishes. Pork and chicken are the most common meats.

### Holidays & Special Days

Anniversary of uprising against Austrian rule	15 March
Constitution Day	20 August
Anniversary of 1956 Revolution	23 October
Local festivals, religious and ancient	

# INDIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

1,051,335,948 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.55%

### Resident in the ACT

1814 born in India (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

There are at least 300 known languages in India, 24 of which have one million or more speakers. Besides Hindi and English, there are 14 other official languages, including Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, and Sanskrit. At least 30 percent of the population speaks Hindi. English is important for business and government and is the language of national communication. Hindustani, a blend of Hindi and Urdu, is spoken widely in northern India.

### Religion

India's constitution proclaims the country to be a secular state, which is particularly important in a society of such religious diversity. India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism - all of which believe in reincarnation. It is also the adopted home of most followers of Zoroastrianism. Slightly more than 82 percent of the people are Hindu. Hinduism is extremely diverse, polytheistic, rich in ceremony, and associated with the caste system. Although Hinduism lacks an authority structure, it does have clearly defined beliefs regarding the purpose of life. The caste system dictates that individuals must work their way up to the highest caste through reincarnation before they can exit life on earth to a better existence. Below the fourth caste (labourers) are the "Untouchables," with whom other Hindus are to have no contact, and who are usually poor and powerless. The caste system has been constitutionally abolished but continues to be practiced. It limits social and economic mobility for millions of Indians, and maintains the status of the privileged few. Almost 12 percent of the people are Muslim. Two percent of the people practice the Sikh religion, mostly in Punjab. The Sikh practice of tolerance is reflected in offers of free food and shelter to anyone who comes to their places of worship. Jains, though powerful in India, also make up less than 1 percent. Jains practice a reverence for life (ahimsa, literally "non-violence"), and self-denial (especially monks). Less than 3 percent of the population is Christian.

### General Attitudes

Indian people are religious, family oriented and philosophical. They believe strongly in simple material comforts and rich spiritual accomplishments. Abundant expressions of gratitude are typically saved for real favours rather than routine courtesies. Physical purity and spiritual refinement are highly valued. Fatalism is widespread in the country, as it is a component of the major religions of India. Indians are proud of a rich heritage that has produced numerous architectural and artistic masterpieces. They are equally proud of being the world's most populous democracy where free elections have determined leadership since 1947.

### Personal Appearance

Women in India generally wear a *saree*, a long length of fabric draped in variations that can represent socioeconomic status and religious affiliation. They may also wear a colourful type of pantsuit with a long shirt that extends to the knee. Women wear considerable jewellery. Hindu women may wear a *Bindi* or red dot, on their foreheads. Traditionally this was a sign of femininity, gracefulness, and marital status, but in modern times it has become more often an optional beauty aid, with the colour of the Bindi frequently matching the wearer's outfit. After marriage, the *Bindi*, accompanied by white powder on the forehead (or vermilion powder in the part of her hair), signifies the woman's husband is alive; widows do not wear a *Bindi*. Men who are Sikhs wear turbans and specific items with religious significance, while Hindus and Muslims may wear a long shirt with pants, sometimes accompanied by a jacket or a vest.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The *namaste* is the traditional greeting used in India. One's palms are pressed together (fingers up) below the chin and the term *namaste* (in the south, *namaskaram*) is spoken. For superiors or to show respect, a slight bow is added. "Hello," and "Hi" are also acceptable. Indians do not usually shake hands with or touch women in formal or informal gatherings. This is a sign of respect for a woman's privacy. It is polite to use titles such as professor, doctor, Mr, Shri (for men), *Shreemati* (married women), *Kumari* (single women), or the suffix *ji* with a last name to show respect. The right hand is used for the *salaam* gesture of greeting and farewell with Muslims. Indians usually ask permission before taking leave of others.

### Gestures

Whistling is very impolite. Women do not wink or whistle; such behaviour is considered unladylike. Postage stamps are not licked, but water is provided to moisten them. Grasping one's own ears expresses repentance or sincerity. One's feet or shoes should not touch another person, and if they do, an immediate apology is necessary. Beckoning is done with the palm turned down, and pointing is often done with the chin. A person must cover the head when entering a Sikh shrine.

### Visiting

Most visiting occurs in the home, and visits between friends or family are often unannounced. The need for prior arrangements is increasing in large cities. At social gatherings guests are often adorned with a garland of flowers, which should be immediately removed and carried in the hand as an expression of humility. Guests repay the host's hospitality by giving gifts, such as specialty foods (fruits, sweets) from other areas of the country, or something for the children. Guests invited for a meal customarily bring sweets, flowers, or fruit for the hosts.

Many Indians do not wear shoes inside the home. Most at least remove shoes before entering the living room. When visitors are ready to leave, they often indicate it by saying *namaste*. Among the more traditional elements of society, women may not be involved in social functions. Indians are too polite to say "no" to an invitation; if they cannot attend, they will more likely say "I'll try."

### Eating

Eating habits vary sharply between traditional and modern settings. Modern (most often urban) families will eat together and follow many Western customs. Traditional families may use the right hand instead of utensils for eating their food. Also, women may eat after other members of the family and any guests. Diners might drink from a communal cup; if so, the lips never touch it. A gesture of *namaste* can indicate one has had enough to eat. Some Hindus object to having their food handled by members of lower castes.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The basic social unit in India is the family, which takes precedence over the individual. Families are generally large, but the government is actively encouraging family planning to curb rapid population growth. Extended families often live together or near each other. The elderly are respected and cared for by their families. The father is head of the household. A middle or upper-class father expects to financially take care of the children until they have finished their education and taken a job - regardless of how long it takes. Few women work outside the home. However, a growing number of urban women are part of the workforce, making important professional contributions to Indian society.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating practices of Western countries are not common in India, although urban residents are affected by Western standards. Traditional marriages are still arranged by parents, often with the consent of the bride and groom. Marriage is sacred to most Indians and is considered to endure beyond death. Chastity is the most treasured virtue of womanhood. Weddings are times of great celebration, expense and feasting. Ceremonies are often elaborate and vary widely from region to region. In many, the bride and groom exchange garlands and or words before they circle around a fire three to seven times to solemnize the marriage. Bright clothing, jewelry, and flowers are part of nearly every type of ceremony. Giving a dowry (money, land etc.) to the groom is still common for the bride's parents, even though the practice is illegal. Divorce rates are very low.

## Diet

Foods vary widely in India, depending on the culture and region. For example rice is a staple in the south, while wheat bread (*roti*) is the staple in the north. Indian meals are usually very spicy. Different types of curry (eggs, fish, meat, or vegetables in a spicy sauce) are popular. Vegetarianism is widely practiced, often for religious reasons. All castes have different food laws and customs, as does each religion. The Hindus consider cows to be sacred and will not eat beef or even use anything made of leather. Muslims eat no pork and drink no alcohol. Betel leaves and nuts are commonly eaten after meals to aid digestion.

## Holidays & Special Days

Republic Day	26 January
Independence Day	15 August
Mahatma Ghandi Birthday	2 October
Various religious festivals, Hindu, Muslim and Christian	

# INDONESIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

233,324,563 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.60%

### Resident in the ACT

598 born in Indonesia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Indonesian (a variety of Malay). However, some 300 other languages are also spoken in the country. One of them, Javanese is the most common with more than 70 million speakers. More than half the population speaks some Indonesian or Malay. Because Dutch was the official language until 1942, some older adults still speak it. English is the leading international language and is taught as a second language in the schools (after Indonesian). Ethnic languages are taught in special classes.

### Religion

At least 87 percent of the population is Muslim. In fact Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population. Muslims believe in Allah as God, and that Mohammed was Allah's last chosen prophet (following a long line of Biblical prophets. Nine percent of the population is Christian (mostly Protestant), and 2 percent is Hindu (mostly concentrated in Bali). There are also some Buddhists, mostly among the Chinese population. Regardless of one's religion, most Indonesians venerate their ancestors. Freedom of religion is guaranteed and religious tolerance is important, but proselytising has been banned by the government to avoid religious conflict.

### General Attitudes

Indonesians value loyalty to family and friends more than their own concerns. They rarely disagree in public, seldom say "no" (they say *Belum*, "not yet"), and generally have time for others. Punctuality, while important, is not emphasized at the expense of personal relations. Indonesians appreciate a quiet voice, an unassuming attitude, and discretion. To embarrass someone is a terrible insult. Indonesians often view Westerners as too quick to anger, too serious about themselves, and too committed to the idea that "time is money". Patience is the key to interaction. Attitudes vary according to diverse ethnic, political and religious backgrounds.

### Personal Appearance

Indonesians prefer modest dress, whether they wear Western styles or more traditional clothing. The traditional dress for a woman is called a *kain*, a long wraparound dress with an intricate batik pattern, and *kebaya*, a long-sleeved blouse reaching below the waist. Batik is the national handicraft and has been part of Indonesian culture for centuries. It is traditionally made by using molten wax to create designs on cloth. When the cloth is dyed, the wax preserves a white pattern. Authentic *batik*, made by hand, is being replaced with mass production imitations. Authentic batik clothing may be worn for formal situations by both men and women.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Indonesian culture is based on honour and respect for the individual. Letters begin with *Dengan hormat* (with respect), and respect is also important in greeting others. Men and women usually shake hands and bow the head slightly when introduced for the first time. After that, it is unusual to shake hands in greeting; a nod or slight bow is most appropriate. Indonesians shake hands when congratulating someone or when saying good-bye before a long trip. A man does not usually touch an older women in public, except to shake hands, even if he knows her well. If a person has a title, it is used in greeting and general conversation. Many Indonesians, especially the Javanese, have only one name and are therefore addressed both formally and casually by that name.

## Gestures

One should avoid using gestures to beckon another person, except for children or a *becak* (pedicab) driver. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers with the palm facing down. Approval is sometimes shown by a pat on the shoulder, but one never touches the head of another person. The left hand is not used to shake hands, touch hands, touch others, point, eat, or give or receive objects. Standing with one's hands in the pockets or on the hips is a sign of defiance or arrogance. Crossing the legs is usually inappropriate, but if crossed, one knee should be over the other (never an ankle on the knee). The bottom of one's foot should never face another person. Yawning in public is avoided, but if a person must yawn, a hand should be placed over the mouth. Laughing at another's mistake is very offensive. People on public transportation should offer their seats to the elderly.

## Visiting

Indonesians believe that visits bring honour to the host, and they warmly welcome all guests. Unannounced visits are common. Visitors sit when invited to, but they will also rise when the host or hostess enters the room. A drink is often served, but a guest does not drink until invited to. If refreshments are served, it is polite to at least eat a little bit to avoid offending the hosts. If the host or hostess is not wearing footwear, it is polite for visitors to remove theirs. Shoes are removed before entering carpeted rooms, feasting places, places of funeral viewing, or holy places (especially mosques). More Westernized Indonesians appreciate flowers from guests invited to dinner, but gifts are not expected by traditional Indonesians. Any gift given is accepted graciously because it is impolite to refuse anything. Gifts are not opened in the giver's presence.

## Eating

Although there are many restaurants along the streets, eating while standing or walking on the street is inappropriate. Finishing a drink implies the desire for the glass to be refilled. It is impolite to eat or drink until invited to do so by the host. Both hands are kept above the table while eating. Compliments about the food are appreciated by the hostess. At restaurants, a service charge is usually included in the bill. Tipping is uncommon. Public use of toothpicks is avoided; if toothpicks must be used, one hand should cover the mouth during use.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Traditionally, Indonesians have had large families, but in recent times people are stopping at two children. Members of the extended family often live under the same roof or near one another. Loyalty and cooperation among family members are highly valued. The home is traditionally dominated by the father, and the mother is responsible for raising children and caring for the household. The trend today is for many urban women to work outside the home, and they comprise 40 percent of the labour force. Women comprise 12 percent of parliament and have generally equal access to education as men. Women also have more rights than in other predominantly Muslim countries, including rights in property settlements, inheritances, and divorce.

## Dating & Marriage

Conventional, Western style dating is uncommon, except in urban areas. Likewise, arranged marriages have given way to marriages of individual choice in urban areas. However, arranged marriages are still common in rural areas. Rural women are often married by the time they are 20 years old. As in other predominantly Muslim countries, a man may have as many as four wives if he can provide for each equally. Yet it is rare to find a man who has more than one wife; women generally oppose polygamy and men usually cannot afford it.

## Diet

Rice is the main staple food. Now nearly self-sufficient, Indonesia once imported large amounts of rice to feed its growing population. Vegetables, fish, and hot sauces are often served with the rice. Tea and coffee are the most common drinks. Popular meats include beef and chicken. It is forbidden for Muslims to eat pork or drink alcohol. Chillies are often used (sometimes in large quantities) in cooking, as are other spices. Coconut milk is used to cook particularly spicy food.

## Holidays & special days

Indonesian National Day                      17 August  
Religious celebrations according to Islam, Christian, Hindu or other faith

# IRAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

66,765,542 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth Rate: 0.72%  
Ethnic groups are Persian 51%, Azerbaijani 24%, Giliki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%.

### Resident in the ACT

284 born in Iran (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language in Iran is Persian, but there are many other languages and Persian dialects spoken because of the different ethnic groups in Iran. Turkic, Kurdish, Luri, and Arabic are among the major languages spoken. Turkic is the most widely spoken language after Persian as it is the language of the Azerbaijanis and Turkmen. All school instruction is in Persian.

### Religion

Shi'ite Islam is the state religion and has been since the 1500s. Before that time, most Persians were Sunni Muslims. About 95 percent of the population is Shi'ite Muslim, with some 4 percent belonging the Sunni branch of Islam. Shi'ism adds a strong nationalist element to the religious principles of Islam. Iran is the most populated Shi'ite Muslim country. There are many Baha'i in Iran, though they are not permitted to practice their faith. There are approximately 80,000 Christians, and 30,000 Jews. Zoroastrianism, the religion displaced by Islam in the seventh century, is also officially recognized and has some followers.

### General Attitudes

Iranians have a rich cultural heritage, including the great Persian Empire, of which they are proud. The people are hospitable and open to others. They like foreigners although official policy statements sometimes condemn Western policy stances. Iranians value education, culture, intelligence, and wisdom. Their perception of time is more flexible than in the West, Iranians do not stress punctuality over the needs of individuals, who are more important than schedules.

### Personal Appearance

Iranians dress formally and conservatively in public. Men usually wear Western-style clothing, although traditional robes and turbans or hats are also worn in parts of the North and West, especially by religious leaders. Kurds also wear a type of turban. Women must be covered from head to foot in public. During the 1980s a veil and a black chador (long dress) were required as well. However, moderation has allowed women to go without the veil and to wear other clothing if it is loose fitting. Even in this case, only a woman's hands and face may be visible in public. The traditionally legal black head cover, (*maghna-ea*) while still worn, is being replaced by more colourful scarves. Islam generally requires men to wear long sleeves, but a bare forearm is permitted. Bright colours are not worn. Personal cleanliness is important. Most men have beards. At home, Iranians often dress in comfortable pyjamas. They may also receive guests dressed in pyjamas, which are not only for sleeping but relaxing as well.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the customary greeting in Iran. A slight bow or nod while shaking hands shows respect. Generally, a man does not shake a woman's hand. Iranians of the same sex will often kiss each other on the cheek as a greeting and sign of affection. Proper etiquette is essential when greeting another person and one will often ask about the family and the health of the other. A common parting phrase is *Khoda haftz* (May God protect you). Formal titles and last names are used in greetings to show respect. Iranians generally stand when someone (especially an older or more prominent person) enters the room for the first time and again when someone leaves. To shake hands with a child shows respect for the parents.



## Gestures

Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands, but not with the left hand alone. The soles of the feet should not point at any person. Crossing one's legs is generally not respectable. Slouching or stretching one's legs in a group is offensive. Out of respect and to maintain proper distance between genders, men and women do not always make eye contact during conversation. Men and women do not display affection in public, even if married. However, friendship and affection is often shown between members of the same sex. To beckon someone, all fingers are waved with the palm facing down. To tilt the head up quickly means "no" and to tilt it down means "yes".

## Visiting

Hospitality is a cherished tradition in Iran. Iranian philosophy claims a guest is a gift from (or friend of) Allah. Respecting the guest is a way of respecting Allah. Guests are therefore the centre of attention in an Iranian home and everything is done to make them feel comfortable. Visitors remove their shoes before entering carpeted areas of a home. A polite guest compliments the host generously and accepts compliments in return. However, complimenting objects is avoided because the host may feel an obligation to offer the object to the admirer. When invited to dinner, it is customary for the guest to take a flowering plant, cut flowers, or candy to the host. Iranians do not open gifts in front of the giver. If offered gifts, refreshments, or invitations from a friend, it is polite to decline a few times before graciously accepting and thanking the host several times.

## Eating

The midday meal is the most important meal of the day. Dinner is usually served after 8.00p.m. Elaborate Persian meals will often be prepared for guests, and a host may insist that several helpings are eaten. Food is eaten with the right hand only. Tea is usually offered to guests. During the entire month of Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink anything from dawn to dusk; in the evenings, families eat together and visit friends and relatives.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family unit is strong in Iran and provides its members with identity, security, and social organization. The father is the undisputed head of the household. Large families with many children, especially boys, are preferred. It is legal for a man to have up to four wives if he can provide for each equally and if he has permission from his other wife or wives; permission from the government is also necessary. Most men, however, choose to have only one wife. A wife may apply to the court for divorce if her husband does not support her.

The elderly are respected and cared for by younger members of the extended family. Relatives remain close. Parents feel a lifelong commitment to children, often providing them with financial support well after marriage. Regardless of their age, unmarried persons live with their parents until they marry. Most families are able to provide for their own basic necessities, and there is a growing upper class that enjoys many modern amenities. Each man and woman has a surname from their family. The second surname is the official one.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating as practiced in the West is not common because members of the opposite sex are rarely alone with each other unless married, related or engaged. Daughters are usually protected by their families to the point that they do not speak to strangers until married. Education is considered important for girls as well as boys these days. Marriage is a highly valued institution. Most people expect to marry and have a family. Divorce is very rare. Most marriages are arranged by families. In the past, this meant that many girls married their cousins. But new attitudes have developed in some areas regarding education, work, and freedom in selecting marriage partners.

A couple may choose to have a temporary marriage (*sigheh*) that can last between a few days and 99 years. Children born to this type of marriage do not have the same rights and privileges as other children, but they are accepted as legitimate. Both a man and woman must consent to a *sigheh*, and women marrying for the first time must have parental consent. When a *sigheh* is terminated a woman may not marry again for about 70 days, or in the event of a divorce of a regularly married couple, the woman may not marry again for at least 100 days. Weddings are elaborate celebrations.

## Diet

The diet varies throughout the country. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Under current law, alcohol consumption is forbidden. Rice and wheat bread are the most common staple foods. Rice is often served with a meat and vegetable stew. Yogurt is generally served with rice or other foods. Fresh vegetables are important in the diet, and fresh fruit is a favourite dessert. White cheeses are also popular for breakfast.

## Holidays & special days

National Day of Islamic Republic of Iran	11 February
Beginning of the Republic	1 April
Ramadan, Id'l Fitr	1st Day of the new moon
Nowruz New Day of the Year	
Nature Day, or Revolution Day	2 April
Other celebrations include the Birthdays and Deaths of Imams, Imam Hussein, and the prophet Mohammed and his daughter	

# IRAQ

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

24,217,910 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 2.84%  
Ethnic groups include Kurds (one-fifth of population), Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenians, Turkomans, Iranians and Bedouins

### Resident in the ACT

77 born in Iraq (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The majority of Iraqis speak Arabic, with variations in dialect according to region. Modern standard Arabic is spoken by educated Iraqis and is the written language. Other languages spoken include Chaldean, Armenian, Syriac, Turkish dialects and Persian. English is the most widely used foreign language and is taught in Iraqi schools.

### Religion

Islam is the recognised religion of Iraq, and 95% of the people practise Islam. There is no distinction between church and state. The two forms of Muslims in Iraq are the majority Shias (Shiites), and the minority Sunnis. The Sunnis were considered the orthodox branch of Islam. A small percentage of Iraq is Christian, and minorities include Yazidis and Kurds.

### General attitudes

Generally, reserve is the norm, and respect for the older generation is a key. People always give up seats on the bus for older people. Men will offer a seat to women, especially if they have children. There is intense pride in national sovereignty, expressed in solidarity shown in national events. The level of women educated to university level has dropped over the last ten years.

### Personal Appearance

The urban population dress conservatively, and most women wear a scarf or head shawl. In rural areas, men wear the *galabea* and loose pants. Effort is made to be clean and neat even when conditions are difficult.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Men greet other men with a kiss, and commonly hold hands. This is not the case for men and women. Women do not shake hands with men. They may say *Salaam Alaykom* (Peace be with you) or similar. First names are only used for greeting family and friends.

### Gestures

Objects are always passed with the right hand or both hands, and it is impolite to point with the finger or signal to another person with the hand. Gesturing with the left hand is rude. The sole of the foot should never point toward someone. Crossing the legs is generally not considered polite.

### Visiting

Friends and relatives visit unannounced, but otherwise warning is appreciated. Shoes are removed at the door, and usually slippers are provided. Guests wait till the host shows them to their seat. People often sit on cushions on the floor. It is polite to take a gift of flowers, wine or other small item. The hosts may decline several times before graciously accepting. The male host usually talks.

## Eating

Women may eat in a different area, and serve the men. Food is prepared in abundance for the guests. The right hand is used only to eat, and food is often eaten in the hand.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Couples can live either with the husband's extended family, or in a nuclear unit. Due to economic hardship, the extended family prevails. The oldest male heads the group, manages property and makes final decisions about issues like education, work and marriage. Women are likely to retain all domestic and child-rearing responsibilities even though they may work outside the home. Older women exercise authority over their son's wives and children. Male children are often given privileges over female children. A man inherits twice as much as a woman.

### Dating & Marriage

In urban settings, women and men have more choice over their partner, but introductions (and outings) are often set up by members of the family. Arranged marriages used to be the norm, but not now. Since the Gulf war, the government decreed that men can marry war widows. Women are forbidden to marry non-Iraqi men. Divorce is accepted, but only if it is initiated by the man.

### Diet

Devout Muslims do not eat pork, and eat only *halaal* meat. The Iraq diet is based around rice, unleavened bread, spiced meat dishes and stuffed vegetables. Strong coffee or tea is served before all meals. The main meal is usually mid-afternoon.

### Holidays or special days

Anniversary of the Revolution                      17 July  
Islamic feasts after Ramadam (Id al Fitr, and Id al Adha, the birth of Mohammad)

# ITALY

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

57,733,807 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.07%

### Residents in the ACT

2345 born in Italy (2001 Census unpub.)

### Language

Italian is the official language. There are significant French and German-speaking minorities, and Slovene is spoken by some. Many Italians are bilingual.

### Religion

Of the 85% professing a faith, nearly all Italians are Roman Catholic.

### General Attitudes

Italians in the warm south enjoy a leisurely life and take their time to accomplish business. In contrast, those of industrialised northern Italy feel more pressure and view time as something not to be wasted. Television and other media unite regions so their identities, dialects and traditions are melting into one. Also, as standards of living rise and traditions disappear, social relations suffer and people find less time for one another.

### Personal Appearance

Italians believe it is important to dress well at all times, regardless of where one goes. Dark glasses are not worn inside buildings. Italy is a major centre of the European fashion industry.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

In Italy, guests are always introduced first. The handshake is the most common greeting. Persons of the same gender often walk arm in arm in public. Good friends may appear to greet each other with a kiss on both cheeks.

### Gestures

The mouth should be covered when a person yawns or sneezes. Men remove their hats when entering buildings. It is impolite to remove one's shoes in the presence of others. Italians are known for their use of hand gestures during conversation, especially in the south. Hands are often used in communication instead of words.

### Visiting

Italians enjoy visiting one another, especially on holidays and Sundays. Guests invited to dinner often take a bottle of good wine, a box of chocolates, or flowers to the host. Unless they are told otherwise, guests wait for the hosts to sit before they are seated, and they also wait for the hosts to begin eating before they eat.

### Eating

When eating with guests, Italians do not usually hurry; a meal may last one to four hours. Compliments on the home and meal are appreciated by the hosts. It is appropriate for guests to give some attention to children in the family. The continental style of eating is used. During the meal a person's hands are kept above the table; to have hands in the laps is improper. At the table, it is impolite to stretch, even if the meal is over. Utensils are placed parallel to each other on the plate when a person is finished eating. A person does not leave the table before everyone is finished eating. Guests do not volunteer to help clean up.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Strong, traditional ties bind the Italian family together. Family association is of great importance. A faster pace of life is affecting the extended family. With more family members working, fewer families can care for their elderly members.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating is much the same as in other Western countries and is done either in groups or as couples. Marriage ceremonies follow general Catholic traditions. Divorce is now only granted after at least three years of legal separation.

### Diet

An Italian breakfast is very light, consisting of a cup of coffee, and a roll. Lunch, the main meal, is around 1 p.m. A light dinner is eaten in the evening. Wine is a common drink at meals and is also widely used in cooking. Meat and tomato sauces are popular with various types of pasta. Veal is a favourite meat. Cheese is important in the diet, including *ricotta*, *mozzarella*, *parmesan*.

### Holidays & Special Days

Liberation Day	25 April
Labour Day	1 May
Festival of Tricolour	12 May
Anniversary of the Republic	2 June
National Unity Day	5 November

# JAPAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

127,059,798 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.17%

### Residents in the ACT

489 born in Japan (2001 Census unpub.)

### Language

Japanese is the official language. Although spoken Japanese is not closely related to spoken Chinese, the written language is related to Chinese ideographs (characters), which were adopted in ancient times. It is from the Ural-Altaic language family. English is taught in all secondary schools and is often used in business. The Japanese also place great worth on nonverbal language or communication. For example, much can be said with a proper bow. In fact, one is often expected to sense another person's feelings on a subject without verbal communication. Westerners often misinterpret this as a Japanese desire to be vague or incomplete. The Japanese may consider a person's inability to interpret feelings through body language as insensitivity.

### Religion

Traditionally, most Japanese practiced a combination of Buddhism and Shinto. Shinto is a religion without a recognized founder or central scripture. It is based on an ancient mythology and stresses man's relationship to nature. There are many gods. All Japanese emperors are considered to be literal descendants of the sun goddess, Amaterasu. Shinto was important historically in ordering Japanese social values, as illustrated through the Code of the Warrior (Bushido), which stressed honour, courage, politeness, and reserve. Religious celebrations and practices, however, are now a social tradition rather than the result of religious conviction for most Japanese. Shinto principles of ancestor veneration, ritual purity, and a respect for nature's beauty are all obvious in Japanese culture. About 1 percent of the population is Christian.

### General Attitudes

Society is group oriented. Loyalty to the group (business, club, etc.) and to one's superiors is essential and takes precedence over personal feelings. In business, loyalty, devotion, and cooperation are valued over aggressiveness. Companies traditionally provide lifetime employment to the "salaryman" (fulltime male professional), and the salaryman devotes long hours of work to the company. Politeness is extremely important; a direct "no" is seldom given but a phrase like "I will think about it" can mean "no". Also out of politeness, a "yes" may be given quickly, even though it only means the person is listening or understands the speaker's request. The Japanese feel a deep obligation to return favours and gifts. Age and tradition are honoured. Various social strains are leading many people to re-evaluate what is most important in life.

### Personal Appearance

Conformity, even in appearance is a characteristic of the Japanese. The general rule is to act similar to, or in harmony with the crowd. Businessmen wear suits and ties in public. Proper dress is necessary for certain occasions. Conformity takes on a different meaning for the youth, however. They will wear the latest fashions (American and European) and colors. A *Kimono* or *wafuku*, is a long robe with long sleeves, wrapped with a special sash (*obi*). The designs in the fabric can be simple or elaborate. The kimono is worn for social events or special occasions.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A bow is the traditional greeting between Japanese. Persons wishing to show respect or humility bow lower than the other person. The Japanese shake hands with Westerners. While some appreciate it when Westerners bow, others do not, especially when the two people are not acquainted. Therefore, a handshake is most appropriate for

foreign visitors. Japanese are formal and titles are important in introductions. The family name is used with the suffix san. The use of first names is reserved for family and friends. Greetings used depend on the relationship. A worker might greet a superior with *Ohayogozaimasu* (Good morning), but he or she would greet a customer with *Irasshaimase* (welcome).

## Gestures

It is impolite to yawn in public. A person sits up straight with both feet on the floor. Legs may be crossed at the knee or ankles, but it is improper to place an ankle over a knee. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers with the palm down. It is polite to point with the entire hand. Shaking one hand from side to side with the palm forward means "no". A person refers to himself by pointing the index finger at his nose. Laughter does not necessarily signify joy or amusement; it can also be a sign of embarrassment. The mouth should be covered when using a toothpick. Chewing gum in public is considered impolite. Young girls often walk hand in hand.

## Visiting

Visits are usually arranged in advance; spontaneous visits between neighbours are uncommon in urban areas. Shoes are removed before stepping into a Japanese home. There is usually a small hall way (*genkan*) between the door and living area where one stands to remove the shoes. After being removed, they are placed together pointing toward the outdoors, or in a closet or on a shelf in the *genkan*. Coats are removed before stepping into the *genkan*. Slippers are often worn inside, but are removed before entering rooms with straw mat floors (*tatami*). Japanese traditionally emphasize modesty and reserve. Guests are usually offered the most comfortable seat. When offered a meal, guests often express slight hesitation before accepting it. Compliments are denied out of modesty. Guests avoid excessive compliments on items in the home because this may embarrass the hosts. When visiting it is customary to take a gift (usually fruit or cakes) to the hosts. Gifts are given and accepted with both hands and a slight bow. Gift giving is extremely important in Japan because a gift says a great deal about the giver's relationship to, and respect for, the recipient. Food and drink are the most common gifts.

## Eating

Although many youths eat while walking in public, it is generally considered bad manners for adults to do so. Snack foods sold at street stands are thus eaten at the stand. In a traditional meal, the Japanese typically eat from their bowl while holding it at chest level instead of bending down to the table. Chopsticks (*hashi*) are used to eat most meals, but people generally use Western utensils when eating Western food. The main meal is eaten in the evening. Because many people work late hours, they may eat dinner in office building restaurants or on the way home.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is the foundation of Japanese society and is bound together by a strong sense of reputation, obligation, and responsibility. A person's actions reflect on his or her family. While the father is the head of the home, the mother has the responsibility for household affairs. Traditionally, it was considered improper for a woman to have a job, but many women now work outside the home. Although the current trend is away from the traditional multi-generation families, many aged parents still live with their married children. In cities, families live in high-rise apartments or small homes. Large homes are found in less crowded areas.

## Dating & Marriage

Youth in Japan begin dating at around age 15 and enjoy dancing, movies, shopping, or eating out. They like Western music and fashion trends. The average marriage age is 27 for men and 26 for women. Weddings can be elaborate and expensive. Marriage ceremonies usually take place in hotels. The couple may wear traditional kimonos for the ceremony, Western wedding outfits for photographs and socializing, and different clothing for an evening party. Wedding guests bring gifts, often cash, and leave with gifts from the couple.

## Diet

The Japanese diet consists largely of rice, fresh vegetables, seafood, fruit, and small portions of meat. Rice and tea are part of almost every meal. Teriyaki sauce is famous, along with sushi (small portions of savoury rice wrapped in seaweed.)



## Holidays & Special Days

National Foundation Day	11 February
Green Day	29 April
Constitution Memorial Day	3 May
Children's Day	5 May
Respect for the Aged Day	15 September
Sports Day	10 October
Culture Day	3 November
Emperor's Birthday	23 December

# JORDAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,360,078 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 3.00%

### Residents in the ACT

62 born in Jordan (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is the official and most commonly used language in Jordan. English is widely spoken among the educated.

### Religion

About 90 percent of the people are Sunni Muslims. Islamic values and laws are an integral part of the society. Christianity (about 8 percent of the population) is represented by a few different denominations. Each religious community has the right to regulate personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance according to religious traditions.

### General Attitudes

Jordanians are good natured, friendly, and hospitable. They place great worth on the family and traditions but are also very modern. Time is not as important in Jordan as in the West. People are more important than schedules. Patience is valuable. Jordanians are proud of their rich cultural heritage and the country's accomplishments. Certain political topics are sensitive and should be avoided by foreign visitors.

### Personal Appearance

Most men wear Western-style clothing, often accompanied with the traditional white or red-checked headdress. Women also wear Western clothing, but many have chosen to wear traditional Islamic floor-length dresses, head scarves, and veils. Either way, clothing is always conservative and never revealing. Shorts are not worn by adults or teenagers, except during athletic events. It is important to be well dressed and modest at all times. Jewelry is an important part of a woman's wardrobe.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greetings are important in Jordan culture. Jordanians greet each other and strangers warmly. A handshake is the most common greeting, accompanied by verbal greetings and inquiries about each person's health. Friends of the same sex often exchange a kiss on either cheek. A common term for "Hello" is *Mar-haba*. A term used to welcome someone is *Ahlan wa sahalan*. *Ahlein mar-haba* might also be used as a welcome greeting. When entering or leaving a room, it is customary to shake hands with each person (except, of course, at large gatherings). First names are not used between strangers when greeting.

### Gestures

It is improper to pass or accept objects with the left hand only; the right hand or both hands should be used. It is impolite to point the sole of one's foot shoe at another person. For this reason, crossing one's legs is generally avoided. Good posture is important, especially at social events. It is improper to be affectionate in public. Hand gestures are used a great deal in conversation and for everyday communication.

### Visiting

Visiting (and entertaining in the home) plays a fundamental role in Jordanian society. Guests are greeted by both husband and wife. Invited visitors may bring gifts of flowers or sweets, but never alcohol. Coffee or tea is almost always offered to guests, no matter how short the visit. A person who has had enough to drink shakes the empty

cup back and forth. Coffee is also served shortly before guests are expected to leave; a person does not leave before this coffee is served. Guests not originally invited for a meal may be expected to remain. It is polite to initially decline the offer before accepting. However, it is impolite to not accept the offer, although some will refuse the invitation up to three times before accepting it. In any situation where gifts are given, the recipients should not immediately accept them. Excessive praise for children is considered bad luck for the family.

## Eating

It is traditional to eat food with the right hand (not the left). Utensils are usually available at functions involving international guests. When invited to a home for a meal, it is polite to leave a little food on the plate. This tells the host that the guest has eaten well and that the host has been generous. When Jordanians have guests, the host provides a large assortment of food. Coffee is important at all meals. Bedouin coffee (*Qahwah saadah*) is bitter and drunk slowly from small cups. Arabic or Turkish coffee is sweeter; it is not stirred so as to keep the thick grains at the bottom of the cup.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is unquestionably the most important unit in Jordanian society. The extended family shares a close relationship. They often live in the same city or housing area. Cousins are usually as close as brothers or sisters are in the West. Arabs love children and lavish time and attention on them. Likewise, the elderly are greatly respected and cared for by their children. Large families are traditionally desired, but family sizes are declining due to economic pressures. To be able to help another member of the family is considered a great honour as well as a duty. Parents will often help or support their children even after marriage. Gender roles in the family follow mostly traditional lines. The mother is expected to take care of the children and household. Only about 10 percent of the work force is comprised of women. The father is head of the family and expects to provide for it financially.

## Dating & Marriage

Jordanian society is fairly conservative in Dating & Marriage practices. In general, families still have a significant role in arranging marriages. Young people often meet at universities or offices and persuade their parents to help them in their courtship and subsequent marriage. One-to-one dating is generally reserved for after the engagement party or until the marriage contract has been signed. A bridal token is given to the bride's family by the groom. Women tend to marry in their early twenties, with men marrying after they have means to support a family (usually by their early thirties). Marriage is the norm and all Jordanians expect to marry and have children. The divorce rate is low.

## Diet

Islamic law prohibits the consumption of pork and alcohol, and most Muslims are careful to obey these restrictions. Most meals include meat and bread, along with vegetables and fruits that are in season. There are many types of bread. Most common is flat, round bread. A variation of this bread is known in the West as pita. The national dish of Jordan is *mansaf*, a large tray of rice covered with chunks of stewed lamb (including the head) and *jamed* (yoghurt sauce). It is eaten by hand from the serving tray. Other popular dishes include *mahshi* (stuffed vegetables), *musakhan* (chicken with onions, olive oil, pine seeds, and seasonings), and *meshwi or shish kebab*. Lamb and chicken are the most common meats. Tomatoes, onions, eggplant, cabbage, and other vegetables are also common.

## Holidays & Special Days

Arab League Day	22 March
Independence Day	25 May
King Hussein Accession	11 August
King Hussein's Birthday	14 November

# KENYA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

31,288,313 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth Rate: 1.27%  
There are 70 ethnic groups in Kenya.

### Residents in the ACT

207 born in Kenya (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

English is an official language and is widely used, especially for business and official purposes. However, Kiswahili (also called Swahili) was proclaimed the national language after independence and is therefore also official. It was chosen over other languages because of its linguistic commonality with other Bantu-based languages in the country. It is promoted to encourage national unity. Each ethnic group speaks its own language as a mother tongue and speaks Kiswahili to communicate with other groups.

### Religion

The majority of Kenyans are Christians. About 40 percent belong to various Protestant churches and 30 percent are Roman Catholic. Approximately 6 percent are Muslim. Most Muslims live along the coast and in the northeast. About 10 percent of the people follow indigenous belief systems or non-traditional Christian beliefs.

### General Attitudes

Kenyans are proud of their cultural heritage, their nation, and its accomplishments. Patriotism is evident in people's respect for the national flag. When and wherever it is raised or lowered, people stop to observe the short ceremony before moving on. The people are warm and friendly. Social systems are group oriented. The individual is expected to be willing to sacrifice personal interests for the interests of the group. The "group" is usually defined by family, which has the highest value in society. To fail to keep close ties with the extended family is considered rebellious behaviour. Individuals are expected to share their wealth with poorer family members. For instance, a man with adequate finances may be expected to pay his less-fortunate brother's children's school fees. Wealthier individuals are also expected to help their community.

### Personal Appearance

Kenyans dress conservatively and modestly. Western-style clothing, with some African variations, is the norm. Shorts (for women) are generally only appropriate in resort areas. Women usually wear dresses, but many young urban women wear pants. Women often wear a kanga around their waist as a skirt or to cover their clothes. A *kanga* is a long piece of colourful cotton fabric. It is also used by mothers to carry children on their backs, or by any woman to shield herself from rain or wind. Rural and some urban women wear scarves. Sleeveless dresses or blouses are not common because they are not considered modest. Light fabrics and short sleeves are common because of the warm climate. Small groups such as the Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana retain traditional dress.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Kenya is an ethnically diverse country, so greeting customs differ between ethnic groups. However, a handshake is common and important throughout the country. Because most of the people speak Swahili, the Swahili term *Hujambo, habari?* (roughly, "Greetings! How are you?") is often used. A simple *Jambo!* is a common casual greeting in coastal cities. *Habari gan?* ("What is the news?") is common in non-coastal areas. English greetings are also acceptable. Kenyans are friendly and greet others with warmth and politeness. They often ask about each other's family and welfare. Upon departing, Kenyans might say *Tuta onana* ("We will meet") or, if evening, *Lala salama* ("Sleep peacefully").

## Gestures

The right hand or both hands are used to pass and accept items. The use of the left hand alone is improper. The verbal "tch-tch" or "tss-tss" sound is used to express displeasure. Pointing at someone with the index finger is very rude. The gesture for "come here" is waving all fingers of the hand, with the palm facing either down or up. Approval may be shown with both thumbs extended up. It is improper to touch an elder. It is often considered improper to photograph another person without permission. Public displays of affection are not acceptable in most areas, although they are increasingly common in Nairobi. In all areas it is common for men to hold hands while walking in public, while a man and woman would not do so. Eye contact is important, as people are more willing to trust a person who will look them in the eye.

## Visiting

Because of strong family ties and friendships, visiting is a common activity among Kenyans. Sunday is a popular day for making visits. Most visits are unannounced; people often drop by for conversation and a cup of tea. No rules exist about how long a visit lasts, but it is impolite for a host to ask guests to leave. Hosts try to make guests comfortable. Invited guests might bring small gifts. Wine is common among Christians; flowers and tea leaves are popular for all groups. In rural areas, sugar, instant coffee, flour, and maize meal are given.

## Eating

When guests are invited to dinner, they usually have some time for conversation while final preparations are being made. After the meal, they stay for more socializing. Afternoon tea is a daily custom throughout the country. Depending on the type of food, and personal or family tradition, people may eat their meal with the right hand or use utensils. It is more common to use the right hand in rural areas, but this is also practiced in cities. Otherwise, utensils are used. Hands are washed before and after eating. Among some traditional families, children eat separately from adults. Men are often served first. Among the Samburu, warriors avoid eating in the presence of women.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family unit usually includes the extended family. There is much interaction between uncles, aunts, and cousins. In fact, children call their maternal aunts, "mother", and their parental uncles, "father." The average Kenyan family is large. In urban areas families are smaller and nuclear families are becoming more common. Aging parents are cared for by the family's youngest adult son. Most Kenyans expect to marry and raise a family, because the family is a great source of pride. A small number of educated women are choosing to avoid their traditional role as wives. Some have children but prefer life as a single parent.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating starts at about 18 in the cities, but is still rather uncommon in the villages. Men and women usually marry between the ages of 18 and 24. The dowry system, where a payment is made by the groom's family to the bride's family, is still in effect. Money has, however, been substituted for livestock as the medium of exchange for the dowry. Usually young people choose their partners, but wedding details are largely handled by the families. In a few cases, marriages are still arranged by families, rather than decided upon by the individuals.

## Diet

The most common meats in Kenya are goat, beef, lamb, chicken, and fish. Milk, *ugali* (a stiff dough made from either cornmeal, millet, or sorghum), *ujji* (porridge made from ugali ingredients) red bean stew, *kitumbua* (fried bread), and *chapati* (a flat bread) are staple foods. Popular fruits include pine-apples, mangoes, oranges, bananas, and papaya. Also common are sweet potatoes and avocado.

## Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Madaraka (Anniversary of self-government)	1 June
Kenyatta Day	20 October
Independence Day	12 December
Other religious days and festivals according to faith	

# KOREA NORTH & SOUTH

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

North Korea	22,326,557 (US IDB Census 2002)
South Korea	47,962,703 (US IDB Census 2002)

### Resident in the ACT

649 born in South Korea (Census 2001 unpub.)  
5 born in North Korea (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The Korean language plays an important role in the identity of the Korean people. Korean is spoken in both North and South Korea and is written in a phonetic alphabet created and promulgated in the mid-15th century. While the alphabet is called Hangeul in South Korea, it is known as Chosongul in North Korea. Although the Korean language is replete with words adapted from Chinese, the North Koreans, unlike the South Koreans, do not use Chinese characters with Chosongul in their newspapers and publications. They prefer to use only Chosongul, which is sufficient for most needs. There are also some difference in vocabulary between the North and the South, influenced somewhat by politics and also by the contact each country has had with other nations. Russian, Chinese, and English are taught as second languages in the schools.

### Religion

The government of North Korea has constitutionally confirmed freedom of religion. In reality, however, the effectual state religion is the veneration of Kim Il Sung, the "Great Leader" and the founder of the modern republic. Yet the way of life and philosophy in North Korea echoes traditional patterns and is based fundamentally on Confucian thought. The government also permits Christians to meet in small groups under the direction of state appointed ministers. Shamanism, a native belief in household and natural spirits, gods, and demons, may still have limited influence in rural areas, but it is mostly promoted by the government as an art form.

### General Attitudes

The establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea's official name) brought about radical changes in the nature of traditional Korean society. The Confucian concept of filial piety and loyalty to one's lineage has been largely supplanted by an intense nationalism that is described as both fiercely proud and excessively paranoid. The interests of the state have taken priority over the interests of the family. One should be aware of the pervasive influence of the *chuch'e* concept on the North Korean psyche. It colours every aspect of life, from popular music to political speeches and everyday conversation. *Chuch'e* gives people a reason to sacrifice, and it is what has convinced the people that they are better off than other nations. North and South Koreans often use extreme modesty when speaking about themselves. Reluctance to accept high honors is the mark of a true Korean gentleman. Compliments are graciously denied. Success depends greatly on social contacts. Friends expect to rely on each other for just about anything. Koreans are quick to make friends and friendships are highly valued. Giving gifts as a means of obtaining favours is common, especially in the workplace, and accepting a gift carries the responsibility of reciprocity. Open criticism and public disagreement are considered very serious because it is not proper to damage another person's reputation. Because of respect for the feelings of others, Koreans may withhold bad news or adverse opinions or express them in an indirect way. South Koreans are proud of their country's accomplishments, including the contributions of traditional Korean culture and the nation's modern economic success.

### Personal Appearance

Most Koreans except for the elderly and some in rural areas, wear Western-style clothing. The youth wear modern fashions, and Korea has an active fashion industry. For special occasions or holidays, however, traditional clothing is often worn. Women wear the *hanbok*, a two-piece, long dress that is often very colourful. Men wear trousers with a loose-fitting jacket or robe. Clothing often depends on the event. In public, conservative dress is important. Bare feet are inappropriate. In the business world, Western-style suits and dresses are the norm.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Confucianism has taught Koreans to behave with decorum and to show respect for propriety. Greetings and introductions, therefore, tend to be rather formal. Handshakes are common among men, but a bow is still most common. A younger or lower-status person always bows until the other offers a handshake or returns the bow. When Korean men do shake hands, the right hand is extended, often supported at the wrist by the left hand to show deference. The head is slightly bowed. When women meet, they usually extend both hands and grasp each other's hands. Children always bow to adults and wave or bow among themselves. There are several phrases used in greeting another person, but the most common is *Anyonghaseyo?* (literally, "Are you in peace?"), which is used to ask "How are you?" The Korean language has different levels of formality, so this and any other greeting will differ depending on the people involved. For example, *Anuong?* is used with children, while *Anyonghashimnikka?* is used for superiors. All mean the same thing, but the different endings indicate levels of respect. When greeting a superior, it is common to ask about health and parents. When greeting a subordinate, the questions are about the spouse and children.

### Gestures

It is not unusual to see men holding hands in public or walking down the street with an arm slung over a friend's shoulder. This is an expression of friendship. Touching between strangers or casual acquaintances, however, especially between opposite sexes, is considered inappropriate. In most situations, good posture is maintained to show respect for the host or speaker. To sit in a relaxed manner is considered an insult. Care is taken not to expose the soles of the feet to another person while sitting. Gifts are given and received with both hands. Hands are generally not used much in conversation. Hats are removed in buildings, as well as in the presence of an elder or superior. One never looks a superior directly in the eye.

### Visiting

Koreans do not commonly visit one another unannounced, and arranged social visits are infrequent. Generally, people visit relatives for the Lunar New Year or Parents' Day, but not so often otherwise. Unless special business calls for it, a superior never visits a subordinate. Those who are invited are nearly always offered light refreshments, consisting of a drink, fruit, crackers, cookies, or coffee. It is considered polite and a sign of respect for guests to take a gift to the hosts. The value of the gift is far less important than the gesture of giving it. In most cases, a gift will be fruit, a beverage, or something from one's home region. Shoes and hats are removed indoors. In some cases, slippers are provided. Otherwise, people wear only socks in the home. Observing etiquette involves paying particular attention to the host and making sure his feelings are respected. Showing respect for the family and state are of utmost importance for most visits. Koreans are very generous hosts. They view the care of a guest as basic good manners, so visitors are given the best the household has to offer. If there are many guests, then age or status are used to determine who gets the best seat, the best cut of meat, the largest drink, and so forth.

### Eating

Families rarely have time to eat daily meals together. Fathers often leave early in the morning and return late at night. They commonly eat their meals at workplace cafeterias. Koreans consider eating while walking on the street ill-mannered and offensive, something only a child is allowed to indulge in. Except during lengthy dinner parties, conversation during meals is quite limited. Eating with the fingers is considered impolite, but slurping soup and noodles is accepted; in fact, it is a practical way to eat hot food at the rapid pace Koreans are used to. Spoons for soup and chopsticks for everything else are the most common utensils.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family remains an important part of Korean life. The population has been constantly exhorted by the government to "love your family, love your state," but obligations have been continually extended outward to embrace the larger society. Traditional Korean familial devotion has been redirected away from the extended family. For most families, the average monthly wage (about US\$50) is enough to purchase daily necessities but not enough to pay for any luxury or nonessential goods. Consumerism tends to be discouraged in favour of austerity in the North. However, workers can earn a variety of supplies, benefits, and gifts from either their employers or the

government. Both parents usually work and their children go to day care. Day care centres are sometimes located at the workplace.

## Dating & Marriage

Western-style dating is now more common in the South, while parental consent for marriage is essential in both South and North Korea. The government has established minimum marriage ages (27 for men, 25 for women) to allow for the completion of military service and other obligations. Due to a shortage in the labour force, the government provides incentives for married couples to have large families.

## Diet

Korean food is generally spicy. *Kimch'i* (a spicy pickled cabbage) and rice are the mainstays of the diet around which most other dishes revolve. Meals usually consist of a number of spicy vegetables, soup, fish, and kimch'i. Because of the lower economic level of North Korea, traditional Korean delicacies such as *pulkogi* (marinated beef) and *kalbi* (marinated short ribs) are not as common as in South Korea. A favorite food in North Korea is *naengmyon*, a cold noodle dish. The consumption of soybeans and corn is high, as is that of millet and wheat.

## Holidays & Special Days

### North Korea

Kim 1 Sung's Birthday	15 April
Labour Day	1 May
Anniversary of Liberation	15 August
Independence Day	9 September
Anniversary of Korean Workers' Party	10 October
Anniversary of the Constitution	27 December

### South Korea

Independence Movement Day	1 March
Children's Day	5 May
Memorial Day	6 June
Constitution Day	17 July
Liberation Day	15 August
Armed Forces Day	1 October
National Foundation Day	3 October
Anniversary of Proclamation of Korean Alphabet	9 October



# LAOS

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,822,840 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 2.48%

Lao Lum, living along the Mekong River, constitute 70% of the population in Laos. Lao Theng (uplanders) comprise 20%, and Lao Soung (mountain people) the remaining 10%.

### Residents in the ACT

652 born in Laos (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Lao, the native language of the lowland Lao which is used in all official communications and taught in schools. Other main languages include Thai, Hmong, and midland Lao. Some ethnic minority languages have never been codified in written form. A small percentage of older people and those who attended high school prior to 1975 speak French, which has been the language of international commerce in the past. Some English is spoken.

### Religion

Nearly all Laotians are Buddhist (85%). The highland ethnic minorities practice animism, which emphasises a reverence for all living things. Buddhism has long been a strong force in Lao culture and remains a major influence in everyday life, even under Communist government. Each ethnic Lao village has its own temple, which is the focal point of village festivities and rituals. It is common for villagers to take food to monks in a daily ritual where the monks do not look at the donors.

### General Attitudes

The Lao are a frank, open and friendly people. They also have a strongly developed sense of courtesy and respect. It is considered very bad taste to publicly criticise a person since it results in a loss of face within the community. Necessary criticisms and suggestions should be made within a general context to avoid placing blame or shame upon any individual. *Bo pen nyang* (Never mind) is a common expression that characterises Laotians' feelings toward life. Life should be enjoyed at the moment; problems are not taken so seriously as to disrupt this enjoyment. Given the hardships people face in the country, with more than half living in poverty, this is an invaluable attitude. Loyalty to family and friends is important. Showing anger or disappointment in public is inappropriate.

### Personal Appearance

Lao women wear western-style blouses with colourful calf-length, sarong-style skirts made of locally hand-woven materials in multicolour designs and fastened with a silver link belt. Men wear trousers with casual, open-neck, short-sleeve shirts. Both men and women usually wear sandals. Some ethnic groups also wear distinct headdresses.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The generally accepted form of greeting among Lao people is the *Nop*, which involves placing one's hands together in a prayer position at chest level but not touching the body. The higher the hands are held, the greater the sign of respect, although they should never be held above the level of the nose. This is accompanied by a slight bow to show respect for persons of higher status or age. The *Nop* is not only an expression of greeting but also of thanks or regard. It is appropriate to shake hands with Westerners. The Lao address each other by the first name. Children address adults by the first name, prefaced by the equivalent of Mr or Mrs or if well acquainted, Mr Uncle or Mrs Aunt, a courtesy title.

## Gestures

As in many Asian cultures, the head is considered the most sacred part of the body; the bottom of the feet are the least sacred. One should not touch a person's head, nor should one use the foot to point at a person or a sacred object. Men and women rarely show affection in public. It is forbidden for a woman to touch a Buddhist monk.

## Visiting

It is customary to remove one's shoes or sandals when entering a Buddhist temple or a private home. In Lao homes raised off the ground, shoes or sandals are left at the bottom of the stairs. In a traditional home a person sits on low seats or cushions on the floor. Men may sit with legs crossed or folded to one side. Women sit with legs off to the side. One should at least take a taste at whatever food or drink is offered. It is not customary to bring a gift when visiting.

## Eating

The Lao eat with a fork in the left hand and a spoon in the right. However, glutinous rice is eaten with the fingers, which are cleaned with a napkin. Lao food, which is very spicy, is served in communal dishes with meat and vegetables cut into bite-size pieces. In a traditional home, the meal is served while diners sit on a mat on the floor. As a sign of respect to a guest, the host and his family will not raise their heads above the level of that of the guest's. Therefore, they may bring the food in a squat position so as not to offend guests.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The Lao have large, close-knit families, often with three generations living together. The eldest man is the patriarch of the family and represents the household at village meetings. The Lao have great respect for their parents and elders. Among the Hmong, the household is composed of the extended family: parents, unmarried children, and married sons with their families.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people are relatively free to choose marriage partners. Young people can meet eligible partners at dances held during festivals, where they are free to sit and talk privately. Marriage is traditionally established by elopement, living together, or a more elaborate marriage ritual among wealthier people. For the first few years of married life, the couple lives with the wife's family, until her first child is about a year old. The couple may then establish their own home or move in with the husband's family.

## Diet

Sticky or glutinous rice is the staple of the Lao diet. Other foods include fish, eggs, chicken, pork, owl, and (rarely) beef. Rice is served with chilli sauce or a spicy sauce made with fermented fish. Beverages include coffee and tea. The traditions of royal Thai cuisine combine the best features of Indian, Chinese and Thai elements.

## Holidays & Special Days

Anniversary of Party	3 February
Labour Day	1 May
Children's Day	1 June
Constitution Day	15 August
National Day	2 December
Buddhist Festivals on the lunar calendar	

# LATVIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

2,359,400 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: -0.81%

### Residents in the ACT

178 born in Latvia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### The language

Latvian is related to Lithuanian, and stems from the Indo-European family.

Latvian is based on the Latin alphabet, but contains many diacritical marks. It is now the official language. Russian is still used in commerce and daily life. English and German are also widely used.

### Religion

The majority of Latvians are Christian, although since Soviet rule, almost half of the population ceased to identify with a church. Twenty per cent are Catholics, mainly in Latgale. Lutherans comprise 12%, and the Russian Orthodox Church 4% of the population. More people are freely expressing their religious beliefs.

### General attitudes

Latvians are reserved and have a preference for formality in public. They are warm, inviting and trusting with friends and networks through friends and family. The pride in their cultural heritage, for example the architecture in Riga, has helped Latvians build a sense of purpose and patriotism that is conveyed to their children. Lively discussion and dialogue is now a strong part of the everyday life.

### Personal Appearance

The Latvians dress with an eye to recent European fashion. Young people tend to dress formally for special occasions, and even at school. Men wear pressed suits, shirts and ties to work. Women wear smart dresses. For casual wear, people wear neat slacks and sweaters. People often wear multiple layers of clothing in winter. Women like to wear jewellery, especially amber, which is found locally. Traditional costumes include wool skirts, white linen blouses and wool vests decorated to reflect the region.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A firm handshake with strong eye contact is the norm. With good friends or as a signal of respect, men and women may give a light kiss. One should not kiss or shake hands across a doorway, but step into the room first. Latvians introduce themselves by stating their name and surname. When introducing someone else, the title *kungs* or *kundze* (Mr or Mrs) may be added. The title follows the name. It is common for friends to use first names, but the ending changes in different settings.

### Gestures

Hand gestures are often used for emphasis in conversation, but otherwise hands are not frequently used. Waving is not a common form of greeting. Direct eye contact indicates sincerity and respect. Eating and drinking in the street is not seen a great deal, except for ice cream.

### Visiting

Rural and older Latvians prefer to visit at home, by invitation. Young people attend bars, clubs and cafes for social interaction. Gatherings of guests are relatively small. It is considered polite to arrive on time or just a few minutes late. Shoes are removed at the door, often replaced with slippers offered by the host. Latvians appreciate a gift,

especially flowers. Flowers are given in odd numbers, with even numbers reserved for funerals. Refreshments served may include liquor, apples, small sandwiches or *maizites* (meat-filled pastries). The way the food is presented is extremely important, and after the meal, the gathering often breaks into song. There are more than 200,000 folk songs in the repertoire. Goodbyes are repeated as guests prepare to leave, and kisses and warm handshakes accompany the parting.

## Eating

Eating together as a family is highly valued. Breakfast consists of bread and butter, tomatoes and cold meat, porridge, pancakes, bacon, ham or sausages, and tea, coffee and milk. Lunch is usually the main meal of the day, and is taken between 1 and 3pm. The meal can include soup (*zupa*), meat (*gala*) and potatoes (*kartupeļi*). Dessert is called *saldais ediens*. Bread accompanies every meal. A light dinner is eaten after 6pm.

The fork is held in the left hand, and the knife in the right. Napkins are left on the table rather than placed on the lap. A popular Latvian dish consists of *karbonade* or pork steak, cabbage soup (*kapostu zupa*) or beet soup (*borsch*).

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Three generations often share a single living space, partly due to scarcity of housing. Grandparents often care for the children, and the elderly are looked after in return. Family members in the extended family help each other financially. The place of birth is important to people.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating begins in high school. Young people enjoy dancing at clubs or discos, going for coffee or to sporting events. Most get married in their early twenties, and have children soon after. Weddings are more often secular than church ceremonies, but in rural areas the wedding is a very big celebration. The groom wears a formal suit, and the bride has a white gown, holding a white bouquet.

### Diet

The staple foods in Latvia include potatoes, onions, soup, poultry, fish and red meat. Summer fruits are imported to add to the local produce of root vegetables, apples, berries and mushrooms. Rye and whole grain breads are preferred. Beer and soft drinks are kept at room temperature, as cold drinks are seen to be unhealthy. A thick herbal/alcohol mixture *balzams*, is poured over ice cream or with coffee. This is believed to be good for health.

### Holidays & Special Days

New Years Day, Easter	
Labour Day	1 May
Independence Day	18 Nov
Commemoration of deportation under Soviet occupation	14 June
Ligo Day	23 June
Janji Midsummers Day	24 June

# LEBANON

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

3,694,708 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.38%  
Ethnic groups are Arab (95%), and Armenian, Kurdish, Assyrian, Turkish, Greek.

### Resident in the ACT

372 born in Lebanon (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is the official language and is spoken by all. French also enjoys official status. It and English are widely spoken by the educated. The Armenian minority also speaks Armenian and some speak Turkish. It is common for people to speak more than one language, even three or four.

### Religion

Lebanese society is based on religion. Every citizen carries an identity card on which their religion is listed. While over half of the people were Christian two decades ago, Christians only account for 25% of the population today. Most of the rest of the population is Islamic. The largest groups are the Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims. A significant number of Palestinian refugees remain, most without citizenship. There is a small Jewish minority.

### General Attitudes

Lebanon has had a long association with the West and has been deeply influenced by it. At the same time, traditional values and attitudes that differ from Western culture remain. Therefore, attitudes vary greatly among the people. Life in Lebanon is still fairly relaxed and slow paced. People tend to care more about personal relationships than time schedules. The Lebanese are very proud of their culture, heritage, and country.

### Personal Appearance

Western-style clothing is the standard in Lebanese cities. However traditional Muslim clothing, such as a woman's *chador* (long dress that covers the entire body and often worn over other clothing) is also worn. It is important to people of all classes to be clean, neat, and stylish. Conservative suits and modest attire are appropriate.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Lebanese people take social amenities seriously. When meeting strangers, acquaintances, or friends, it is important to exchange greetings, to inquire about the person's health and family, and in general to make polite small talk before getting down to business. Handshakes are common for both men and women. Close friends and relatives often appear to kiss each other on both cheeks upon meeting or departing. Titles such as "Dr." or "Professor" are used consistently where appropriate. In Arabic, these titles are commonly used with a person's first name, but Lebanese are accustomed to hearing titles in English and French. Personal space is more limited

### Gestures

Pointing or beckoning with the index finger is impolite. To beckon another person, all fingers wave with the palm facing down. Objects are not handed to another person to hold, as this implies servant status. A closed fist should never be waved in the air. For many, it is offensive to pass or receive objects with the left hand. The right hand or both hands should be used. Knees may be crossed, but crossing an ankle over a knee risks offending any person toward whom the bottom of the foot is pointed. The soles of the shoes or feet should always face the earth and never another person. Eye contact is important. Men never curse in front of women. Public displays of affection, even between married couples, are not acceptable.

## Visiting

Hospitality is a prized tradition in Lebanon. People feel honoured to have guests in their homes, and they also love to visit others. Hosts always serve guests something to drink; usually tea or coffee is prepared and served without asking the guests. Hospitality requires that it be accepted, so a word of polite explanation is in order if it is refused. If invited to a meal, guests might bring flowers, a plant, a special dessert, or something for the home. Guests invited for lunch generally do not leave until after 4:00 pm and dinner guests are expected to stay the entire evening. It is extremely impolite to leave directly after eating.

## Eating

Unspoken rules of hospitality require the host to make guests feel completely welcome. Offering food is one way to do this and Lebanese hosts will be very insistent that their guest eat even if the guest refuses the food initially. Because it is often customary to refuse an offer a couple of times before accepting it, the host assumes the offer will eventually be accepted. Guests should at least try the food, but they can politely decline a full meal or more refreshments without offending the host. It is not appropriate to discuss business during a meal.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Lebanese families tend to be strong and closely knit. Cousins and other relatives are expected to have close personal relationships. In fact, cousins are generally as close as brothers and sisters. Discipline is strict, and children show respect for their parents and other elders. The father is head of the family. Mothers generally take care of the home and children. Many women who work outside the home do so out of necessity, not choice. Family loyalty is important. Lebanon has a class based society. The wealthy have access to fine education, good jobs, and luxuries, while the poor do not.

## Dating & Marriage

Traditionally, neither Christians nor Muslims dated. All marriages were arranged by the family. Today, Christians and many urban Muslim families follow Western dating habits. Because financial independence is customarily a prerequisite for marriage, men often wait to marry until their late 20s or early 30s. Women usually marry in their early 20s. Christians are generally opposed to divorce, although it is allowed by Islamic law for Muslims. Lebanese law provides for each religion to have a separate court system to handle matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other such concerns, according to the different customs.

## Diet

The main meal of the day is eaten between noon and 3.00 pm. This meal may last two or more hours. Various stews are Lebanese specialties. The cuisine is often spicy and hot. But because of the warm climate, many dishes are also light, that is, they are vegetarian. A traditional meal for special occasions is the *Meza*. *Kibbeh* is a popular beef dish that can be baked, fried, or eaten raw.

## Holidays & Special Days

Arab League Anniversary	22 March
Independence Day	22 November
Evacuation Day	31 December
Islamic holidays for Ramadan and feasts	

# MACEDONIA

## (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

### THE PEOPLE

#### Population

2,057,973 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.43%

#### Resident in the ACT

368 born in Macedonia (Census 2001 unpub.)

#### Language

The official language is Macedonian, which is written in a Cyrillic script. Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian are spoken widely. Sixty-seven per cent of the population in Macedonia are Macedonian, 22.9% are Albanian and there are between 2-3% Gypsy and Serb minorities.

#### Religion

The majority of the population are Christian Orthodox, and a significant number are Muslim, mainly Albanian.

#### General attitudes

Macedonian culture stresses the importance of the family. Parents sacrifice a great deal to support their children into adulthood, and assist them financially. This is particularly important for the poorer Macedonians who came to Australia wanting a better life for their children. The care of grand-parents is in the hands of the son, but in reality daughters do most of the caring of sick and elderly. Herbal remedies are used by many of the older generation. Women are seen as the primary carers. However, in Australia, some families use residential care for their elderly due to work and professional commitments. In Macedonia, the unemployment rate is between 25-30%. As yet, there is no Republic of Macedonia. However, the drive for autonomy is very strong.

#### Personal appearance

Western European styles are followed by the majority of urban Macedonians, within the limits of the budget. A clean, tidy appearance is important. Albanian Muslims wear the loose pants and long tunic used by Muslim men in many areas, and a turban.

Women wear head scarves and long dresses.

### CUSTOMS & COURTESIES

#### Greetings

Macedonians greet friends and family warmly, with members of the same gender embracing or kissing on the cheeks. Muslim men and women do not shake hands, but use verbal greetings only. When people are introduced, the more formal title is used, whereas for friends, people are on first name terms. Good morning is *dobro utro*, and good evening is *dobro vecher*. Hallo is *alo*, and good-bye is *prijatno*.

#### Visiting

Relatives, friends and neighbours visit regularly and informally. However, it is important to give advance notice of a visit if you are a stranger, in order for the host to receive you in the desired manner. Hospitality is a hallmark of the culture, and shoes are traditionally taken off at the door as a show of respect, although this practice is diminishing among urban Christians. A person entering the room where others are seated shakes hands with each person. Staring at strangers has been considered impolite.

## Eating

Breakfast is eaten about 9am by office workers, but earlier by factory labourers and rural residents. Dinner is the main meal, taken about 2pm. Supper is usually eaten later after an afternoon siesta. Meals are always prepared just before consumption, although they may include leftovers. Hot food is often left to cool to room temperature. Other meals begin with appetisers (*meze*), served with fruit brandy (*rakia*).

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The traditional family unit is an extended family consisting of a married couple, their unmarried daughters and their sons with spouses and children. This unit is becoming less common in urban areas with the changes to workforce participation.

### Dating & Marriage

Children often live with their parents till they are married. Young people are permitted to go out to movies, parks, sporting events and dances, but often chaperoned by an older sibling. Traditionally, all marriages were arranged, but nowadays most young people select their partners. Pregnancy would lead to marriage among young people, though in the past the bride was expected to be a virgin.

Traditional marriages rarely cross religious lines. Marriage is the norm. Divorce and remarriage are now regulated by civil law. Women now work outside the home, but still retain the major responsibility for the household chores and child-care. Grand-mothers also often care for children wherever possible.

### Diet

Breakfast consists of bread, cheese and sometimes eggs. Root vegetables, grains and fruit, wine and meats are staples. Bean casserole (*tavche-gravche*), is a basic food. Pizza is very popular. There are no taboos in food other than the normal ones associated with religion, but folk beliefs about food are common. Among Christians, a bird is eaten at Christmas, and lamb for Easter. Among Muslims, a lamb is slaughtered for *Kurban Bayram*. Sweet desserts are associated with religious holidays, New Year's Day, births, weddings and funerals.

### Special days & holidays

New Year	1-2 January
Orthodox Christmas	7 January
Easter Monday	
International Day of Labour	1-2 May
St Elijah's Day	2 August
Macedonian Independence Day	8 September
Day of uprising of the Macedonian People	11 October



# MALAYSIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

22,811,550 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.96%

Ethnic composition: 59% Malay and indigenous peoples (including Orang Asli of West and the Iban, Land Dayak, Bajan and Kadazan peoples of East Malaysia, 26% Chinese, 7% Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lankan Tamil.

### Resident in the ACT

1581 born in Malaysia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Malay (Bahasa Melayu) is the official language of Malaysia and is spoken in all areas of the country. The ethnic Chinese also speak one of various Chinese dialects (Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien, Mandarin, or Min); Tamil is spoken by the Indians. English is taught in the schools and is widely spoken.

### Religion

Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, although the constitution guarantees freedom of worship. Ethnic Malays are nearly all Muslim. The Chinese on the peninsula are chiefly Buddhist, with some Taoists, Christians and Confucianists. Some practice principles from all three. The Indians are generally Hindu.

### General attitudes

A person's ancestral background is often important to social status and future opportunities. Many Malaysian are fatalistic; they believe successes, failures, opportunities, and misfortunes result from fate or the will of God. Although the people are proud of their country and generally loyal to the Malaysian state, they often identify first with their ethnic group, island, or region.

### Personal appearance

Most people wear Western-style clothing. However, traditional clothing, or a combination of Western and traditional clothing, is also worn. In some areas, Muslim women with head covers, veils, and long dresses are as common as women wearing short skirts or pants. Special headdresses, wraparound skirts, jackets, tunics and sashes vary between regions and ethnic groups. Many traditional costumes have intricate designs.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is used between men. A slight bow or nod of the head is common when greeting an older person. Women and elderly persons seldom shake hands, but may offer verbal greetings. When greeting close male friends, men use both hands to grasp the hand of the other. Business cards are often exchanged after an introduction.

### Gestures

In Malaysia it is not polite to beckon adults, with the exception of close friends. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers with the palm facing down. Individual fingers are not used for gesturing. Giving and receiving gifts with both hands shows respect. Objects should not be moved with the feet. The sole of a person's foot should not be pointed at another person. Objects are generally not passed with the left hand. When yawning or using a toothpick, the mouth is covered. A slight bow when leaving, entering, or passing by a group of people is a nonverbal "excuse me".

## Visiting

Visiting one's relatives and friends is an important part of Malaysian life, especially when one does not share a house with the extended family. Dropping by without prior arrangement is common. When invited, persons are generally not expected to arrive on time. Punctuality is not important in Malaysia because of the emphasis on people over schedules. Shoes are removed when entering a home.

## Eating

Eating customs differ among ethnic groups. Malays and Indians eat with their hands and with spoons. Some cultural groups refrain from eating certain foods. For example, Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcoholic beverages. Hindus and some Buddhists do not eat beef. Tipping is not generally expected in restaurants because service is usually included in the bill.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Traditionally, the family system is the most important social unit in Malaysia. It is common for two or more generations to live together in the same house. Cooperation, loyalty, and unity are important in the family. Young people respect their elders. Modernisation and urbanisation have affected the family structure in some areas. In urban areas, nuclear families are common, with members of extended families living in the same city or neighbourhood, but not the same house.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating and marriage practices in urban areas are similar to those in other Westernized countries. Attitudes are more liberal. Families stress that dating should wait until after one's education is complete. Despite this, dating usually begins around age 17 or 18. In rural areas, dating habits are conservative. Some marriages there are still arranged by families. The majority of couples, however, make their own choices in consultation with family members. A marriage is seen not only as joining two persons but two families. Customs and ceremonies are also affected by the different religions.

## Diet

Due to Malaysia's cultural diversity, a wide variety of foods are eaten. Rice is the dietary staple and fish is the main source of protein. Spiced foods such as hot peppers (chillies) are also widely eaten.

## Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Official birthday of HM the Yang di-Pertuan Agong	1st Wed in June
National Day	31 August
Religious days observed by different faiths	

# MALTA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

398,487 (Estimate 2001 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.74%

### Resident in the ACT

336 born in Malta (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Both Maltese and English are official languages. The Maltese language has a Semitic structure developed from a medieval form of Arabic. Italian and English words were added later, resulting in a unique language. The written form of Maltese is a Latin script, and it is used in daily commerce, education and business. However, English is a second language taught in school.

### Religion

The official religion in Malta is Roman Catholicism. Christianity arrived when Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked on Malta on his way to Rome in AD 60. Freedom of worship is legislated in Malta. Other faiths include Anglican, Methodist, Greek Orthodox, Islamic and Semitism.

### General attitudes

The Maltese are known for their hospitality, and generosity. The family is of great importance, and children stay in close contact with the grand-parents. Maltese do not easily tolerate alternative lifestyles. Due to the size of the islands, privacy is rare and it is impossible to be anonymous. Networking oils the wheels of social interaction and resource-sharing. The warm climate ensures that people go out to the piazza to socialise. Strong rivalry between villages can lead to heated exchanges over politics, soccer or village saints.

### Personal appearance

The Maltese like to dress according to the European fashions. Style and quality of clothing define social status. People pay attention to hairstyle, and avoid being sloppy or untidy, even in informal settings. Dress code usually applies in the service, business and professional sectors, and even in the blue collar sector.

In the rural villages, older people wear traditional items of clothing. Men wear a *beritta* (cap), and women dress in dark-coloured long skirts. School children also wear uniform, though they dress in bright colours at home and on weekends.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

There are many factors in the way people greet each other. These include how well they know each other, and on gender, age and social status. The Maltese have combined the reserve of English manners, and the expressiveness of Mediterranean style. Formal greetings begin and end with a hand-shake. Religious and professional titles are used. People from a rural or working background tend to pat one another on the back, shoulder or arm in a friendly gesture. Older people may greet others with a nickname (or diminutive), eg *Guzzeppi* may be greeted as *Guz*. Goodbye is '*ciaw*'.

### Gestures

The Maltese use a range of gestures in conversation, as do most Mediterranean people. The head, hand, and body language emphasise moods and convey feelings.

Lifting the chin up is saying 'no', while bending chin down is 'yes'. Clenched fists indicate anger, and surprise is displayed by placing fingers of the right hand on the mouth. Tapping the forehead with the index finger suggests

one thinks something stupid. A quick lifting of the index and middle fingers and the thumb of the right hand in an outward curving motion means: 'how are you?'

## Visiting

Going out to socialise is a favourite activity for most Maltese, preferred over spending time in each other's homes. It is polite to arrange a visit. Many women clean the house daily, and receive guests in the front sitting room. The hosts generally offer a drink and refreshments (cakes, biscuits or sandwiches). Guests often bring a gift of wine, chocolate or flowers when invited to a meal. Foreign guests may present a souvenir from their country.

## Eating

The Maltese eat in the continental manner, with fork in the left and knife in the right hand. Hands are kept above the table. After finishing, the utensils are placed parallel on the plate and the person waits till others have finished. Most families like to eat together, depending on school and work commitments. Breakfast and lunch are light meals, with lunch consisting of sandwiches and salad. Dinner is the main meal, usually eaten between 6 and 8pm. Snacks are common in the mid-morning or afternoon, taken with tea or coffee. In the summer, picnics are common near the sea. In tea shops, cafes and clubs, people eat Maltese sandwiches and *pastizzi*.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The extended family is very important to the Maltese. Grand-parents, uncles, aunts and cousins meet often to celebrate events such as the village *fešta* or important birthdays. Baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals are all marked with large family groups.

Though there are increasing numbers of single parent families, divorce and abortion are still illegal. Children remain at home till they marry, and young people seldom live on their own. Parents often help their children acquire a house or car. Traditionally, the man is the head of the family, but the woman exercises power in the private arena. Many women control the family budget. Malta has a relatively low rate of female workplace participation, but more women are seeking employment. Caring for older parents is becoming less possible with the changing labour market.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating usually starts between age 14 and sixteen, but are only 'going steady' when parents have been formally introduced. Engagements are celebrated by sharing rings, and with a family feast, and tend to last a long time. Marriage usually takes place when the couple have saved enough to live independently. Most do not live together before marriage. Weddings are very special events, with a lavish feast followed by a Mass. The bride's parents generally pay for the wedding expenses.

## Diet

The Maltese diet combines Italian and British cuisine. Breakfast ranges from cereal, toast and tea to full fired breakfast. Roast turkey, baked vegetables, fruit cakes are common at Christmas. The majority of dishes are Mediterranean, with tomatoes, onion and garlic. Fresh bread accompanies every meal, and pasta dishes are served either as entree or main meal. Fish is on the menu frequently, including *aljotta* or fish chowder. Pastry is often filled with cheese and spinach as well as anchovies. Many pastries reflect the Arabic heritage, including the almond filled desserts.

## Holidays & Special Days

Religious holidays, Christian and Muslim

St Pauls' Shipwreck	10 Feb
Freedom Day	31 March
Workers' Day	1 May
Sette Giugno	7 June
Imnarja harvest feast	29 June,
Assumption	15 August
Victory Day	8 September
Independence Day	21 September
Republic Day	13 December

# MEXICO

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

103,922,337 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.50%  
Ethnic groups consist of Indian-Spanish (mestizo) 60%, Amerindian 30%, 9% white or predominantly white.

### Resident in the ACT

49 born in Mexico (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish is the official language of Mexico. There are perhaps as many as 100 Amerindian languages still spoken in parts of Mexico. Those who speak an Amerindian language also speak Spanish.

### Religion

The majority of Mexicans (93 percent) are Roman Catholic.

### General attitudes

Generally, Mexicans feel individuals are more important than schedules. The Mexican people are generally proud of their country.

### Personal appearance

Most Mexicans wear clothing that is also common in other Western countries, especially in the urban areas. But there are also many types of traditional clothing worn in rural areas-either daily or for festivals. People from various regions of Mexico wear many different kinds of clothing, but colour and beauty are two common features for all of them.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The usual greeting is a handshake or a nod of the head, although a full embrace between friends is common. Women often greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. Mexicans typically stand close to each other while talking, sometimes touching their friend's clothing. Mexicans are generally very friendly and polite in their greetings.

### Gestures

Items are handed, not tossed, to another person. Tossing an item shows a lack of manners and is offensive. Hand and arm gestures are often used in conversation.

### Visiting

Mexicans are very hospitable. Unannounced visitors are usually welcomed and served refreshments. It is impolite to refuse refreshments. Mexicans enjoy conversation and socialising with relatives or friends. First-time visitors usually receive a tour of the host's home.

### Eating

When eating, both hands are kept above the table. Guests do not leave directly after the meal, but stay for conversation. Lunch is usually the main meal of the day. Dinner might be light or heavy, depending on the family. It is inappropriate for adults to eat while walking on the street. Some foods are eaten with utensils, others with the hand. Tortillas are often used as scoops for sauces.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Except in urban areas, where the trend is to have smaller families, Mexican families are generally large (more than three children). Family unity is very important. Divorce is relatively low, due in part to the dominance of the Catholic faith. Traditionally, the father has been the leader of the family, while the mother runs the household. However, as women go out to work more, and sometimes fathers look after children, this is changing.

### Dating & Marriage

When dating, a boy often meets the girl at a prearranged place, rather than picking her up at her home. Parental approval of the boyfriend, however, is important. It is common for Mexican males to make *piropos* (flattering personal comments) to passing females, to which the females generally do not respond. Marriage customs follow Catholic traditions. The marriage is legally registered first with a civil ceremony, often followed by a church ceremony with many guests.

### Diet

Staple foods include corn, beans, rice, and chillies. They are combined with spices, vegetables, and meats or fish in the daily meals. *Tortillas* (made from cornmeal or flour) are cooked on a skillet or hotplate, and are eaten everywhere. They are eaten as bread, or filled with beans, potatoes, meat and cheese (*torta*). Some popular foods include *frijoles refritos* (refried beans), and *posole* (white corn boiled with pork).

### Holidays & Special Days

Constitution Day	5 February
Birthday of Benito Juarez	21 March
Labour Day	1 May
Anniversary of the Battle of Puebla	5 May
Independence Day	16 September
Discovery of America	12 October
President's message	1 November
Anniversary of the Revolution	20 November

# MOROCCO

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

31,345,932 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate 1.71%

Morocco's population is composed mainly of Arabs (55%) and Berbers (44 %), 0.2% Jewish, with a small number of Harratins (Blacks) in the south, as well as other small groups.

### Resident in the ACT

20 born in Morocco (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Arabic, and the Moroccan dialect of Arabic, called Derija, is the most widely spoken tongue. Derija is quite different from the classical Arabic of the Qur'an (koran), the scriptural text of Islam. Berber is the native language of about 35 % of the population, and it also includes several dialects. Other dialects are Rif, Tamazight and Shluh. French is widely spoken, especially in business, government, and higher education. Spanish can still be heard in the north, which was formerly under Spanish control. English is gaining popularity.

### Religion

Islam is the country's official religion. The King is both the political and spiritual leader of his people. Popular religion mixes aspects of various folk beliefs with traditional Islamic practices.

### General Attitudes

Moroccan culture is deeply rooted in Islam. When fortunes turn, people tend to attribute the cause to Allah, and the phrase *Insha'allah* (If God wills) is frequently heard. Moroccans value family, honour, dignity, generosity, and hospitality.

### Personal Appearance

The national garment is the *djelleba* a hooded caftan worn by both men and women, although Western-style clothing is becoming more common. It is important to be neat, well-groomed, and appropriately dressed so one will be treated with respect.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Moroccans generally shake hands when greeting each other. To show one's pleasure to see the other person or to show personal warmth, one might touch the heart often the handshake. Children conventionally kiss the right hand of their parents or elders to show respect when greeting.

The most common general greeting is *Assalam Oualaikoum* (Peace be upon you) which is used as "Hello". Titles are always used in formal situations and to address acquaintances. Friends address each other by first name.

### Gestures

Items are passed with the right hand or with both hands, not with the left. It is impolite to point at people and improper to let the bottom of one's foot face a person. Moroccans generally consider it improper to cross their legs. Those that do might cross their legs at the knees, but would not place an ankle over a knee. Raising a hand up is used to hail a taxi. Snapping one's fingers is used in coffee houses and restaurant to call a waiter.

## Visiting

Visiting friends and relatives frequently is an important part of Moroccan Culture. Moroccans are warm and gracious hosts. Social visits can last several hours. Guests are generally offered refreshments, and it is impolite to refuse them. Men and women do not always socialise together.

## Eating

In most homes the family eats the main meal of the day together. Before and after eating, each person washes their hands. A basin of water is usually available in the eating area for washing. Moroccans eat with their fingers from a large communal dish, using the right hand only. When guests are present, hosts serve their plates and encourage them to eat as much as they like. If the hosts think the guests have not eaten enough, they will urge them to eat more. It is impolite for guests to finish eating before the hosts, as this can imply the food did not taste good. Mealtime is an important time for conversation; guests who do not join the discussion embarrass the hosts.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The extended family is the most important element in Moroccan social life. One's family is a source of reputation and honour as well as financial and psychological support. It is one's duty to provide financial support to other members of the extended family when it is necessary or requested. The tie between mother and son is the most important relationship. Children are indulged but are also expected to contribute to the family by attaining a respectable position in society. Adult children expect to care for their aging parents when it becomes necessary. Polygamy is legal but not frequently practiced. A man may have up to four wives, but he must have permission from any wives he already has and must provide for each equally.

## Dating & Marriage

Dating in the Western sense does not occur in Morocco. Boys and girls do not associate, and traditionally brides and grooms often do not meet until they are to be married. When a couple is to be married, the man pays the woman's father or eldest brother a sum of money to meet her expenses in the wedding. This sometimes inhibits a man from marrying because he cannot afford to pay the family. Girls usually bring a dowry into the marriage. A woman is expected to be a virgin before marriage.

## Diet

Lamb, beef and chicken are the main meats eaten in Morocco. Rice and *couscous* are staples. Mint tea is the national drink. As the vast majority of Moroccans are Muslim, they do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

## Holidays & Special Days

Festival of the Throne	
Anniversary of King Hassan's Accession	3 March
Labour Day	1 May
King Hassan's Birthday	9 July
Anniversary of the Green March	6 November
Independence Day	18 November



# NEPAL

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

26,068,739 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.32%

The ethnic composition is Nepalese (native Mongolian) 58.4%, 18.7% Bihari (including Maithiri and Bhojpuri), 3.3% Tharu, 3.5% Tamang, and 3% Newar.

### Resident in the ACT

67 born in Nepal (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

As many as 20 major languages are spoken with many different dialects. However, Nepali, an Indo-Aryan language related to Hindi, is the official language. The majority of the people speak Nepali to some degree, but more readily use the native tongue of their ethnic group. Because many private schools and colleges use English as the medium of instruction, especially at the post-secondary level, the ability to speak English is associated with better education and higher social status.

### Religion

Nepal is the only official Hindu state in the world; about 88% of the population is Hindu. Except those in the upper castes, Hindus and Buddhists often share the some customs and worship at each other's shrines. There are 5% Buddhists and 3% Muslims

### General attitudes

Nepalese are religious, family-oriented, and modest people. Physical purity, spiritual refinement, and humility are highly valued. Acceptance of incidents as the will of fate karma (consequences of past deeds) is widespread. The majority of the people believe to some extent that *bhoot* (ghosts), *pret* (evil spirits) can cause disease in people and livestock. They can also cause crop failures or accidents. In general, Nepalese believe Westerners are honest, punctual, rational, pragmatic, and fair. At the same time, they have great pride in their own traditions.

### Personal appearance

Although Western-style clothing is most often worn by men, traditional attire is still common for women. Many wear the sari (a long, colourful wraparound dress) and a *cholo* (blouse). Women of Tibetan background wear a wraparound jumper and a colourful apron if married. Women in the south and unmarried girls often wear Punjabi. Married Hindu women wear a red *tika* (made from vermilion powder) on their foreheads and vermilion powder in the part of their hair to signify that their husbands are alive. Widows do not wear the *tika*, the powder, jewellery, or colourful clothing.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Namaste is the traditional greeting. A person places the palms together (fingers up) in front of the chest or chin and says *namaste* (or *namaskar* for superiors). Adults do not say *namaste* to children. In informal situations, one might raise the right hand in a *salaam* (salute-like) gesture for both greetings and farewells. At formal social gatherings, a guest may be adorned with a *mala* (flower necklace) when greeted. In certain Buddhist communities, a *khada* (with cotton scarf) may be offered instead of a mala. The Nepalese do not generally shake hands. In greetings, it is polite to use titles (Professor, Doctor, Director) or the suffix *jee* (or *jye*) with the last name. The Nepalese usually ask permission before taking leave of others.

## Gestures

It is rude to touch another person's head or shoulders. Men do not touch women in public. Even physical affection between married couples is reserved for the privacy of the home. However, members of the same sex often express friendship by walking arm in arm or hand in hand. If a person's foot touches another person, immediate apologies are necessary. A person beckons by waving all fingers with the palm down. Other finger gestures, including pointing, are impolite. Parents make a chopping motion with their hand to express anger at their children. If foods or flowers displayed at bazaars are touched, they become impure. A person does not whistle inside a home or at night. Winking at a person of the opposite sex is vulgar. Cows are sacred; a foot may not point at them and they should not be touched.

## Visiting

Visiting others is an important social custom, and relatives and friends get together as often as possible. Hosts are patient with late arriving guests because people are more important than schedules. Even if a Nepalese wears a watch, with is common, time is thought of more as a series of events or tied to seasons than as a matter of minutes and hours. Nepalese are warm and hospitable. Tea with sugar and milk is usually offered to guests. When entering a home, a Hindu temple, or a Muslim mosque, shoes are always removed. In general, the right hand is used for eating and for giving or receiving objects. Gifts are not opened at the time they are received.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The basic social unit is the family; it takes precedence over the individual. The elderly are respected and cared for by their families. Traditional families are large and include the extended family. In many homes, aunts, uncles, and other relatives with their respective families live together and share the same kitchen. Among the educated, it is increasingly common for sons to set up separate households after marriage rather than live with the extended family. Land is inherited and divided equally between the sons of a family. Women are gaining some property rights. But women, especially among Hindus, generally have few rights or privileges in society. They are responsible for the household and farming (except plowing), and do not socialise in public as much as men. Nepalese women are often married before they are 18 years old. They join their husband's extended family at that time and are expected to care for his parents. Some rural men have more than one wife.

## Dating & Marriage

Customs regarding marriage vary among the different castes. Traditional marriages are arranged by parents, although sometimes with the consent of the marriage partners. Marriage is sacred, divine, and considered to endure beyond death. Conventional dating and divorce are rare. For the Nepalese, *Sat* (chastity) is the most important virtue a woman can bring to a marriage. Sherpas might live together before getting married. Weddings are times of great celebration and feasting. In Terai, the southern region, a dowry is common.

## Diet

Diet varies according to region. Rice with lentil soup and vegetable curry are the main dishes of people living in urban areas or rural upper classes. Many high-caste people are vegetarian or only eat goat meat. The middle castes eat goat or chicken when they are available; some eat water buffalo. Millet and corn are staples for most Nepalese, although rice is a staple in the Terai. *Roti* may be prepared with different grains.

## Holidays & Special Days

National Day	18 February
Dasain-Durga Puja Festival	October (a week)
Tihar-Festival of Lights	November (2 days)
Constitution Day/ Mahendra Jayanti	16 December
King Birendra's Birthday	28 December

# NETHERLANDS

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

16,098,991 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.55%

### Resident in the ACT

1324 born in Netherlands (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Dutch. English, German, and French are commonly understood and spoken and are taught in the secondary schools.

### Religion

About 36 percent of the people are Roman Catholic. Another 27 percent are Protestant, 6 percent belong to other churches, and the rest are not officially affiliated with any religion.

### General Attitudes

By reputation, people in the south are more gregarious than those in the north. Netherlands has a strong tradition of involvement in international affairs. Dutch openness to the world has made them no less proud of their own culture and heritage, whether it is in the arts, politics, technology, or a strong tradition of liberalism.

### Personal Appearance

European fashions are popular. The Dutch enjoy stylish casual attire, as long as it is neat and clean. Traditional attire is rarely worn. The Dutch are famous for the wooden shoes or clogs (*klompen*) they produce.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A warm and hearty handshake is an appropriate greeting for both men and women. It is also popular among friends to kiss on alternating cheeks three times when greeting. The use of given names is generally reserved for close friends and relatives, except among the youth. Otherwise, titles and family names are used when addressing people.

### Gestures

Eye contact and facial expressions are important. The mouth is covered when a person yawns. It is impolite to chew gum while speaking. Pointing the index finger to the forehead to imply someone is crazy is an insult.

### Visiting

The Dutch are hospitable and enjoy having visitors. Unannounced visiting is not common, except between very close friends or relatives. When visiting, it is customary to shake hands with everyone present, including children. Dinner guests usually bring flowers or another small gift to their hosts.

### Eating

The Dutch generally eat three meals a day. Dinner (around 6 pm) is the main meal for most people. It is impolite to begin eating before others at the table. A parent or host often indicates when to eat. It is proper to keep hands above the table, not in the lap, but to not rest elbows on the table. The continental style of eating is used. One does not leave the table until all have finished eating.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The Dutch have strong families, which are moderate in size. People generally live close to extended family. Both parents often work outside the home. Young people often leave home at age 18 in order to continue their education or to work.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating habits are similar to those throughout Europe. Teenagers begin with group activities. It is common for couples to live together before, or instead of, getting married.

### Diet

Bread or toast with jelly or jam, Dutch cheese or meats, are the most common foods for a Dutch breakfast. Coffee and tea accompany the meal. Open-faced sandwiches are common for lunch, as is *kroket* (a deep-fried sausage). The main meal usually consists of potatoes and gravy with seasonal vegetables and meat or fish. Some typical dishes include *poftertjes* (small puffed pancakes served on special occasions), pea soup, and *hutspot* (mashed potatoes with carrots and onions). Dutch pastries are world famous.

### Holidays & Special Days

Queen's Day	30 April
Labour Day	1 May
National Liberation Day	5 May
Local festivals	

# NICARAGUA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,059,773 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.15%  
Ethnic composition is 69% mestizo (mixed), 17% white, 9% black, 5% Indian, including the Sumo, Mikito and Ramaguie peoples of the north-east.

### Resident in the ACT

39 born in Nicaragua (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish is the official and predominant language. English is understood by some in the capital city, with its Creole form also used. Indigenous languages are spoken in some regions.

### Religion

Approximately 95 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Most of the rest are members of Protestant or other Christian organisations.

### General attitudes

Nicaraguans enjoy being with other people and are sociable. Honour is important and defended vigorously, sometimes even physically. Personal criticism is taken seriously and should be avoided. Because individuals are considered far more important than schedules, punctuality at meetings may be admired but not strictly observed. Power is highly valued and often sought.

### Personal appearance

Men wear clothes made from washable cotton cord or other lightweight material. Women wear cool, cotton dresses. There are also various traditional costumes worn for special occasions and festivals.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When meeting another person for the first time, Nicaraguans smile and shake hands. Complete attention is given to the person being greeted. Men greet each other with a hearty handshake, and close friends hug and pat each other on the back. Between female friends, the usual greeting is a kiss on the cheek and gentle hug.

### Gestures

Most gestures common in Western countries are also acceptable in Nicaragua. However, a fist with the thumb positioned between the index and middle fingers is vulgar.

### Visiting

Visitors are always welcome, as the Nicaraguans are very hospitable people. Dinner guests may take small gifts, such as flowers or candy, to the hosts.

### Eating

Eating is complemented with pleasant conversation. Both hands (not elbows) should remain on or above the table at all times. The main meal is eaten at midday.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The extended family is the basis of society and exerts a major influence on an individual's life and decisions. A person has two family names.

### Dating & Marriage

A girl formally enters social life at age 15. Group dating is common among the youth. Although marriage is a valued institution, some infidelity among men is tolerated.

### Diet

Beans and rice are eaten with most meals. Corn is an important ingredient in many foods. Typical dishes include tortillas, *enchiladas*, *nacatamales* (meat and vegetables, with spices), *mondongo* (tripe and beef knuckles), and *baho* (meat, vegetables, and plantain).

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Liberation Day	19 July
Managua Local Holiday	10 August
Battle of San Jacinto	14 September
Independence Day	15 September
Religious festivals and holidays	

# NIGERIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

131,054,620 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.61%

Of the 250 ethnic groups, the Hausa and Fulani of the north, Yoruba of the south-west and Ibo of the south-east constitute 65% of the population. The Kanuri, Tiv, Edo, Nupe and Ibibio make up the rest.

### Resident in the ACT

46 born in Nigeria (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

While more than 250 languages are spoken in Nigeria, English is the official language, although fewer than half the population is actually fluent in it. Many consider English a foreign language. Pidgin English is often used in casual conversation. Each ethnic group also has its own distinct language. Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo and Fulani are widely spoken. Educated Nigerians are often fluent in several languages.

### Religion

Nigeria is divided between the predominantly Muslim north (50%) and the Christian south (40%). Those following traditional African belief systems (10 %) are spread throughout the country. Many Christians and Muslims also incorporate some traditional African worship practices and beliefs into their daily lives.

### General attitudes

Individual Nigerians are proud of the unique cultural heritage of their particular ethnic group. Nigerians oppose dictatorship, regardless of the ethnicity of the leader, and this has united striking workers and other citizens of all groups. Nigerians are sensitive about their past status as a colony and have been striving to create a modern industrial society that is uniquely African and not a "carbon copy" of Western society. Life in Nigeria moves at a relaxed pace. Schedules are not as important as the needs of an individual.

### Personal appearance

Dress varies according to the area and culture. Amongst Muslims, dress is very conservative for both men and women. Dress is more casual in the non-Muslim east and west. Nigerian women and young girls wear a traditional, long, wraparound skirt, a short-sleeved top, and a scarf.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

In Nigeria, greetings are highly valued among the different ethnic groups. Neglecting to greet another is a sign of disrespect. Because of the diversity of customs, cultures, and dialects in Nigeria, English is widely used in exchanging greetings throughout the country. People are courteous and cheerful when exchanging greetings. Nigerians, who treat others with respect, expect to be treated likewise. Personal space between members of the same sex is much closer. Persons conversing with one another may stand or sit very close.

### Gestures

Nigeria is a multicultural nation and gestures differ from one ethnic group to another. Generally, pushing the palm of the hand forward with the fingers spread is vulgar and should be avoided. One should not point the sole of the foot or shoe at another person. Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands, but usually not the left hand alone. Nigerians often wink at their children if they want them to leave the room.

## Visiting

Visiting plays an important part in maintaining family and friendship ties. It is common to visit one's relatives frequently. Unannounced guests are welcome, as planning ahead is not possible in many areas where telephones are not widely available. Invited guests are not expected to bring gifts, but small gifts are appreciated.

## Eating

Eating habits vary between different ethnic groups. Some eat with the hand (right hand only), while others use utensils. Hands are generally kept above the table.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Although specific details of the family structure vary from one ethnic group to another, Nigerian families are generally male dominated. The practice of polygamy (having more than one wife) is not uncommon since it is allowed by Islamic law. About one-fifth of the labour force is female. Large families traditionally share the work load at home. Nigerians have deep respect for their elders. Children are trained to be quiet, respectful, and unassertive in their relations with adults.

## Dating & Marriage

Marriage customs vary, but the payment of a bridal token or dowry is common throughout the country. The groom is expected to give money, property, or service to the family of the bride. Women usually marry by the time they are twenty. Living together without a formal marriage ceremony is common and socially accepted.

## Diet

The mainstays of the Nigerian diet are yams, cassava (a starchy root), and rice. Nigerians are fond of hot, spicy food. Their meals are normally accompanied by a pepper sauce made with fish, meat, or chicken. Climatic conditions favour a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to supplement the diet. Because of tse-tse fly, dairy cattle are scarce in coastal regions, but powdered milk, margarine and cheese are dairy substitutes.

## Holidays & Special Days

National Day	1 October
Labour Day	1 May
Christian and Muslim Holy days	



# PAKISTAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

148,696,334 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.11%

### Resident in the ACT

309 born in Pakistan (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Due to the diversity of ethnic groups and the great difference between dialects in a single language, many languages are spoken in Pakistan. English is an official language and is used by the government and educated elite. It is also taught in school. But the other official language, Urdu, is being encouraged as a replacement for English in these cases; it is also the nation's unifying language. Major languages correlate with the ethnic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi, Pashtu, and so forth.

### Religion

About 97 percent of the people are Muslims. Most of these are Sunni Muslims, while the remainder are Shi'a Muslims. Islam pervades every facet of a Pakistani's life from birth to death, and people believe their destiny is subject to the will of Allah (God). The remainder of the people are either Christian or Hindu, or belong to other religions. Jalalabadis practice Sufism, and are a distinct and colourful people. Freedom of worship is guaranteed.

### General attitudes

Most Pakistanis are devout Muslims and live according to the philosophy that the will of Allah is evident in all things. Pakistan is a nation of diversity, and people often identify first with their own group before identifying with the country. Differences also exist between urban and rural populations, the latter being more conservative. They are also evident between the ethnic groups, with Pashtuns and Baluchis being more conservative and traditional than the other major groups.

### Personal appearance

Although Western-style clothing is worn in Pakistan, the national dress, the *shalwar-qameez*, is more common in both rural and urban areas. Made of cotton, the *shalwar-qameez* differs for men and women. Men wear solid, plain colours, and add a vest or coat for formal occasions. For women, the colours are brighter and patterns bolder, with more tailoring common. Women wear a *dupatta* (scarf) around their heads and sometimes another long scarf around their shoulders. Men usually wear some kind of headdress, and it is often possible to determine a man's ethnic group from his hat. It is important to dress conservatively. Pakistanis cover their legs, arms, and heads in public. Men only wear shorts for athletic events and women never do.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is the most common greeting, although close friends may embrace if meeting after a long time. Women might greet each other with a handshake or hug. It is not appropriate for a man to shake hands with a woman or to touch her in public, but he may greet a man's wife verbally without looking directly at her. Verbal greetings often include inquiries about one's health and family, which can take some time. A title and last name are used when addressing someone.

### Gestures

It is not proper for the bottom of one's foot or shoe to point at another person. People may therefore sit with both feet on the ground or squat. If sitting on the floor, or if crossing the legs, feet are positioned so as not to point directly at others. Items are preferably passed with the right hand or both hands. To beckon, all fingers of the

hand are waved, with the palm facing down. Using individual fingers to make gestures is very impolite. Male friends may walk hand in hand or with their arms over each other's shoulders, but it is inappropriate for members of the opposite sex to touch in public.

## Visiting

Visiting between friends and relatives is a very important social custom and occurs as often as possible. Hospitality is important and guests are made to feel welcome. In small groups, each person is greeted individually. Personal rapport is important. Visitors are often treated to coffee, tea, or drinks. Guests often bring gifts if they are acquainted with the hosts or if the occasion calls for a present. It is customary to socialise before a meal and then to leave soon after the meal is finished. In traditional homes, men and women do not socialise together. Rather, men receive their male guests in a special room to enjoy conversation and refreshments.

## Eating

In urban areas, many people have dining tables, in which case they may eat with utensils or the hand. In rural areas, people sit on the floor or ground to eat. Whenever possible, the whole family eats together, usually sharing the same platter and eating from the portion directly in front of them. *Chapati* (bread) is used to scoop up the food. Often the father feeds young children and mothers feed infants. In large groups, men and women eat in separate areas. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sundown each day. They eat together in the evenings, which are also occasions to visit or offer prayers. During Ramadan, it is polite for non-Muslims to not eat or drink in front of Muslims during daylight hours.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is the centre of social life and support. Although increased modernisation has brought many women into public life, the male continues to reign as head of the home. It is common for the extended family- a father and mother, their sons, and the son's family- to live together in the same household. The presiding male of the family has significant influence over the lives of all family members, although women are increasingly taking on active decision-making roles. The elderly are highly respected. Nuclear families are generally large, with the average woman bearing six children in her lifetime.

## Dating & Marriage

Boys and girls have little contact with each other; they attend separate schools and are not allowed to date. Arranged marriages are still the norm. Formal engagements may last from a few months to many years, depending on the age of the couple when the arrangements are made. In many cases, the bride and groom meet for the first time on their wedding day. Pakistanis view marriage as a union of two families as much as a union of two people. Both families participate in the wedding preparations. A Muslim holy man, usually called a Qazi in Pakistan, completes the marriage contract between the two families. Pakistan has a low divorce rate.

## Diet

The mainstay of the Pakistani diet is *chapati* or *roti*, an unleavened bread similar to pita bread. Pakistani food is generally hot and spicy, with curry being one of the most popular spices. Islamic law forbids the consumption of pork and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Rice is part of most meals and desserts. Tea is the most popular drink. A type of yogurt is a common ingredient in meals.

## Holidays & Special Days

Pakistan Day	23 March
Labour Day	1 May
Independence Day	14 August
Defence of Pakistan	6 September
Anniversary of death of Quaid-i-Azam	11 September
Birthday of Quaid-i-Azam	25 December
Islamic religious days are observed	

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,213,093 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 2.43%

The country is populated by people of Melanesian origin, with Polynesian, Chinese and European (including Australian) minorities.

### Resident in the ACT

731 born in Papua New Guinea (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

In Papua New Guinea, languages fall within two basic language stocks: Melanesian and Papuan. English is the official language and is taught in public schools. The language used at home, however, is almost always that of one's language group. Melanesian Pidgin (Tok Pisin) is the most widely used language. Motu is the most common indigenous language, used primarily in the Papuan region.

### Religion

A majority of Papua New Guineans are Christian, primarily Catholic and Lutheran.

Strong beliefs in witchcraft and ancestor worship remain and coexist with Christianity. People in remote areas often follow traditional theologies.

### General attitudes

The people are proud of their diversity and land. Most individuals have a strong sense of belonging to a tribe or language group. They also value their gardens, and their own physical abilities, endurance, and strength. There is a desire for material things and a sense of inadequacy in not being able to obtain them. Family and clan loyalty is strong and there is an obligation to share one's income and possessions. People are event oriented. Meetings or gatherings may not take place on time.

### Personal appearance

Western-style clothing is most common, with traditional attire limited to extremely remote areas. Men wear shorts or pants, but a shirt is optional when one is hot or doing physical labour. Both men and women often wear *laplap* (wraparound sarong).

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Papua New Guineans greet by shaking hands. Other greetings vary depending on the area and language group. When passing a stranger, a nod of the head and a smile are adequate gestures. When addressing an important official, one uses the appropriate title with a full name. In most other cases, people use first names to address one another.

### Gestures

Gestures with the head, eyes, and eyebrows are important to communication. Staring at a person of the opposite sex is very offensive. Men often hold hands in public as a sign of friendship, as do women, but it is not acceptable for members of the opposite sex to do so. A short hiss and sideways motion of the head indicates disgust or derision. The "thumbs-up" sign is considered offensive to some.

## Visiting

Papua New Guineans may spend a large portion of each day visiting, often stopping in at the home of a relative or friend to share some food, smoke tobacco, or chew betel nut and discuss the day's news. Visiting is welcomed, whether impromptu or planned. Visits are usually informal and often lengthy.

## Eating

In general, two large meals are eaten, with snacking throughout the day. The most common utensil is the spoon. Hands are used otherwise. There are rarely second helpings, and asking for them can imply the host has not provided adequately. Most people sit on the ground or floor when eating, although tables might be used in urban areas.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The extended family is the basis of support for most people. While a household is usually occupied by the nuclear family, a child often refers to having more than one mother or father and numerous siblings who, in Western society, would be called aunts, uncles, and cousins. Parents who are infertile or who have recently lost a child are often given an infant or child by relatives. There is a great deal of obligation and duty associated with family. Extended family members share food, wealth, and work. In cities, both men and women may work outside the home. A majority of family structures are patriarchal, although there are some matriarchal societies in PNG. Men usually handle construction activities. Women usually cook and prepare food, and take care of small children, animals, and the garden.

## Dating & Marriage

A woman is officially purchased and her family compensated for its loss through a negotiated bride price, which is exchanged in a ceremony before the wedding. A typical price might include several pigs, money and food. The groom's extended family contributes to the bride price and the bride's extended family shares it.

## Diet

The staple food in the Highlands is *kaukau* (sweet potato), while on the coast and in the lowlands *saksak* (a starchy extract from the sago palm) is the main source of calories. Taro is a staple of both regions, as are a myriad of fruits and vegetables from banana to yams. Beer is popular as a status drink among men.

## Holidays & Special Days

Queen's Birthday	5 June
Remembrance Day	23 July
Independence and Constitution Day	16 September

# PERU

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

28,108,538 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:1.70%  
South American Indians comprise 45% of the population, with 37% mestizo (mixed European and Indian), 15% white, 3% black, Japanese or Chinese.

### Resident in the ACT

114 born in Peru (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Spanish and the Indian language, Quechua, are both officially recognised languages. Another Indian language, Aymara, is also spoken widely.

### Religion

Most people are Roman Catholic. However, many Protestant and Evangelical churches also operate in the country.

### General attitudes

Peruvians are strong willed and nationalistic. The people have a good sense of humour and are accommodating and eager to please. Jokes about their lifestyle, especially those coming from foreigners, are offensive. Personal criticism, if necessary, is expected to be expressed in a positive manner. Appointments and other meetings may not begin on time and Peruvians generally consider people to be more important than schedules.

### Personal appearance

Although Western-style clothing is worn regularly in Lima, the capital, and other urban areas, rural *campesinos* (farmers) often wear traditional clothing related to their ethnic background. Hand woven fabrics are commonly used to make their clothes.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Both men and women shake hands when meeting and parting. Close friends often greet each other with a kiss on one cheek. First names are used among friends, but elderly people and officials are referred to by their title and last name.

### Gestures

People stand close to each other during conversation and constant eye contact is important. When seated, placing the ankle of one leg on the knee of the other is inappropriate for women, but okay for men. Hand gestures are used a great deal during conversation.

### Visiting

Peruvians enjoy visiting one another. Between friends and relatives, most visits are unannounced. In other cases, it is polite to make advance arrangements. Special acknowledgment of children in the home is appreciated by the hosts. Gifts are not expected when one visits the home, but small gifts such as fruit or wine are welcome on any occasion.

### Eating

A polite guest eats all the food that is offered. Proper table manners are important. The continental style of eating is followed. Both hands (but not elbows) are kept above the table at all times.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family unit is important in Peru. Nuclear families have, on average, three children. The father is the undisputed head of the family, while the mother spends most of her time directing and performing household duties.

### Dating and Marriage

Some group dating occurs in the late teen years, but dating in couples is almost strictly reserved for courtship. Men usually marry in their late twenties, while women generally marry in their early twenties. Common-law marriages are prevalent and widely accepted, except among the upper classes.

### Diet

The main staples in the diet include rice, beans, fish, and a variety of tropical fruits. Soups are common. Corn, native to Peru, is the main staple among the Indians. *Cebiche* (raw fish seasoned with lemon and vinegar) is popular on the coast.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Day of the Peasant	24 June (half day)
Independence Day	28-29 July
Battle of Angamos	9 October
Religious festivals and Saints' Days	

# PHILIPPINES

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

85,089,905 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.03%  
The Filipinos are of Malay origin, with some Chinese, US and Spanish mix.

### Resident in the ACT

1421 born in Philippines (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

There are two official languages in the Philippines, Pilipino and English. English is spoken as the main language of business, government, and education from the fourth grade through college. Pilipino, which is based mostly on Tagalog, is the language spoken in central Luzon. Pilipino is referred to as Tagalog by most people.

### Religion

The Philippines is unique among Asian countries because it is the only nation that is predominantly Christian. Approximately 83 percent of the population belong to the Roman Catholic Church. Six percent belongs to the Philippine Independent (or Aglipayan) church, and 3 percent belongs to various other Christian churches. The Muslim people, called Moros, live mainly on the southern islands, particularly Mindanao. A number of Buddhists also live in the Philippines.

### General attitudes

Filipinos have been influenced by the Chinese, Malay, Spanish, and US cultures. Although casual and fun loving, Filipinos are sensitive people. Insincerity is easily detected and can ruin a relationship. Individualism is less important than the family. Interdependence is more important than independence; a family member will often sacrifice personal goals or desires to help the family or another family member. In general, Filipinos have a more relaxed view of time and may not always begin meetings or appointments promptly. Gratitude and saving face, is paramount to Filipinos. Fatalism is a common attitude. Success may also be attributed to fate rather than ability or effort.

### Personal appearance

As elsewhere in the world, clothing trends in the Philippines have somewhat conformed to Western standards, with a few exceptions. Women generally wear western style dresses or wrap around skirts with blouses. Traditional clothing is generally worn in special occasion and by very few of the ethnic minorities.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Initial greetings are friendly and informal. Because English is commonly used in urban areas, normal English greetings are acceptable. The common greeting for acquaintances and friends is *Komusta* or an expression which is loosely translated in English as 'where are you going/what are you doing.' People are taught to show respect to each other. Proper titles are used (Doctor, Professor) or honorific terms (aunt, uncle).

### Gestures

Beckoning, is done by waving all fingers with the palm facing down.

## Visiting

Hospitality is important to Filipinos. Guests are made to feel at ease and should in turn, be tactful and sincere. The word "hostess" should not be used when referring to the woman of the house. Filipinos attach great importance to personal and family honour. If possible, criticism should be avoided.

## Eating

Conversation is casual during meals. The best way for a guest to compliment a meal is to eat heartily. A small portion is left on the plate to indicate the person has had enough to eat.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The average Filipino family is large, often with four or more children. Professionally and otherwise, Filipino women generally enjoy equality with men. A mother's advice to her son or daughter is taken very seriously. Family ties are very important to Filipinos and often influence many aspects of their lives. Filipino family members tend to feel free to call on one another for financial assistance. The borrower is then expected to help other family members when in a position to do so.

## Dating & Marriage

In urban areas, dating habits are similar to Western style. Group dating begins in the early teens. In rural areas, dating habits vary according to religion and tradition. It is the obligation of the groom and his family to pay for the wedding ceremony and feast.

## Diet

Rice is the staple food in the Filipino diet. It is prepared in a variety of tasty ways and is often included in desserts as well as main meals. The primary source of protein is fish, which is accompanied by a variety of vegetables and tropical fruits.

## Holidays & Special Days

Freedom Day	25 February
Labour Day	1 May
Independence Day	12 June
National Heroes Day	28 August
National Thanksgiving Day	21 September
Religious days for Christians, Muslims and others are observed	



# POLAND

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

38,618,416 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:-0.03%

### Resident in the ACT

1230 born in Poland (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Polish, a West Slavic tongue related to Czech, is the official language. English is the most popular second language.

### Religion

The overwhelming majority of Poles belong to the Roman Catholic Church. Approximately 75 percent of the people are practicing Catholics, and another 15 percent belong to the Church. There are also other churches represented in Poland as well, including Russian Orthodox, various Protestant faiths, and others.

### General attitudes

Polish people value self-reliance and individualism. The Poles are generally outgoing and outspoken. They value generosity. People are generally strait-forward and unaccustomed to cynicism. They place great emphasis on the family and on education.

### Personal appearance

Because clothing is expensive, people's wardrobes remain small. Fashions are generally conservative, although the youth favour current European trends. Business people wear conservative suits or dresses.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Adults generally shake hands upon meeting. A professional person's title is used before his or her last name. Only the person's title is used in formal conversation or in business. Teenagers and children are called by their first name, but between adults first names are used only by mutual consent. Women greet close friends by kissing both cheeks.

### Visiting

Unannounced visits among friends and relatives are common. More formal, longer visits are arranged in advance. It is customary to give hosts flowers for even a brief arranged visit. Entertaining is more commonly done in the home, because going out is expensive.

### Eating

Poles generally eat breakfast between 6.30 and 8.00 am. The main meal is at 3.00 pm and is the meal the family expects to gather for. The lighter evening meal is eaten between 6.00 and 8.30 pm. The continental style of eating is used. Both hands (not the elbows) are kept above the table during the meal. Eating should not begin until everyone has been served and the host or head of the family has begun. When eating as a guest, it is impolite not to finish one's first helping.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The average family has one or two children. The father, traditionally a dominant authority figure, demands obedience yet wants his children ultimately to be independent and have self-discipline. In all households, children are given considerable responsibility from an early age. The economic situation of most families demands the equal involvement of both parents in raising the family and working outside the home, although women still bear most responsibility for home making.

### Dating & Marriage

Women marry between ages 18 and 20; men begin marrying at age 21. Parents of the couple often give financial assistance and allow the couple to live in their home for the first few years. Living together before being married is discouraged.

### Diet

Because workdays begin early, Poles often have only a light breakfast, taking a sandwich along to eat at 10.00 am. The main meal consists of soup, meat or fish, salad, and potatoes. Pastries or ice cream are eaten for a late-afternoon snack. Some common dishes include *pierogi* (dumplings with cream cheese and potatoes), *uszka* (a kind of ravioli), and *bigos* (sausage, mushroom, cabbage). Pork is more popular than beef.

### Holidays & Special Days

Constitution Day	3 May
All Saints Day	1 November
Independence Day	11 November
St Nikolas Day	6 December
Christian holidays	

# PORTUGAL

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

10,090,478 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.18%

### Resident in the ACT

221 born in Portugal (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Portuguese. English, French, and German are taught in the schools, and are therefore often understood by the Portuguese.

### Religion

More than 95 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Approximately 1 percent belongs to other Christian denominations, and some non-Christian religions are also practiced in Portugal.

### General Attitudes

The Portuguese are generally traditional and conservative. People and relationships are more important than time, so punctuality is not always stressed. The Portuguese are proud of their cultural heritage, sense of nation, and economic progress. They are very open and friendly to people of other nations.

### Personal Appearance

The Portuguese are generally conservative in dress. Men wear suits to work. Tattered clothing is improper. Clothing is usually ironed well; wrinkles are considered sloppy. People are careful to be well dressed in public.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Personal appearance

A warm, firm handshake is an appropriate greeting for anyone. Friends often hug. Relatives or close female friends kiss each cheek, beginning with the right. Touching is a common part of greeting because it shows friendship. First names are used for friends, youth, and children. Otherwise, a title is used with a surname to address an adult.

### Gestures

Although the Portuguese are rather reserved, they use a lot of physical gestures in conversation. It is impolite to point directly at a person with the index finger. It is a serious insult to make a "V" sign or "rabbit ears" behind someone's head, because it connotes a lack of morals.

### Visiting

When visiting a family, guests wait outside the door until invited inside the home; like wise, guests do not let themselves out when leaving, but they let the hosts open the door. Guests are expected to wipe their feet before entering. Guests usually avoid inquisitive personal questions. Guests often take small gifts to their hosts or send a thank-you note after a dinner engagement.

### Eating

The continental style of eating is followed. Portuguese eat with a knife and fork, but a special knife and fork are used when eating fish. It is important to keep the hands above the table at all times, and it is impolite to stretch at the table. A small breakfast is eaten around 8 am, a large lunch at about 1 pm, and dinner is generally served between 8 and 9 pm.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family is the core of Portuguese life. Families are strengthened by a clan spirit that extends to aunts, uncles, cousins, and beyond. Nuclear families tend to be small, averaging two children. Women often work outside the home in urban areas.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating habits in Portugal are similar to those currently prevailing in the rest of Europe, although they are more conservative in the rural areas. Young people associate in groups first and later pair off in couples. Actually, going on a date signifies a serious relationship. Marriage ceremonies generally follow the Catholic tradition. It is not uncommon for young people to live together before getting married.

### Diet

The staple foods in Portugal include fish, vegetables, and fruits. One of the national dishes is *bacalhau* (dried cod), which is usually served with potatoes and green vegetables, and sometimes beans. The traditional Portuguese salad includes dark green lettuce, tomatoes, onions, vinegar, olive oil, and salt. Olive oil is the favourite cooking oil, and garlic is a commonly used seasoning. Sweets are very popular. Wine is inexpensive and consumed by all members of the family with their meals.

### Holidays & Special Days

Christmas, Lent, Easter and Saints' Days, Corpus Christi, Assumption of our Lady	
Carnival	February or March
Freedom Day	25 April
Labour Day	1 May
National Portugal Day	10 June
Proclamation of the Republic	5 October
All Saints Day	1 November
Restoration of Independence	1 December

# ROMANIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

22,301,231 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: -0.21%  
89.1% Romanian, 8.9% Hungarian, 0.4% German, 1.6% Ukrainian, Serb, Croat, Russian, Turk and Gypsy (Approx 1 million).

### Resident in the ACT

144 born in Romania (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Romanian. Romanian is a Latin based language in the same family as Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese. The Germans and Hungarians speak their native ethnic tongues. The Roma speak Romany.

### Religion

Nearly all Romanians are Christian. About 70 percent belong to the Romanian Orthodox church. Six percent of the people (mostly Hungarians) are Roman Catholic and 3 percent are Uniate (Greek Catholic). Islam, Judaism, and other Christian religions are also practiced. About 15 percent of the population claims no religious affiliation.

### General attitudes

The conflicting attitudes about the future of the nation have led to violence, instability, and the rise of dangerous tensions between ethnic groups.

### Personal appearance

Romanians attach importance to their appearance, but few have the means to buy fashionable clothing. People generally dress conservatively in public. In general, the elderly wear dark, conservative colours. Conservative business suits are appropriate for men. Younger people are following the recent relaxed trends.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Greetings on a first-name basis are usually made only between close friends and relatives. However, adults normally address young people by their first names. Where applicable, it is most polite to use a person's title before the surname. Adults commonly greet each other with a handshake, but a man usually waits for a woman to extend her hand first.

### Gestures

It is impolite to yawn without covering the mouth. When one sneezes, one is wished *Noroc* (Bless you) or *sanatate* (Good health). On public transportation, men will generally offer their seat to a woman. Hats are removed by gentlemen before they enter buildings, except stores.

### Visiting

Romanians like to receive and pay visits. In the home, guests are usually offered a drink-coffee, tea, brandy, or a popular regional wine. When invited to dinner, it is considered polite for the guest to bring an odd number of flowers or a small gift for the hostess.

## Eating

The continental style of eating is used. Both hands (not elbows) are kept above the table during a meal. The hostess indicates when the meal will begin and when it will end. Toasting is usually a part of formal and informal lunches and dinners.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family has always been important to Romanians and the father maintains a dominant role. Most women work outside the home, but they are also responsible for the upkeep of the home and the children. Men are generally not involved in household chores. Grandparents often live with the family. Many families, urban and rural, lack proper housing and most go without modern conveniences.

### Dating & Marriage

People in rural areas marry at a fairly early age and follow local and ethnic customs regarding courtship and marriage. In the past, most students in the cities waited until completion of university or other graduate training before getting married. More recently, however, students have begun to marry in their last year of education because it has been easier to get housing and a job in a city if a person is married.

### Diet

Romanian food is characterised by distinctive ethnic specialties including *mititei* (grilled meatballs), *patricieni* (grilled sausage), and *mamaliga* (cornmeal mush served like mashed potatoes). Breakfast usually consists of eggs, cheese, rolls or other breads, and coffee. Lunch is the main meal of the day and generally consists of soup, meat, potatoes, bread, and vegetables. Wine or beer is usually served as the drink. Pastries are popular for dessert.

### Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
National Day	23-24 August
National Day	1 December
Orthodox Christian holidays	

# RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

144,789,476 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:-0.35%  
The majority (82%) are ethnic Russians, with other groups being Tatar, 3% Ukrainian, 1% Chuvash and 1% Dagestan.

### Resident in the ACT

283 born in Russian Federation (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Russian is the official language in the country. It is a European language belonging to the Slavonic group of languages. This group includes Ukrainian, Belorussian, Serbian, Czech and Polish. Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, which consists of 33 letters; this alphabet is related to but quite distinct from the Roman (Latin) alphabet. Standard Russian is spoken throughout the territory, with regional differences in pronunciation and vocabulary.

### Religion

The Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant religion. The Eastern Slavs (including the Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians) converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 988. From 1589 the Russian Orthodox Church has been headed by the Patriarch, resident in Moscow. Over the last thousand years the Orthodox Church has been a principal driving force in Russian history and culture, architecture, literature, education and philosophy. After 1917, the communist regimes used every method to destroy the Church physically and spiritually. This campaign ultimately failed, and the Church has regained its freedom, reasserting its influence on Russian politics and culture. In many southern regions, Islam is practised.

### General attitudes

Much has been said about the purported fatalism and inertia of the Russian people. This is not borne out by the achievements of Russian history. The eastward expansion of Russia over the centuries was much more a popular phenomenon than a government-driven scheme, is clearly evidence of a vibrant and energetic nation. The brilliant achievements of Russian literature, art, music and architecture bear witness to the talent and initiative of the Russian people. The Russian Orthodox has had a moral influence on the attitudes of the Russian people for a thousand years. The attempt to destroy this moral culture has weakened the national will, and tried to replace it with communism. After this, confusion and chaos set in, both political and social. At this point, many Russians are frustrated with the rapid changes, reflected in high prices, violent and rampant crime, unemployment and a reduced quality of life. Many Russians believe that Russia's 'soul' is different, and that Russia needs to take a different course taking into account its unique historical and spiritual heritage.

### Personal appearance

Russian clothing styles are essentially the same as in Europe, but with the younger generation following the latest trends, and the older generation dressing more conservatively.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When meeting, Russians shake hands firmly. Some women prefer not to shake hands, but it is impolite for a man not to offer his hand. Friends and family may kiss on the cheek. In addressing an older or a respected person one uses the given name and a patronymic (possessive of father's first name) but surnames are preferred in formal greetings.

## Gestures

Pointing with the index finger is improper but commonly practised. It is impolite to talk with one's hands in the pockets or arms folded across the chest.

## Eating

Eating with a fork in the left hand and the knife in the right is standard, but many people use only a fork. Hands are kept above the table.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family is the basic social unit in Russia and most people expect to marry and have children. The average urban couple has one child but rural families are larger. Because housing is difficult to obtain, young couples often live with their parents for some time. It is the normal practice to financially support children until they reach adulthood. Both husband and wife usually work, but women are usually also responsible for housekeeping. Men rarely share in household duties. When the elderly live with their children, they often provide child care and do the shopping.

## Dating & Marriage

When young people date, they usually go to movies or for a walk in a city park. Sometimes they go to bars or cafes, but this is presently too expensive for many people. Many couples live together before or instead of marriage.

## Diet

Common Russian foods include *borsch* (cabbage soup with beets), *pirozhki* (a small oblong pie filled with a variety of ingredients such as meat, mushrooms, potatoes or cabbage), and *blini* (pancakes) with black caviar. Pork, sausage, chicken, and cheeses are popular. Russians prefer tea to coffee. Russians drink far more vodka than wine.

## Holidays & Special Days

Christmas	7 January
Women's Day	8 March
Victory Day	9 May
Independence Day	12 June
Religious holidays	



# SAMOA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

178,507 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: -0.23%

### Resident in the ACT

143 born in Samoa (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Samoan is probably the oldest Polynesian language, and it is the official language of both Independent Samoa and American Samoa. English is the second official language. Samoans are proud of their language.

### Religion

Religion plays a central role in the lives of most Samoans, almost all of whom are Christian. Families sing hymns and pray between 6.30 and 7.30pm. Public meetings begin and end with prayer. 50% of Samoans are affiliated with the Christian Congregationalist Church. Other denominations include Roman Catholic, Methodist, the Church of the Latter-day Saints, the Seventh Day Adventist and the Baha'i.

### General attitudes

Samoans approach life in a friendly and playful way, with a strong sense of 'fa'a Samoa' or 'the Samoan way'. This indicates a relaxed way of life with respect for family and tradition. Qualities of respect, cooperation, consensus, a sense of humour, hospitality are all valued highly. The individual gives way for the good of the group. Sharing is more prized than ownership. Oral skills are praised and cultivated, and people tend to solve disputes through verbal negotiation.

### Personal appearance

Traditional attire is still commonly worn in Samoa, though Western clothing is gaining popularity. Men wear a straight wraparound *lavalava* along with a shirt. A shirt with pockets and a *lava/lava* may be worn to church or official gatherings. It is forbidden for women to wear pants, except in athletic events. Women wear a *puletasi* (short skirt over a longer dress) or a muumuu (wraparound skirt). Women style their hair in a bun with a stick securing it. Rubber flipflops or jandals are the common footwear. People tend to take pride in neat well-pressed clothing.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Family and friends usually hug and kiss on the cheek. Others are greeted with a handshake and a warm smile, or by raising the eyebrows and smiling. First names are used for friends, but strangers or community leaders are greeted respectfully by a title. Professional people or chiefs can be greeted by *Lau Susuga*. Before opening a conversation, Samoans may say: *Susu mai* or *Afio mai* meaning 'Welcome'.

### Gestures

Hand gestures are used dramatically in oratory speech, it not generally to accompany conversation. Beckoning by waving all fingers with palm down is reserved for small children. Samoans point with the chin, as pointing with the index finger is considered rude. Lifting the eyebrows signals 'yes', while furrowing the brow indicates 'no'. Scratching the head during conversation is a negative gesture, expressing inferiority, uncertainty or shyness. If walking in front of someone, Samoans may bow from the waist. Public display of physical affection between the sexes is generally regarded as inappropriate.

## Visiting

Visiting people takes place in the home, on the road or at church. Women visit while weaving, making handicrafts. Visiting unannounced is common, and people may stay till long into the night. When a guest enters the home, the host makes a speech of welcome and the guest makes a formal response. The best floor mats are laid out for visitors in traditional homes. It is customary to leave shoes outside, and sit cross-legged on the mat. Legs should be tucked behind the person. Legs should only be stretched out if they are covered properly, and pointing feet at someone is rude. Refreshments such as coconut, biscuits and soft drinks may be served. Speaking to someone in the home while standing, is considered impolite.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Children are taught to respect their elders, avoid shaming their family, and sustain the culture. They are expected to support their parents when they are old. However, if both parents work outside the home, grand-parents care for the grand-children.

Discipline is strict, and an adult relative may freely scold a child as required.

In the extended family, a male or female chief holds authority. The *matai* (chief) is selected on the basis of loyalty and service to the group. This hierarchy is the basis of Samoan social and political life. A Samoan village is typically made up of several families. Each *matai* is responsible for the wellbeing of each member of the village group.

### Dating & Marriage

Samoan youth generally meet at church activities or in the village. Dating as in the Western world is not common. Messages may be sent back and forth through a friend. Wedding receptions are extravagant affairs, with a large party and plentiful food, singing, dance and speeches. After the reception, the tradition is for the bride's family to offer mats (*ulumoeaga*) to the groom's family. The groom's family reciprocates with money at least equal to the value of the mats.

### Diet

The original staple food was taro, but it was destroyed by blight. It has been replaced by a larger root called *ta'amu*, green bananas and yams. Rice, seafood and breadfruit are other basic foods. Coconut cream (*Pe'epe'e*) is popular as a sauce. The traditional underground oven *umu* is still used for ceremonial occasions.

### Holidays & special Days

Christmas, Easter,	
Independence Day	1-3 June
Arbor Day	(first Friday in November)
Mother's Day	(last Thursday in November)
Teuila Week is Tourism week	
Swarm of the Palolo when the coral worms propagate their species	

# SAUDI ARABIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

23,752,020 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 3.27%  
The population comprises 90% Arab, 10% Afro-Asian, including nearly 2 million nomadic people.

### Resident in the ACT

49 born in Saudi Arabia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is the official language of the kingdom. It is also the language of the Qur'an (Koran) the Scripture of Islam. English is used in business and educated circles.

### Religion

Islam is the only legally and officially recognised religion of Saudi Arabia. Arabia is the birthplace of the revered prophet Muhammad and Saudi Arabia is the home of Islam's two most sacred cities: Makkah "Macca" and Madinah. Non-Muslims are not permitted to enter these cities. The Arabian peninsula is the centre of the Islamic religion, which has spread throughout the world. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Muslims complete a pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah as part of their religious duties. All Saudi citizens are Muslims and are restricted from joining any other religion.

### General attitudes

Life in Saudi Arabia is more relaxed than in fast-paced Western nations. Saudi Arabians prefer to establish trust and confidence before proceeding with business. Saudis are conscious of personal and family honour and can easily be offended by any perceived insult to that honour. The people are generous and hospitable. Privacy is important. Saudis generally prefer to maintain cultural tradition in the face of modernisation. The people are very religious. Islamic customs therefore play a key role in determining cultural practices. Saudi Arabians are proud of the strength of their modern country and are very patriotic; at the same time, their chief devotions are to family and religion.

### Personal appearance

Saudi Arabian men and women continue to wear traditional Arab dress. The men wear the *ghutua* (headdress) and *thobe* (ankle-length shirt, usually white, that covers long pants). Women in public have veiled faces and wear an *abaaya*. Modesty is of utmost importance, even in the heat of the Saudi summers.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

There are several forms of greeting in Saudi Arabia. The most common is a handshake with the right hand and the phrase *As-Salaamu 'Alaykum* (peace be upon you). The greeting used depends on the individuals' relationship to each other and their status in society. When accompanied by a woman wearing a veil, a man will not normally introduce her, and one does not expect to shake hands with her.

### Gestures

It is impolite to point with the finger or signal to another person with the hand. A person also avoids the use of the left hand for gesturing. All objects are passed with the right hand or both hands, never with the left alone. It is an insult to point the bottom of one's foot at another person. It is also impolite to cross an ankle over the knee, although crossing one's legs at the knees is acceptable and common.

## Visiting

Invitations to a Saudi Arabian home are often given to a man alone. If his wife is invited, she may be sent to eat with the other women in a separate room or quarters. It is inappropriate for a first-time guest to take a gift to the woman of the house. Otherwise, gift giving is common. Dinner guests usually present flowers, sweets, or other small items to the hosts as appreciation for their hospitality.

## Eating

In general, food is eaten with the fingers of the right hand only. Bread may be torn with the left hand but is eaten with the right. The Saudis delight in preparing an abundance of food for their guests. The main meal of the day is in mid-afternoon.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Although the Saudi Arabian family is traditionally a strong, male-dominated unit, women exercise considerable influence in the home. Most families live as extended families. The family is the key to Saudi Arabian society. Infidelity is crime. The separation of male and female is a way of life in Saudi Arabia. Rules governing the actions of women are based on Saudi Arabian law and custom and are designed to respect and protect a woman's modesty and honour. A woman's behaviour reflects on her family's reputation. Men and women have separate workplaces. Female doctors treat women and children. Women cannot socialise in public with men and are usually accompanied by a male relative in public. Women are not allowed to interact with men outside their family and are forbidden to drive a car or ride a bicycle.

## Dating & Marriage

Marriages are usually arranged, but a growing minority of young men and women in urban areas are being allowed to choose their mates. Because of the separation of sexes, dating is not practiced. A traditional Saudi Arabian wedding is an Islamic ceremony followed by separate parties for the men and women. Traditionally, men pay a dowry for their brides. Chastity is the most important thing a woman can bring to marriage.

## Diet

Saudi dishes are composed mainly of rice with lamb or chicken and are mildly spicy. *Kabsah* (rice and lamb) is a favourite dish throughout the country. Coffee or tea is served before all meals. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

## Holidays & Special Days

Islamic holidays

Unification of the Kingdom

23 September

# SERBIA, MONTENEGRO, and the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

Serbia 8 million approx. (US Census 2001)  
Kosovo and Vojvodina 1.7 million (US Census 2001)  
Montenegro 680,158 (US Census 2001)

### Resident in the ACT

1188 born in the (then) Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Census 2001 unpub.) Note: The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist on 5.2.03, when the new State of Serbia and Montenegro was declared, with autonomy for both.

### Language

Serbian is the official language spoken, and has a Cyrillic script. Cyrillic is also used in Macedonian and Montenegrin. However, other languages include Yugoslav, Slovak, Hungarian, Croatian, and Albanian. The population is comprised of 62% Serb, 16.5 Albanian, 5% Montenegro, 3.4% Yugoslav, 3.3% Hungarian, and 9.2% other minorities including Croats, Magyar, and Gypsy. Kosovo and Vojvodina are autonomous provinces of Yugoslavia, where several languages are spoken.

### Religion

Sixty-five per cent of the Serbian population identifies with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Nineteen per cent are Muslim, most of whom live in Kosovo. Most of the Muslims are Sunni, with some Shi'ite). Four per cent are Roman Catholic; 1% are Protestant, and the remaining 11% practice other faiths. Serbia is famous for its religious architecture, with churches, mosques and monasteries dating back many centuries.

### General attitudes

People in Serbia and Montenegro are extremely patriotic, and place a very high value on family and kinship networks. As the turbulent recent history has wreaked havoc on the economic and social structures, people have turned inward, and become more suspicious of outsiders. Unemployment is still nearly 30%, and there is now a large gap between the wealthy and the poor. Serbia and Montenegro have their separate governance, each with its own president, legislation and court system.

Yugoslavia was once admired for its diverse and integrated society, and will no doubt strive to return to normal commerce with its neighbours. The social order is patriarchal, although this is slowly changing as women increasingly need to be bread-winners alongside men.

### Personal appearance

Western-style clothing is the norm in urban areas, while in rural areas women tend to wear the traditional plain blouse, long black skirt and head scarf. On festive occasions, unmarried women wear small red felt caps adorned with gold braid. Albanian men in Kosovo region wear small white caps.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Serbians greet friends and family with a handshake, and women kiss each other on both cheeks three times. When meeting new acquaintances, a more formal verbal greeting is used.

### Visiting

Serbians frequently visit one another, and it is an important part of the culture to keep close ties with family and friends. Visitors may bring gifts on special occasions like birthdays, but it is impolite to open the gift while the guest is still there.

### Eating

People in Serbia and Montenegro eat in the continental style, with fork in the left and knife in the right hand. Breakfast usually consists of bread, eggs, meat and a dairy sour cream dip called *kajmak*. Lunch is the main meal of the day, and is commonly taken at 3.00pm. Then a light supper is served at about 8.00pm in the evening.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The extended family is still strong, but young people prefer to move into their own apartment. The normal size of family is one or two children. Grand-parents often help to look after the grand-children, and are cared for by their adult children when they become frail or ill.

### Dating & Marriage

Teenagers may meet at school, church activities, or with family outings. In their late teens, they can go out to cafes, movies or go for walks. Arranged marriages are not in currency, and young people select their own marriage partners. The age of marriage is moving up to late twenties.

### Diet

The Serbian staple diet relies on bread, fruit, meat, and dairy products, including yoghurt and cottage cheese. Peppers are also a common ingredient in many dishes. The national dish is called *cevapcici*. It consists of small meat patties, highly spiced and grilled. Other Serbian specialities include a type of cornbread, *proja*; a thin, crispy dough served with eggs and cheese called *gibanica*; cabbage leaves filled with meat or *sarma*; and *palacinke* or crepes, served with coffee prepared in the Turkish style. A fruit juice called *sok* is very popular.

### Holidays & special days

Christmas Eastern Orthodox	7 Jan
Christmas Eve (Badnje Vece)	
Patron Saint Day (Slava)	
International Labour Day	1 May
Day of Uprising of Serbia	7 July
Republic Day	29 Nov

# SLOVAKIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

5,424,349 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.13%

### Resident in the ACT

45 born in Slovakia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Slovaks speak Slovak. Hungarian is the second most commonly spoken language, especially in the south. German is widely understood, while English is the language of choice to study in school. The Slovak Republic was formed at the time of the division of the Czech Republic in 1993.

### Religion

About 60% percent of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, followed by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (6.2 percent), and the Greek Catholics (3.4 percent) smaller groups include the Calvinist Reformed (1.7 percent), Eastern Orthodox (0.7 percent) Baptist, and Jewish. Nearly 10 percent are atheists, while the rest of the population either belongs to various smaller groups or has no religious affiliations.

### General attitudes

Slovaks are proud of their rich cultural heritage. Slovaks are usually outgoing and value good humour and hard work. They are also generous. Education, modesty and honesty are admired.

### Personal appearance

Clothing in urban areas is fashionable, while older, rural people remain more conservative. Businessmen wear suits, women and girls wear dresses and skirts. Jeans and t-shirts are quite popular and short pants are increasingly common in the summer.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Shaking hands is the most common form of greeting. A man usually waits for a woman to extend her hand. Formal titles carry a particular significance. People are addressed as *Pan* (Mr) or *Pani* (Mrs), followed by any professional title and then the surname. First names are used upon mutual consent, among friends, or among the youth.

### Gestures

Hand gestures are frequently used to emphasise speech. Yawning in public is considered improper, and chewing gum is not acceptable during polite social interaction. Smiling is courteous.

### Visiting

Impromptu visits are common, but only between close friends and family members. Guests remove hats and shoes in a home; hosts often provide slippers. Visitors wait for hosts to invite them to be seated. Invited guests often present the hosts with a gift of flowers, wine liquor, or something else. Out of courtesy, guests often politely decline offers before eventually accepting them.

### Eating

Slovaks eat in the continental style. Three meals are eaten each day. Breakfast consists of bread and rolls, sliced meat or sausage, and cheese. Soup is commonly served with the main meal at midday, when meat, dumplings or potatoes, and a vegetable are eaten. A lighter meal of cold cuts, cheese, and bread is eaten in the evening. Mid-

morning and mid-afternoon snacks are common. Both hands are kept above the table, but elbows do not rest on the table. Napkins are used on the table, not in the lap. When guests are present, women typically serve the meal but do not eat at the table. Meals are frequently completed with a small cup of Turkish coffee.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Typical Slovak families have two or three children. While most women hold jobs outside the home and comprise 47 percent of the labour force, they are also usually responsible for the home and children. However, some men are beginning to share in household duties.

### Dating & Marriage

Popular dating activities include dancing and going to the movies and theatre. Men marry between the ages of 23 and 26, and women marry about three years earlier. Most Slovak weddings involve church ceremonies.

### Diet

Among the most popular Slovak foods are *rezen* (breaded steak) and potatoes, rice, dumplings, or pasta and sauce. The national dish is *bryndzove halusky* (small dumplings with processed sheep cheese). Fresh-baked bread and soup are considered staples at the dinner table. Potatoes, cabbage, and carrots are the most frequently eaten vegetables.

### Holidays & Special days

Christmas Eve	24 December	Christmas Day	25 December
Epiphany of the Three Kings, Orthodox Church			6 January
Easter, Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary, All Saints Day			
Establishment of the Slovak Republic			1 January
Labour Day			1 May
Victory Day over Fascism			8 May
Slovak National Uprising			29 August
Constitution Day of the Slovak Republic			1 September



# SLOVENIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

1,933,745 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.14%

### Resident in the ACT

200 born in Slovenia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The official language is Slovene, a Slavic language. The language has a special language construct that indicates two people or things, separate to singular and plural.

Slovene uses Roman characters, but excludes q,w,and x. The oldest documents preserved date back to 1000AD. Slovene resisted the pressure to Germanise the language. The next most used language is English.

### Religion

The largest religious denomination is Roman Catholic (69%). There are also congregations of Orthodox Christian, Lutherans, Muslims and Jews. Places of worship are being restored after being neglected under communism.

### General attitudes

Slovenes tend to appear reserved at first, but are very friendly on acquaintance.

They place a high value on their relationships with family and friends. Slovenes are very proud of their cultural heritage and their country. People lose respect by being late, rude, aggressive, boastful, pessimistic or xenophobic. On receiving a compliment, the Slovene may say: *I invite you for a drink!* indicating they gracefully accept the compliment. Children are treasured, and motherhood is revered. Pets are also treated with great affection.

Slovenes are inclined to work hard, both in a job and at home. Building their own home and having a garden are popular pastimes. The streets and public spaces are kept clean and tidy. Homegrown food is a valued commodity. Flowers are often on display on window sills.

### Personal appearance

Grooming in public is important to Slovenes. Contemporary Western styles are worn.

People wear furs to keep warm, including a fur hat called *polhovka* made from the skins of the dormouse worn in southern regions. The clothes worn reflect the occupation and status. Village women working at home wear a long dress with a full-length apron. Village men wear overalls or heavy trousers, a blue coat and boots. Many young people board in dormitories in the city during the week to attend school. They therefore are familiar with the modern youth fashions, including blue jeans.

In the urban setting, men wear sports jackets and slacks with a collar and tie to work. Women may wear suits, dresses, slacks, jackets and the usual fashion accessories.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Slovenes smile, shake hands and greet each other with *Kako se imate?* (How are you?). The casual term is *kako se imas?* Sometimes Slovenes nod their head when shaking hands. If their hand is not clean, they will use a verbal greeting, apologising for not shaking hands. Women are called *Gospa* (madam), and men *Gospod* (Mister).

The degree of formality is reflected in the use of different pronouns- *vi* or *ti* for you. When parting or leaving a room, people usually say *Na svidenja* or *adijo*.

## Gestures

Open displays of affection are rarely seen among anyone other than young people.

Two girls or women may walk along the street arm in arm. It is not polite to place one's hands in the pockets while conversing. Good manners are essential, for instance holding the door open for others, not eating while speaking, and taking off the hat when you have arrived somewhere.

## Visiting

While family and friends enjoy visiting, it is customary to call ahead. It is very common to invite friends to the home, especially on Sundays and holidays. Guests may take a bouquet of flowers, a bottle of wine or a small gift for the children. Refreshments such as coffee, juice, pastries or biscuits are generally offered, and visitors are careful not to stay too long. Hosts usually accompany the guests to the street or the car. In many Slovene households, it is a good idea to offer to remove one's shoes before entering the house. Slovenes also enjoy meeting friends at cafes or inns, for coffee or a drink.

## Eating

Traditionally, Slovenes eat in the continental style, with the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right. Breakfast is usually taken early in the morning, a mid-morning snack, then lunch (*kosilo*) being the main meal at mid-afternoon. A light supper (*večerja*) is eaten in the evening. Families try to eat the main meal together, though changing patterns of work, more convenience foods, and modern cooking facilities have changed this.

People like to raise their glasses when drinking together, and toast each other's health with *Na zdravje!*. This toast customarily is offered before a meal. After serving, the host offers the blessing: *dober tek!* (Your health!) or *živijo!* (long live!). Guests are always served first, but no-one begins eating till the host does. Glasses and plates are re-filled often.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The living arrangements and family size are changing. Ten years ago, it was common for two or three generations to live together. It is now more usual for the young couple to move out and set up a home. Many are remaining childless, or having only one child. Family ties are still strong. Both parents may work outside the home and share child-care and household responsibilities. Most people in the cities live in apartments, while in rural areas people may live in small privately owned houses. Many city-dwellers have a small retreat in the country for holidays, where they often grow productive gardens.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people often go out to movies, fairs and dances. They may visit museums, parks, sporting events or simply walk in the town or village. A large number of young people live in Ljubljana area while they attend high school or university.

People usually only marry after their education is completed. The wedding may involve both a civil and a church ceremony. Church weddings are becoming more popular. Rural weddings involve a traditional component, for instance a bridal carriage decked with flowers may transport the bride and her family to the ceremony.

## Diet

The many influences on Slovenian cuisine include Italian, Austrian, south Slavic, and Hungarian cooking traditions. A typical meal may consist of meat (chicken or beef), soup, green salad, and apple, cherry or cheese strudel and coffee. Pork, veal, chicken and turkey are popular on the menu. Organ meats are also valued. Green salad with oil and vinegar dressing is eaten in all seasons. Staples are potatoes, onions cabbage, celery, carrot, apples and walnuts. Mushrooms and berries are collected as additions to the meal.

Home-made wine, brandy, sauerkraut, pickles, sausages, dried fruits and juices augment the diet. A healthy autumn meal may include blood sausage, potatoes, pickled turnips and dark bread. Slovenes also enjoy pastries, cakes and chocolate. Tea was once only used medicinally, but is now popular alongside coffee. Herbal teas are used for preventing or treating illness. Health spas are frequented and appreciated.

## Holidays & special days

New Years Day	
National Culture Day	8 February
Day of Uprising against Nazi Occupation	27 April
Labour Day	1-2 May
National Day	25 June
Reformation Day	31 October
Independence Day	26 December
Easter, Assumption Day, Day of the Dead and Christmas	25 Dec

# SOMALIA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

7,837,204 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 3.48%

Somali constitute 95% of the population. Minority groups include Hamari in Mogadishu, and a related Arabic-speaking people on the coast; Barawani, mostly farmers and fishermen of Swahili origin, and Bantu-speaking farmers along the Shebelle River.

### Resident in the ACT

21 born in Somalia (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The Somali language stems from the Cushitic language family. It has three distinctive dialects. Standard Somali with its diverse scripts based on clan affiliation, is now written in Latin script. Literacy has increased dramatically. English, Italian and Arabic are spoken by educated Somali.

### Religion

The large majority of Somali are Sunni Muslims. A small number are Christian. All towns have mosques, some of which are hundreds of years old.

### General attitudes

Most Somali have had little exposure to Western cultures, or any culture outside Somalia. Even though larger clans claim higher status, Somali consider themselves to be equal, and subservient to no-one but Allah. Unlike in some Muslim countries, women can own property and manage businesses, though they occupy an essential position in the extended family. Somali value self-reliance, respect and tradition. Expressions of gratitude are rare, since it involves reciprocal giving.

### Personal appearance

Somali people are tall and slender. Urban men wear Western-style pants or a flowing plaid *ma'awiis* or kilt. A colourful turban is wrapped around their head, or alternatively an embroidered cap or *koofiyad*. Rural men wear 5 yards of cloth wrapped around the lower body and the torso, or across the shoulder. The fashion for northern women is a long, flowing dress or *dirah* worn over petticoats. In the south, the favourite is the *guntino*, wrapped around the waist and tied over one shoulder. All women wear shawls and headscarves. Somali bathe often, and women henna their hair, giving it a reddish glow.

## CUSTOMS & COURTESIES

### Greetings

Somali greet friends by name, or for relatives, use a word showing their relationship, eg 'uncle, aunt, niece'. A common northern greeting is *Ma nahad baa* (Is there peace?) or in the south *nahad miya*. The Islamic greeting is *Asalaamu aleikum*. Men shake hands firmly with each other three times before placing their hand on their heart. In the south, many women shake hands with each other and then kiss the hand they have shaken. Somali usually do not touch members of the opposite sex.

### Gestures

The hands are used expressively in conversation. Sweeping hand and arm gestures accompany a statement, with the eyes following the direction of the hand movement. A quick twist of the open hand and wrist means nothing or no. A thumb under the chin indicates fullness. Snapping the fingers can mean 'long ago' or 'so on'.

## Visiting

Somali women traditionally socialise at the market or at home and in the street. There is no expectation of a gift when visiting. Visitors announce their presence before entering a family compound to give the hosts time to come out. Hosts usually serve sweet spicy tea with milk, and some other refreshments. A popular time to visit is late afternoon, when most work is finished and it is too hot to be outside. In country areas, night time is better. Men and women usually socialise separately. Tea shops are centres for men to interact and discuss political events.

## Eating

Other than in the immediate family, men and women often eat separately. In rural cafes, women may eat in a different area with the children. Men are traditionally served first, while women and children eat later. All diners wash their hands in a bowl of water before and after eating. People gather around a communal bowl or platter set on a mat, and eat only with the right hand from the portion directly in front of them. Guests are offered larger servings. The left hand is reserved for personal hygiene and therefore not to touch food. Overindulging in food is not acceptable.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Loyalty and devotion to the family is important, and families always help each other when in need. This help will be returned if there is a need at another time. Good deeds bring honour to the family, clan and society, and vice versa. Due to repeated drought, strict priority is given to an order of assistance. For example, the extended family of the father takes precedence. Children of urban relatives are taken in. Many urban dwellers have returned to their rural roots as clan hostility has increased.

## Dating & Marriage

The concept of dating does not exist in Somalia, but young people take part in traditional dances. Virginity is valued in women at the time of marriage. Arranged marriages are still common, with brides often much younger than the groom. Marriage to a cousin from the mother's side of the family, but different line, has been a way to form alliances between clans. This practice is now fading. Members of the same clan have been favoured for marriage. Both families celebrate the wedding with a large feast. Special foods may be served, including *muqmad* (dried beef in clarified butter) and dates. Some areas give the couple a seven day honeymoon. Divorce is legal.

## Diet

Locally produced meats and imported rice are on the urban table. In rural areas, the staples are sorghum, millet, corn and sesame. The nomadic peoples use milk for yoghurt, and meat from camels and goats, supplemented by grains traded for animals.

In the urban areas, people eat pancakes from flour or millet for breakfast, rice or millet served with milk and ghee for lunch, and a snack of milk or bean dish for supper. When herding animals away from home, nomads often do not eat lunch. Vegetables are not common, but seasonal fruit including mangoes, papaya, bananas, are plentiful. Fish is a staple in coastal regions.

## Holidays & special days

Islamic holy days include:

*Eid al Fitr* (3 day feast at the end of Ramadan)

*Eid al Adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice)

Mawliid (Mohammed's birthday)

Ancient Persian New Year (in many parts of Somalia)

# SOUTH AFRICA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

43,737,609 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.26%

### Resident in the ACT

924 born in South Africa (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

The languages spoken in South Africa are as diverse as its ethnic groups. Africans is the native tongue of about two-thirds of all whites and most of coloureds (8.6%), and English is the original language of most the whites (13.6%) and the Indians (2.6%). The black's (75.2%) native tongues include a variety of Bantu languages, which are roughly divided into four language families: Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga or Shangana and Venda.

### Religion

About 60 percent of blacks and most of whites and mixed race peoples are Christians, belonging primarily to the Dutch Reformed Church. English-speaking whites generally belong to other denominations.

### General attitudes

Today's South Africa and the attitudes of its people are both changing rapidly. Blacks generally value education as the key to a better life. They express optimism about the future and are anxious to exercise their rights and obligations in the new system. Mixed-race South Africans also benefit from the multiracial system. One thing that seems to unite all peoples in South Africa is the common claim they have to the country as home. They all want to work for a better future for that home.

### Personal appearance

Male South Africans may wear shorts with knee socks rather than trousers. Women generally wear comfortable dresses or long pants. Western-style clothing, usually lightweight cottons, is most common. Some rural blacks retain traditional clothing habits for special purposes or everyday attire.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Because of ethnic diversity, many different greetings are used in South Africa. English greetings such as "Hello" and "Good morning" are frequently heard. Shaking hands is more common among whites, but is also used by other ethnic groups. It is generally impolite to use first names with strangers or older people. Titles are valued and are used for adults unless one has developed a closer relationship. It is polite to call an older black man *tata* (father) or woman *mama* (mother)

### Gestures

When yawning, one hand should cover the mouth. Spitting in public is inappropriate. Among some ethnic groups, it is not polite to gesture with the left hand. For many, it is polite to receive something with both hands cupped together rather than just one hand. Indicating "two" or "peace" by forming a "V" with the index and middle fingers in very rude if the palm faces inward. Facing the palm outward is acceptable.

### Visiting

Visiting is an important social activity for most groups. When possible, visits are arranged in advance, but unannounced visits among good friends or relatives are common. South Africans are very hospitable to guests. Guests are usually served refreshments by their hosts. Among most people, dinner guests are not expected to bring a gift but will often bring something to drink.

## Eating

The continental style of eating is generally observed by urban South Africans. In rural areas, people often eat with spoons or their fingers. It is generally not appropriate for adults to eat on the street unless eating ice cream or standing at a vendor's stand.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Family life among the white population is similar to that of middle-class Europeans. Families are small and live as a nuclear unit. They are generally close-knit and enjoy a good standard living. In black families children are taught to respect their elders and obey their parents. The extended family plays an important role in caring for children and providing support to those in need.

### Diet

The South African diet is often determined by a person's economic status. Beef, mutton, a variety of curries, green vegetables, pumpkins, and other foods are eaten. Staples include potatoes and rice. South Africa produces a great variety of food. Dinner, usually eaten after 6 pm, is the main meal.

### Holidays & Special Days

Human Rights Day	21 March
Freedom Day	27 April
Worker's Day	1 May
Youth Day	17 June
National Women's Day	9 August
Heritage Day	24 September
Kruger Day	10 October
Day of Reconciliation	16 December

# SPAIN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

40,091,525 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.10%

### Resident in the ACT

576 born in Spain (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

There are four official languages in Spain. The first, Castilian Spanish, is the main language of business and government. The other languages include Catalan (17 percent), Galician (7 percent), and Basque (2 percent). English can be heard in tourist centres, and many Spaniards know some French.

### Religion

Spain has historically been a Roman Catholic nation and 99 percent of the people are baptized members. All aspects of Spanish life are influenced by deep-rooted catholic traditions. Freedom of religion was granted in the 1970s, opening the way for many Spaniards to begin joining other churches. One percent of the population is involved with other (mostly Christian) religious groups. Some Muslims and Jews also reside in Spain.

### General attitudes

The Spanish are generally friendly, helpful, and individualistic. They enjoy conversation and giving advice. The Spanish often consider it their duty to correct "errors" as they see them in others. Along with the spirit of individualism comes a strong sense of personal pride. Spanish people feel it is very important to project an impression of affluence and social position. Appearance is extremely important. Regional pride and devotion are strong and increasingly expressed

### Personal appearance

The Spanish are concerned with dress. Style and quality of clothing are important indicators of a person's status and respectability. Men usually dress conservatively, avoiding flashy or bright colours. Women try to be stylish and children are dressed as nicely as possible. Many colourful regional costumes are sometimes worn for festivities.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The usual greeting by Spanish males is a handshake. Good friends often add a pat on the back and, if they have not seen each other for sometime, and *abrazo* (hallo).

Women also shake hands when greeting others, but close female friends also kiss each other on the cheek. A slight embrace and kiss on the cheek are also used among women when parting. Family names and titles, such as *Senor* (Mr) *Senora* (Mrs), and *Senora* (Miss) may be used to address older people or professionals.

### Visiting

When invited to someone's home, a person may decline at first, because the invitation may be only a polite courtesy. If the hosts insist on a visit, then it may be accepted. Guests invited to a home usually expect to stay from one to two hours. It is polite for a guest to take or send flowers, especially if the visit is a dinner invitation or if someone is ill. On special occasions, hosts might give gifts to guests, which are opened immediately in the presence of the host.

### Eating

In a formal dinner, the host or hostess indicates the seating arrangements. Ladies and older people are seated first. Compliments on the meal are welcome. The continental style of eating is followed. Hands are kept above the



table at all times and are not placed in the lap during the meal. It is considered bad manners for adults to eat while walking down the street.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family is very important in Spain. Divorce rates are low. The average family has two children. The father is traditionally the undisputed head of the home. Generally the wife is responsible for caring for the house and children, although many living in urban areas also work outside the home. About one-third of the labour force is female.

### Dating & Marriage

Dating usually begins around age 14 with group activities. Couples begin dating at about age 18, although in some areas couples only date if they plan to marry. Rather than call on a girl at her home, a boy often meets a girl at a prearranged site. Potential spouses must usually be approved by parents. The average marriage age for men is 27, while women marry between 20 and 24.

### Diet

Typical Spanish food includes fresh vegetables, meat, eggs, chicken, and fish. Most fried foods are cooked in olive oil. Breakfast is generally a light meal of coffee or hot chocolate, bread and jam, or sometimes *churros* (a batter made of flour and butter, deep-fried and sprinkled with sugar). A substantial meal is eaten at about 2.00 pm, usually including soup, a salad, a dish consisting of some kind of fish, a main dish, and fresh fruit. Around 5.00-6.00 pm Spaniards eat a snack (*merienda*), usually a sandwich or sweet bread or crackers with tea or hot milk. Dinner is usually at 9.00 - 10.00 pm and is not as large as the midday meal.

### Holidays & Special Days

St Joseph the Workman	1 May
King Juan Carlos Saint's Day	24 June
National Day	12 October
Constitution Day	6 December
Catholic holidays and Saint's days, <i>fiestas</i>	

# SRI LANKA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

19,634,392 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.87%  
Ethnic composition: 74% Sinhalese, 18% Tamil, 7% Moor, 1% Burgher, Malay and Veddha

### Resident in the ACT

1410 born in Sri Lanka (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Both Sinhala and Tamil are official languages in Sri Lanka. Although the use of English is declining, about 10 percent of the population speaks it.

### Religion

Nearly 70 percent of the population practices Buddhism. Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the constitution. About 15 percent of the people practice Hinduism. The moors are mostly Muslims, while 8 percent of the population is Christian. There are small Sufi minorities that have been forbidden from practising their faith.

### General attitudes

Sri Lankans are friendly and have relatively open attitudes. While some groups seek independence, people in general seek peace, unity, and economic development for the entire population.

### Personal appearance

Although the youth and people in the cities wear Western-style clothing, traditional forms of dress remain popular. With variation two basic styles of apparel for men and women are found. Women may wear a *saree* with a tight blouse. The saree is one very long piece of fabric draped over the shoulder and wrapped at the waist in a way that creates tailoring without being sewn. Traditional attire for men may include loose-fitting trousers combined with a long shirt that reaches to mid-thigh. Men might also wear a *sarong* (a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, sometimes held by a belt or *lungi*).

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Forms of greeting vary between different ethnic groups. The traditional greeting of placing one's palms together under the chin and bowing the head slightly is widely practiced. A Western handshake is also acceptable. Titles are important to Sri Lankans, and it is proper to address acquaintances by their titles.

### Gestures

Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands. As with many Asian cultures, the head is considered the most sacred part of the body; the bottom of the feet are the least sacred. One should not touch a person's head, nor should one use one's foot to point at a person or an object. Women are forbidden to touch a Buddhist monk. Pointing with the index finger is impolite. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers with the palm facing down.

### Visiting

Sri Lankans are very hospitable. If refreshments are offered by the hosts, it is impolite to refuse them. In some homes, it may be appropriate to remove one's shoes before entering. At Buddhist temples, shoes are removed.

## Eating

The different religions of the country play a large role in determining what is and is not eaten. Sri Lankans of all religious groups seek to avoid those things that would cause spiritual pollution. Because food enters the body, it is considered a prime source of potential pollution. Those that adhere strictly to Buddhist doctrines, do not eat flesh of any kind. Some Buddhists, however, include fish or eggs in their diet. Hindus do not eat beef or pork, and Muslims do not eat pork.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

Traditionally, the various caste systems of each ethnic group have governed family patterns and relationships. Even with the declining influence of the caste system, the family remain the central social unit in all Sri Lankan societies. The wife manages the affairs of the household and has influence in all family matters. The elderly receive deep respect and younger family members often yield to their advice and counsel. Children expect to care for their elderly parents if necessary.

### Dating & Marriage

Although individual choice of marriage is found among more Westernised circles, traditional practices of arranging marriages still prevail in Sri Lanka. Marriage outside of one's caste traditionally had religious taboos associated with it, but this tradition is fading as Sri Lanka modernises. Sexual purity is an essential part of the marriage contract on the part of the woman. Marriage between members of different ethnic groups is now very common in modern Sri Lanka.

### Diet

Rice is the staple in the Sri Lankan diet and is the basic food for all meals. Each ethnic group is known for its own dishes, but each has also borrowed from the others over time; thus, Sri Lankan cuisine is a combination of all the different types. A variety of curries are popular, from mild to very spicy. Sri Lankans typically consume little meat, but they do eat large amounts of pulses (peas and beans) and nuts. Tea is served with most meals and as refreshment.

### Holidays & Special Days

Independence Commemoration Day	4 February
May Day	1 May
Hindu, Muslim and Christian holidays	

# SUDAN

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

The population is 37,426,240 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.79%

### Resident in the ACT

37 born in Sudan (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Arabic is spoken by about half the people, but it is the official language. Many dialects are spoken throughout the country. Arabic Juba is a unique dialect used in southern urban areas for communicating between different ethnic groups. Other languages spoken are Nubian, Dinka, Azanda, Bari, Nuer and Shilluk. Those with education speak good English.

### Religion

The majority of Sudanese are Sunni Muslim (70%), living mainly in the central and north areas. Five percent of the population, living in the south, are Christian. Some of the population follows indigenous animist beliefs. Religious loyalties have a significant role in Sudanese politics.

### General attitudes

Sudanese from the north are inclined to be polite, reserved, and cautious. They view whatever happens as the will of God presenting challenges. Sudanese value good humour, courtesy and strong family ties. The society is highly stratified, with respect given to those with wealth and status. Power may be reflected in having a government position, coming from a respected family, being a religious leader or being a chief (in the south). Rural wealth is measured by the size of one's herd (cattle among Africans, sheep, goats, camels for Arabs). Educated people earn respect as they are likely to obtain good positions.

### Personal appearance

Western clothing is worn by urban men in the north, but traditional *jalabia* (long white robes) and *imma* (turbans) are worn in the towns as well as rural areas. Women need to cover themselves from head to ankle when in public (*hijab*). Southern men and women wear Western attire, and jewellery is a sign of affluence. Most women wear attractive locally made earrings and beads.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The northern Sudanese tend to be more formal than those from the South. Arabs greet with a light handshake to members of the same sex, and friends often embrace. A Muslim man does not touch a Muslim women in public. The common greeting is salaam *aleykom* (Peace be with you). Good friends sometimes exchange a casual *Salaam*. In the south, friends or relatives shake hands when greeting. Generally, a verbal greeting is used. However, both men and women shake hands. The Bari phrases are *Do pure* (good morning) or *do parana* (good afternoon).

### Gestures

The left hand is never used for eating, and both hands should be used for passing items between people. Pointing with a finger is not polite, and in the north it is rude to point the sole of one's feet towards someone. Nodding the head downward means 'yes', and nodding up means 'no'.

### Visiting

In the north, visiting among friends and relatives is seen as important in building and mending relationships. Visiting usually takes place in the home, with close friends and family visiting spontaneously. Arrangements are

made if the person is less known. Religious holidays and special events offer the best opportunity for relaxed gatherings. It is considered best to visit mid-morning or evening, because at other times people may be sleeping or eating. Men and women generally socialise separately. Children are requested to play away from adults to enable conversation. Guests are served tea, coffee, soft drink or water, and when visiting for the first time, short stays are best.

For Sudanese in the South, visiting is extremely important in maintaining the extended family and social networks. Hosts will sometimes prepare a meal of goat, sheep or chicken for valued guests. In most cases, light refreshments are served. Short, casual visits are commonly exchanged between relatives and friends. Men and women often socialise together at social functions.

## Eating

Two meals a day is the norm across Sudan, though urban residents eat three meals when they can afford to do so. Dinner (evening) is the main meal, and it is shared by the family. Men and boys generally eat separate from girls and women. People wash their hands before and after a meal, and only the right hand is used for eating. Families do not often eat at restaurants. The food is often expensive, and of a lesser quality.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The Sudanese family is based around the extended family, and is headed by males. Three generations of males and their wives and children live in the same household or compound. Men are responsible for the herd, earning an income and leading the family in discipline. Children are punished harshly if they shame the family. Women clean and cook, look after young children and help with the farm and garden. They may also collect firewood and water. Women do not leave the house for 40 days after giving birth. Southern women in general have more equality with men than women in the North.

### Dating & Marriage

Northern marriages are still arranged between cousins within families. A couple may usually however, refuse the match. The groom's family must pay a dowry to the bride's family, preferably as cash. Wedding celebrations last for days, and both families host feasts and parties. Young people in the south meet at markets, dances, schools and church functions. They are often permitted to go out together, but parents become involved when engagement takes place. Grooms also pay a dowry, often cattle or cash. The divorce rate is very low in Sudan.

### Diet

Where possible, Sudanese people like to eat beef, chicken, goat or mutton to supplement the staples of millet, sorghum, and maize. In higher rainfall areas, cassava, potatoes, peanuts, mangoes and papaya are eaten. Other locally grown foods include guavas, grapes, bananas, okra, carrots, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, citrus and pineapples. A thinly layered food made from flour paste (*kisra*) and thin bread with lentils, peas, tomatoes and cheese is called *fatta*. Although alcohol is officially prohibited, southern Sudanese often drink a sorghum beer called *marisa*. Many families suffer from malnutrition in some regions.

### Holidays & special days

National holidays are set by the Gregorian (Western) calendar, while Islamic holidays are set by the lunar calendar. In the north:

Independence Day	1 January
Unity Day	3 March
Labour Day	1 May

Islamic days:

Id-al-fitr (feast at the end of ramadan)  
Id-al-Adha (feast of the Sacrifice)  
Muhammad's birthday.

# THAILAND

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

61,797,715 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:0.91%  
Ethnic groups include 75% Thai, 14% Chinese, 11% other, including Khmer, Akha and Mon minorities.

### Resident in the ACT

697 born in Thailand (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Central Thai is the official language and is used in schools, with other Thai dialects being spoken in various regions of the country. Thai is a tonal language, meaning that a given syllable can have different meanings depending on the inflection with which it is pronounced. Central Thai has five tones. Chinese and Malay are spoken by many people.

### Religion

Although Thailand guarantees freedom of religion, and many religions are represented in the country, 95 percent of the population is Theravada Buddhist. Muslims compose about 4 percent of the population. There is also a small number of Christians in Thailand.

### General attitudes

Thailand means "Land of the Free" and the Thais are proud of the fact that their country has avoided foreign rule throughout its long history. The king and Queen are the most respected and honoured persons in Thailand, and Thai would be offended by any joke or ill reference to them. Even images of the King are treated with respect. It is illegal to say or write anything offensive to royalty. Traditionally, success is measured by a person's wealth and education. Wealth is generally looked on as a reflection of virtue. Thais are a reserved people and usually consider criticism of others to be poor taste. A sense of humour, laughter, and a pleasant, smiling attitude are highly regarded.

### Personal appearance

While Western clothing is common in most areas, especially Bangkok, traditional clothing is also often worn. Men and women frequently wear straw hats because of the heat. Sandals are popular, but shoes are worn in formal situations.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The traditional and most common greeting in Thailand is called the wai. How the gesture is performed depends entirely on the relationship between the people, and there are many variations. Generally a person places the palms of the hands together, with fingers extended at chest level, and bows slightly. The younger person greets first, and the more senior person responds with a *wai* in a lower position. The higher one's hands are placed, the more respect is shown. Bows and curtsies are also more pronounced to show greater respect. The fingertips only go above the level of the eyebrows to reverence Buddha or to greet royalty. It is an insult to not return a *wai*, unless there is great social or age distance between the two people. Thais address each other by their first names, preceded by Khun, and reserve surnames for formal occasions.

### Gestures

A person's head is considered sacred and one should neither touch another's head nor pass an object over it. Parents pat their children's heads, but this is the only exception. People try to keep the level of their heads below that of social superiors. The bottoms of the feet are the least sacred part of the body and should never be

pointed in the direction of another person. Thais avoid stamping their feet, touching people with them, or using them to move or point at objects. It is usually offensive to cross the legs while sitting in a chair, especially in the presence of an older person. Placing one's arm over the back of the chair in which another person is sitting is offensive. Men and women generally do not touch or show affection in public. Women must never touch images of Buddha or a Buddhist monk or offer to shake hands. Items especially gifts, are passed and received with the right hand only, never the left.

## Visiting

Thais are very hospitable hosts and enjoy having visitors. The person of highest social rank or age is treated with the greatest respect. In all cases, how one sits, walks, or otherwise interacts with others depends on the status of each person present. It is customary to remove one's shoes when entering a Buddhist temple or private home. It is not necessary to take gifts when visiting, but it is not uncommon for guests on extended stays to present their hosts with a gift of appreciation. In the home, people commonly sit on the floor. One does not stretch out their feet in front of them. Women generally tuck their legs to the side and behind them and men sit cross-legged.

## Eating

Thais use forks and spoons at the dining table. They hold the spoon in the right hand and the fork in the left. Chopsticks are used with noodle dishes and in Chinese homes. Guests usually receive a second helping of food and are encouraged to eat as much as they can. Diners choose small portions from various dishes at the centre of the table to eat with rice. Water, the standard mealtime drink, is drunk at the end of the meal. When one is finished, utensils are placed together on the plate.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Thai families are close, and several generations may live in the same household. The oldest male is customarily the patriarch of the family. Members of the family (even adults) are usually expected to abide by the advice of their elders, although this is becoming less true with time and modernisation. Thais have great respect for their parents and the elderly. Families usually have two or three children. A family's youngest daughter inherits the parents' home. In return, she and her husband care for the parents in their old age.

## Dating & Marriage

In Thailand, girls have traditionally led a more sheltered life than boys, but this is no longer the case. Boys and girls generally have equal access to society. Although western style dating is popular in Bangkok, it is not as common in rural areas. According to tradition, if a boy wishes to marry a girl, he must first become well acquainted with the entire family and make himself agreeable to them. He then sends his parents to the girl's family to make his wishes known. The groom traditionally pays a bride price to the bride's parents as "compensation" for raising her. Some parents later return the items or cash to the couple as a wedding gift.

## Diet

Rice is the staple food of Thailand. It is usually served with spicy dishes that consist of meat, vegetables, fish, eggs, and fruits. Curries and pepper sauces are popular. Typical meats include beef, chicken, and pork. Thai cuisine is a combination of cultural influences, renowned for its fine flavours.

## Holidays & Special Days

Labour Day	1 May
Coronation Day	5 May
Queen's Birthday	12 August
King's Birthday	5 December
Constitution Day	10 December

# THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

499,584 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:2.98%

### Resident in the ACT

19 born in Solomon Islands (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

While English is the official language, there are 65 indigenous languages spoken in the Solomons. Solomon Island Pijin enables islanders from differing language groups to communicate. The vocabulary is basically English, but the grammar is Melanesian.

93% are Melanesians, 4% are Polynesian, and some Micronesians re-settled from the Gilbert Islands.

### Religion

The majority of Islanders are Christian. The Church of Melanesia (Anglican) has a following of 34%. There are 19% Roman Catholic, 17% Baptist, 11% United Methodist/Presbyterian, and 10% Seventh Day Adventist. Four per cent of the population practice pre-Christian worship rituals, including a belief in ancestral spirits.

### General attitudes

The essence of village life and welfare is the *wantok* or 'one talk' system. Wantoks, who are people of the same language, village or extended family, share their belongings and give help as needed. When a woman is sick, a wantok may do the gardening and look after the children till she is well. If the wantok runs short of supplies, he or she may request help in return. This system works well at the village level, but is more challenging in an urban setting. Solomon Islanders place a high value on family and children, their relationship with the land and do not like to be hurried. A third part, perhaps a chief, will resolve disputes.

### Personal appearance

Dress is casual, with men wearing shorts and T-shirts, and women wearing T-shirts and below-the-knee skirts. Men and women often wear *lavalavas* (large rectangular pieces of cloth with different wrapping options). Children below four years old usually do not wear clothing. Adults like to wear jewellery such as hair combs, armbands, necklaces made from shells, teeth of porpoises and flying foxes. Flowers can be tucked behind the ear or braided into the hair.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Villagers greet one another by their first names in their language, or in pijin if they are from different language groups. A common greeting is: Where have you come from or where are you going? With strangers, formal titles are used, like 'Mr' or 'Mrs'. One greets a chief according to one's familiarity with him. When arriving at a village, it is expected that one informs the chief of the nature of the visit and length of time of the stay.

### Gestures

Facial expression is a vital part of conversation for Solomon Islanders. When eyebrows are quickly raised, this indicates agreement. Pointing is not done with the hand, but with pursed lips, and chin gesture. Clicking the tongue may suggest disapproval or concern. To beckon, one waves the fingers of one hand with palm down. Shouting is not polite, but nose-picking or spitting in public are not seen as offensive. Male or female friends may hold hands or walk arm in arm, but not members of the opposite sex. Women cross or fold their legs under them in the company of men. Taboos include stepping over a man, or for a man to go under a woman's clothing, eg a man will not walk under a clothesline.



## Visiting

Visiting is a key part of life on the Solomon Islands. Formal invitations are only made for a feast, although townfolk may let people know of a proposed visit. It is good to call out on approaching a house. Customarily, one takes off the shoes at the door. Women visit women, and men visit men as a general rule. People gather outside on the veranda. The visit is about *stori*, or conversation. Tea and food will be offered if prepared.

## Eating

Village breakfast may consist of the left-overs from last night's meal. Tea, coffee and Milo are used more by urban residents. At midday, rural Islanders working in the gardens eat freshly cooked food over the fire, or cooked food from home. The main meal is generally after sunset, will probably include a staple like cassava, sweet potato, fish, vegetables and fruit. Families tend to sit together on the floor of an open-air kitchen or veranda. Traditionally, grace is said before eating. Food is covered with towels or leaves before it is served. One may eat with fingers, or use utensils. The mother and elder girls serve the meal, giving the first serve to the men. Guests will eat with the father, while women and children eat elsewhere. It is etiquette for speeches to be made by the host, reciprocated by the visitor.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The family unit consists of both parents and their children. The members of the extended family keep close ties. Generally, men are responsible for earning an income, fishing, clearing gardens and building the house. Traditional houses are made from sago leaves lashed to a bamboo frame. Modern homes are timber-framed with glass windows and steel rooves. These are more lasting, but harder to keep cool. Women usually maintain the gardens, gather and prepare food and firewood, care for young children, and undertake household tasks. Children will help after the age of five.

## Dating & Marriage

The traditional marriages were arranged by the wantoks. The groom's family customarily paid the bride's parents a bride-price of shell money, pigs or root crops. Now, young people choose their own partners, and it is more accepted to marry outside your language group. The bride-price is still important on some islands. It may include some modern goods such as mattresses, sewing machines, or watches. The groom's wantok often prepares a generous feast of pig, fish and root crops the day before the wedding. The groom is led in a procession to the bride's village, where respected elders exchange the bride-price. The bride has a tearful farewell to her family. A Christian ceremony usually takes place later, with the bride in white and the groom in a black suit.

## Diet

A large proportion of the food is grown in family gardens, or wild food from the forest. Staples include cassava, sweet potato, taro, and yam. Leafy greens include pumpkin and taro leaves, watercress, ferns and slippery cabbage. Fish, pork, wild nuts and eggs provide the protein in the diet. Pigs and chickens are bred for special occasions, and wild pigs are hunted. Coconut water can be drunk before it is ripened. Fruit is in abundant supply, and includes bananas, papaya, mangoes, breadfruit, pineapples, bush limes and lemons, and guava. Women cook food over open fires or in stone/earth ovens.

## Holidays

Christmas  
New Year's Day (celebrated by dunking people in water)  
Easter (Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Monday)  
Queen Elizabeth II's birthday (second Friday in June)  
Independence Day 7 July  
Liberation Day (last Monday in August with the preceding Saturday)  
National Thanksgiving Day 26 December  
Each province also has an annual feast.

# TONGA

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

106,721 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 1.79%

### Resident in the ACT

138 born in Tonga (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Tongan is the language used for everyday communication, while Tongan and English are both official languages. The majority of Tongans are of Polynesian descent. Tongan is spelt with a Latin script, and sounds the way it looks.

### Religion

Christianity is the practiced by most Tongans, and incorporated into daily life. The official State church is Free Wesleyan. The king is the head of the church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is a relatively new, fast growing church. There are also significant numbers of Roman Catholics, Independence Church of Tonga and Church of Tonga.

### General attitudes

Tongans are understandably proud of their independent nation, their royal heritage and the Polynesian culture. The 'Tongan way of life' is relaxed and unhurried. Tongans place people and relationships, especially with family and village, over Western performance drive. Tongans can be generous, gentle and friendly, valuing respectful behaviour toward elders. Men and women who drink or smoke to excess are not regarded as good role models. Young people are drawn to pursuing a Western lifestyle, and are tending to look for jobs outside Tonga.

### Personal appearance

Women generally avoid wearing short skirts or low-necked dresses, as modesty is valued. It is a law that males over 16 must wear shirts. The word for clothes is *valas*. Traditional attire is worn on formal occasions. This means a *tupenus*, a calf-length wrap-around cloth for men, and for women a *kiekie* (ankle-length skirt). Both men and women wear a *ta'ovala*. Western dress is commonly worn now.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

People in Tonga greet each other with a handshake or a warm verbal greeting. Men often hold the handshake a few seconds while conversing. *Hallo* (*malo e lelei*) is the usual form of greeting, with variations for good morning and good evening. Visitors are often greeted with *talitali fiefia* (welcome!). It is customary to use the first name for acquaintances, but when meeting for the first time the title and family name may be used as a show of respect.

### Gestures

Physical gestures are important in communicating. Raising the eyebrows can indicate agreement. Beckoning is only appropriate for children. A downward arm movement can mean 'come here'. A forward and upward wave means 'good-bye'. Boys and younger men often walk hand in hand to express friendship. Displays of affection between males and females are not encouraged. Crossing the legs at the knee is appropriate when sitting.

## Visiting

Tongan society is close-knit, and social interaction is part of the fabric. People always greet each other when passing. Women usually keep company with other women. Relatives and neighbours often visit each other on Sunday afternoon after Church. Visits during the week are unplanned. However, if a resident feels their house is not ready for visitors, they may not invite them in. People remove their shoes at the door, and are shown to the best seats. In a traditional home, men sit cross-legged on the floor, and women have their legs tucked under them to one side. Children stay out of sight as far as possible. Refreshments such as coconut, *otai* (a mix of cut fruit) are served. It is common to invite guests to stay for lunch, and to make a speech praising the visitors before they leave. Compliments are enjoyed, but if one admires an object too much, the host may feel obliged to offer it to the visitor. A gift may be offered to a new or honoured guest, and it is important to accept this gift.

## Eating

Whenever possible, families eat meals together. Residents of outer islands sit on woven mats, while urban Tongans use dining tables. Traditionally, the hands are used to eat, but utensils are in common use now. Standing while eating and drinking is frowned upon.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Tongan families are very sociable, and they care for one another in every situation. The family unit consists not only of parents and siblings, but grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Often, many members of the extended family work together to plant, fish or harvest and cook. A young married couple tends to live with the woman's parents, and the husband is responsible for feeding the family. The average number of children is four.

Traditionally, the head of the family is the father, and the mother is not equal. However, brothers are subordinate to sisters at the same age. The eldest daughter therefore receives has the first pick of family resources. A father's elder sister is the leader over the nuclear family. While the type of housing varies from coconut leaf and timber to modern framed house, nearly all Tongans own their own home.

## Dating & Marriage

There is little interaction between boys and girls during adolescence. Teenagers meet at church groups or village activities. Traditionally, a boy is only allowed to date a girl in the girl's home. The boy may ask a girl to share kava (a mild stimulant made from roots) with friends.

Marriages are celebrated with great joy for the entire community. The religious affiliation determines the kind of ceremony, but festivities include a feast, singing and many speeches. The married couple may move in with the bride's parents, but most set themselves up elsewhere.

## Diet

The tradition for Tongans includes two meals a day, consisting of yams, taro leaves, sweet potatoes, cassava, fish or pork. The European style is becoming popular, with three meals a day. Roast pig is a favourite for feasts and celebrations. There is an abundant supply of tropical fruit such as mango, guavas, citrus, papaya, watermelon, bananas, avocados, peppers and cabbage.

## Holidays & special days

The Crown Prince's Birthday	4 May
Emancipation Day	4 June
Birthday of King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV	4 July
Constitution Day	4 November
King George Tupou 1 Day	4 December
Christams Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, Easter	

# TURKEY

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

67,596,349 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 1.24%  
Ethnic groups are Turkish 85%, 12% Kurd, 3% other.

### Resident in the ACT

148 born in Turkey (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Turkish is the official language of the country. Some people of Kurdish origin speak Kurdish. A small number of people also speak Arabic. English, German and French are spoken as the second language in cities and more often German in small towns.

### Religion

98 percent of Turkey's population is Sunni Muslim. The remaining is Orthodox Christian and Jewish.

### General attitudes

Turkey is often described as a bridge between East and West. Due to centuries of interaction with Europe and Asia, Turks have incorporated features from both areas into their lifestyle and thinking. At the same time, they are patriotic and have developed a unique society. The people are proud of the achievements of their modern state as well as the accomplishments of their ancestors, who ruled great empires. Individually, Turks prize a good sense of humour; it is considered a sign of intelligence. Group orientation is valued over personal assertiveness or aggression, and honesty and intelligence are admirable qualities. People value a good education, secure employment, social status, and an honourable heritage.

### Personal appearance

Western-style clothing is most common. European fashions are especially popular among the youth. Some traditional clothing is still worn in rural areas or for special occasions. Costumes differ according to region. The design of the costume's headdress and the type of material used signify a person's social status.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

When greeting friends or strangers, one shake hands and says *Nasilsiniz* (how are you?) or *Merhaba* (Hello). Greetings are followed among friends by polite inquiries about one's health, family, and work. Among close friends of the same, and sometimes opposite, gender, Turks clasp hands and kiss on both cheeks when greeting. To show respect to an older person, their hands may be kissed and touched to the greeter's forehead. The youth often greet each other with *Salam*. Upon joining a small group, one greets each person in the group individually. When addressing others formally, professional titles are used. In urban areas, strangers passing on the street are not generally greeted, but rural people are more likely to greet the person.

### Gestures

Turks generally use their hands a great deal during conversation, forming gestures that add meaning and emphasis. Social courtesies are valued in Turkey. One does not put feet on a desk or table, point the sole of the foot toward another person, smoke without asking permission, or cross the legs while in the presence of an older or superior person. It is not proper for adults to eat or smoke on the street. Public displays of affection are not acceptable.

## Visiting

Turks enjoy visiting one another in their homes, and hospitality is an integral part of the culture. Many Turks remove their shoes when entering a home and replace them with slippers. Guests are expected to do the same at homes where this custom is followed. Visitors are expected to bring a pleasant presence to the home; bad news or accounts of problems are saved for other occasions and locations. It is not polite to ask personal questions of hosts. First-time visitors to a home may bring a small gift, such as candy, fruit, or flowers. Turks work hard to make their guests feel comfortable .

## Eating

Breakfast is usually eaten around 7 am., although earlier in rural areas. Lunch is at midday and dinner is around 7 pm. Dinner is the main meal, and the family generally expects to sit down together for this meal. Many foods are eaten with the fingers. When utensils are used, the continental style of eating is followed.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The primary social unit in Turkey is the family. An individual is loyal to and dependent upon the family. The Turkish household is often extended, consisting of a mother and father, their unmarried children and in some cases, married sons with their families. The married sons remain until they are financially independent. It is uncommon for a person to live alone, mostly for economic reasons. Polygamy, as permitted by Islamic law, was abolished in 1930. Women gained the right to vote and the right to divorce in 1934 when civil marriage contracts were introduced. Urban women frequently work outside the home.

## Dating & Marriage

Except perhaps at universities or in large urban areas, dating in the Western sense is not common. Young people associate more in groups. It is against the law for women to marry before age 15, and men before age 17. The average age for marriage is 22 for women and 25 for men. Most Turks expect to marry and have children.

## Diet

Turkish cuisine is among the finest in the world. Lamb and rice are served with many meals. Turkish bread is popular in countries across the world. The famous *kahve* (Turkish coffee), a thick brew served in very small cups, is served with nearly every meal. Breakfast is usually light, consisting of tea, white cheese, bread, butter, marmalade or honey, and olives. The main meal of the day is eaten in the evening and may consist of several courses. *Shish kebabs* (chunks of lamb on a skewer) are a favourite, as are vegetables prepared in olive oil.

## Holidays & Special Days

National Sovereignty & Children's Day	23 April
Spring Day	1 May
Youth & Sports Day	19 May
Victory Day	30 August
Republic Day	29 October
Muslim Holy Days	

# UKRAINE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

48,251,976 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:-0.78%

### Resident in the ACT

158 born in Ukraine (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Ukrainian is the official language. It is a Slavic language with a Cyrillic alphabet of 33 letters. Russian was also an official language during the Soviet period, and it is still widely spoken by the ethnic Russians. More than half the population is bilingual. Minorities including Polish, Hungarian and Romanian speak their own language. Ethnic minorities now have the legal right to use their own language in public and judicial matters.

### Religion

The dominant religion in Ukraine is Christianity, primarily Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic. Many people left their religious affiliation during the communist era. After Independence, other churches also began. Ukraine is home to a number of sacred Jewish sites.

### General attitudes

Ukrainians see themselves as a lively and happy people, with a liking for song and dance. They appreciate wit and humour, and also now individualism. Neighbourhood ties are strong, and friendship is valued highly. Ukrainian society is in great transition, since the work patterns are now changing with the private enterprise. There is now some disenchantment with the reform process.

### Personal appearance

The Ukrainians generally follow European fashions. Professional men wear suits, ties and hats, while women wear suits, dresses and skirts. Most clothing is imported and therefore expensive, but many women sew the clothing for their families. Scarves, caps and jumpers are also knitted for the long winter. It is considered improper to wear wrinkled or untidy clothing. The older generation dress conservatively, and women in rural areas cover their heads with scarves. On special occasions such as weddings, Ukrainians bring out their traditional outfit, with a focus on the embroidered shirt (*vyshyvanka*) in several regional patterns.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Informal greetings are usually a wave of the hand and a verbal greeting like Hi (*Pryvit*). 'Good day' or *dobryj den* can be used in both formal and informal settings. People shake hands in a formal meeting. Men may wait for the woman to extend her hand first. Titles are important in formal introductions.

Close friends and family members usually kiss both cheeks and hug when meeting, and address each other by their first name. To show respect, one uses the first name followed by the father's given name and a gender-specific suffix.

### Gestures

It is important to make eye contact occasionally, but hand and body gestures are kept to a minimum in daily conversation. Expressions are reserved, and smiling at a stranger is unusual. One nods the head to express approval or agreement. Pointing with the index finger is not polite, but it is still done by some people. Speaking to an elder or person of higher status with hands in the pockets or arms folded is very disrespectful. Chewing gum is

not courteous. Men still open doors for women, and offer to carry heavy items, or to give up their seat on public transport.

## Visiting

There is a strong tradition of hospitality in Ukraine, and people welcome both expected and unexpected visitors. However, people prefer to receive advance notice when possible. When friends, neighbours and relatives visit, tea and coffee are always served with some light refreshments. An abundance of food is served to the invited dinner guest, and one is expected to stay for a while after the meal. Guests often give flowers (in odd numbers), cake or a bottle of liquor to the hosts. Chocolate, sweets or toys may be given to children. It is etiquette to stand when a woman enters the room.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

The role of the extended family is important in Ukraine. An average family is headed by the father and has two children. Both parents usually work outside the home, but child-care is expensive and hard to find. For this reason, many elderly parents live with adult children to offer care of the children. Women generally undertake the household responsibilities.

The elderly receive great respect and care. They often support their children into adulthood, and in return expect to be looked after when frail. Most urban families live in small apartments, many of which are privately owned due to recent housing programs.

## Dating & Marriage

Young people go out together to movies, dances or bars. From April to October they enjoy spending time at parks, and engaging in outdoor activities. Couples commonly marry in their early twenties. A marriage needs to be performed in a public hall or 'wedding palace' to be legal. Many have a religious ceremony as well. Urban wedding parties are often formal, but in rural areas weddings are huge events lasting up to three days. In these events, celebration is combined with performance of traditional acts. For example, a highlight is when the bride must be 'stolen', with the 'thieves' demanding a ransom for her return.

## Diet

The staple foods in Ukraine are breads, dairy products, vegetables and starchy foods. Corn on the cob is popular in Ukraine, unusual for Europe. The most liked meats are pork and beef, but poultry, sausages and preserved meats are widely enjoyed.

The most popular dishes in Ukraine are based on cereal grains and flour pastes, based on buckwheat, oats and millet. Common dishes include dumplings (*varenyky*), cabbage leaves stuffed with minced meat and rice (*holubsti*). Cooked or baked cereal is called kasha. Chicken Kiev is an internationally known dish, and borsch is a common accompaniment. There are several variations according to region. Fresh produce is available in summer, but very expensive in the winter months. Preserves are common in winter.

## Public Holidays & special days

New Years' Day	
Christmas	25 December for Catholics and 7 January for Orthodox Christians)
Easter (occasion for painted eggs and special cakes)	
International Women's Day	8 March
Solidarity Day	1 May
Victory Day	9 May
Independence Day	24 August

# VIETNAM

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

81,488,736 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 1.45%  
The ethnic composition is 85-90% Vietnamese (Kinh), 3% Chinese, and other minorities. Minorities include the Mong, Dzay and Black Thai groups.

### Resident in the ACT

2209 born in Vietnam (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Vietnamese is the official language, although there are distinct northern, central, and southern dialects and accents. The most popular foreign languages taught in schools are English, Russian, and French.

### Religion

Buddhism is the most commonly practiced religion in Vietnam. The most important effect of Buddhism on Vietnamese is that it has given them the ability to accept what has happened no matter how horrific the event may be. Buddhists believe that life means suffering (a new born baby cries as soon as it was born), there is no god who governs everything, but human beings are responsible for their own actions. They are expected to lead a life of restraint and moderation, respecting the life of others and being dutiful to those around them. Such a restraint and dutiful life was not only considered as a religious aim, it was also valued as an end in itself. The Buddhist believes there will be consequences for every action, or karma in this life or the next. About 12 percent of the population is Taoist and 7 percent is Roman Catholic. Regardless of one's religion, nearly every one practices ancestor veneration. The Vietnamese in general believe the deceased go to a place near the living and are therefore accessible to help or hinder the living. Some ethnic minorities in North Vietnam and the Central Highlands remain matriarchal ; they practice a reverence for all living things, claiming all living forms have a soul or spirit.

### General attitudes

The long struggle for independence has given the Vietnamese a deep sense of national pride. They use the experience of history to re-create the future. The inequality in some areas between urban and rural areas must be resolved if all of Vietnam is going to enjoy future prosperity.

### Personal appearance

Everyday dress for both men and women generally consists of slacks worn with a casual cotton or knit blouse or sport shirt. For special occasions, the women wear the graceful, traditional ao dai, a long dress with front and back panels worn over satin trousers. The Vietnamese do not wear shorts in public except at the beach or work site. Suits and ties have been worn in offices in Vietnam.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

Young and Western- influenced Vietnamese generally shake hands when greeting and saying good-bye. But the majority of Vietnamese do not shake hands. One uses both hands to show respect for older people and those of status, for example an elder sister or brother. Bowing the head slightly while shaking hands also indicates respect. Men and women don't touch one another as Vietnamese culture is mostly non-tactile. Vietnamese names begin with the family name and are followed by a given name. The Vietnamese address one another by their given names, but they also add a title that signals their perceived relationship to the person. These titles are family related rather than professional. Classifiers for gender and familiarity are also combined with the greeting.



## Gestures

Ancient Buddhist tradition says one should not touch the head of a young child, as it is considered a sensitive spiritual point. Most Vietnamese no longer adhere to these practices. The Vietnamese consider it rude to summon a person with the index finger. Men and women do not generally show affection in public, but it is common for members of the same sex to hold hands while walking. The Vietnamese use both hands to pass and object to another person to indicate respect for age or status.

## Visiting

In Vietnam, because the majority does not have telephones, people drop in on one another all the time. The Vietnamese have a very strong sense of hospitality, but Vietnamese do not like to be visited by 'outsiders' unexpectedly because they do not like their private life to be exposed. On special occasions such as New Year's days, death anniversaries, weddings, or celebrations gifts are an expected part of courtesy. Flowers are welcome on some occasions, but incense is only appropriate for deaths, anniversaries and temples.

## Eating

The Vietnamese use chopsticks and rice bowls for most meals. They hold the rice bowl in the hand; it is considered lazy to eat from a rice bowl that is on the table. Spoons are provided when soup is served. Food is placed on dishes in the centre of the table from which each person helps themselves. However, people older than oneself and their children are served first. Often, beverages are not served until after the meal. Mats are traditionally used as bed, couch and dining table.

# LIFESTYLE

## Family

Rank in the family denotes status, which carries responsibilities as well as rights. In an extended family (group) culture, each household usually accommodates more than one family. In urban areas like Hanoi, Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City, critical accommodation shortage further aggravates this situation. But generally Vietnamese do not like to live alone. Vietnamese still prefer to live near one another for mutual support. Living alone, on the other hand, can become a fearful experience to some Vietnamese, particularly those who come from remote rural villages. This stems from their belief in the existence of spirits. Community counselling occurs on a natural basis for family members needing guidance, when people go to the market and meet in the street.

## Dating & Marriage

It is very much depends on upbringing and degree of Western influence. The pattern varies from family to family. Youth begin dating in their late teens. In urban areas, young people generally go as couples to coffee houses or movies. In rural Vietnam, they tend to socialise in groups. Marriages were traditionally arranged by parents, but this practice is now very rare. Young people are free to choose their mates; in general men marry at age 25-30, and women age 23-26. Weddings are a great celebration.

## Diet

Rice is the staple food of Vietnam. A fermented fish sauce called *nuoc mam* is the main seasoning used to flavour dishes; special foods are also dipped in it. Vietnamese cuisine is famous for a wide variety of dishes and features excellent seafood. Spring rolls, summer rolls, and steamed or fried rolls with varied fillings are used in different seasons and for special occasions.

## Holidays & special days

Vietnamese Lunar New Year	January - February
Trung Tu Moon Festival Lunar calendar	8th month
Vulan Buddhists pray for deceased	15th of 7th month
Fasting-refrain from meat	1 and 15 <sup>th</sup> of month
Liberation of Saigon	30 April
Labour Day	1 May
National Day	2-3 September
Christmas, Easter, Lent, Saint's Day (related to name)	

# ZAIRE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

55,847,279 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate:3.10%

### Resident in the ACT

11 born in Zaire (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

Although French is the official language and is used in larger businesses, education, and government administration, it is spoken by only about 10 percent of the population. Lingala is increasingly used as the national language. Regional languages are: Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba, and Swahili.

### Religion

Eighty percent of the population is Christian. Fifty percent is Roman Catholic and 20 percent belongs to various Protestant organisations. Another 10 percent of the people participate in the indigenous Christian sect known as Kimbanguism. About 10 percent of the people are Muslim. The remaining 10 percent follow traditional beliefs.

### General attitudes

Most Bantu peoples share a common cultural heritage. Most distinctive, perhaps is the general politeness and genuine concern for the welfare of others. This politeness sometimes manifests itself as a gentle disposition and shyness with strangers, which outsiders occasionally interpret as reticence. Although they may seem shy, Zairians reciprocate open and sincere friendliness. In general, Zairians are careful not to offend. Individualism is acceptable only if it does not conflict with a group's needs. Because schedules are not as important as people, appointments may run 30 to 60 minutes late.

### Personal appearance

Western-style clothing is common in most urban areas. Zairian women wear a *pagne*, a long dress made of a five-yard length of fabric. Shorts and immodest attire are rarely worn by adults.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

In urban areas, men and women generally shake hands, smile, and greet each other verbally. Outside urban areas, men do not usually shake hands with women but will shake other men's hands.

### Gestures

Pointing directly at a person with the index finger is impolite. Beckoning is done by waving all fingers. Objects are passed with the right hand or both hands.

### Visiting

Visiting is important in Zaire and hospitality is traditional. Most visiting occurs in the home. Family and close friends often drop by unannounced, but strangers are expected to make arrangements in advance. When a person first visits a Zairian home, a gift is not appropriate. Small gifts, such as food or an item for the house, may be given after a relationship is established. If a Zairian offers to share a meal, the guest is first expected to show reluctance to join the host's table. But the guest should ultimately accept the offer. Not doing so is impolite. Zairians often judge the sincerity of their guests by the way they eat.

## Eating

Meals are usually eaten with the fingers of the right hand only. When utensils are used, the continental style of eating is observed. Men and women eat from separate communal bowls. Hands are washed before and after each meal.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The family is the most important focus in a Zairian's life. Although family structure varies greatly between the different ethnic groups, emphasis is placed on group goals and overall family welfare. Large extended families are the norm in Zaire.

### Dating & Marriage

Casual dating habits only occur among the wealthy in large urban areas. Otherwise, if two young people meet and desire to date, the boy and his family seek permission of the girl's family for him to see her. Subsequent dating usually leads to marriage. Traditionally, marriage is a family affair and is at least partly arranged by parents.

### Diet

Staple foods include cassava, rice, potatoes, bananas, yams, beans, corn, fish, peanuts, and various fruits and vegetables. Common fruits include mangoes, oranges, pawpaws, and coconuts.

### Holidays & special days

Labour Day	1 May
National Heroes Day	22 May
Independence Day	15 August
Christian and Muslim Holy days	

# ZIMBABWE

## THE PEOPLE

### Population

11,388,159 (Estimate 2002 GeoHive) Growth rate: 0.15%

### Resident in the ACT

188 born in Zimbabwe (Census 2001 unpub.)

### Language

English is the official language of the republic and is spoken by most educated people. It does not predominate in rural areas, however, where people converse in the tongue of their native ethnic group. Shona and Ndebele are commonly spoken. People often speak more than one language and many mix parts of several languages in daily speech.

### Religion

Zimbabwe has many established Christian churches and missions and a few minority religions (Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam). About 24 percent of the people continue to practice their traditional beliefs.

### General attitudes

Zimbabwe has an interesting variety of customs. Zimbabweans are generally friendly, cheerful, optimistic, and courteous. While very open and enthusiastic among friends, they are more cautious and reserved with strangers. Humility is esteemed. Zimbabweans are sensitive to racism and discrimination because of many years of colonial subjugation.

### Personal appearance

Generally speaking, Zimbabweans wear Western-style clothing. Traditional African dress is reserved for performing or for special occasions, but fashions from other African countries are becoming more popular. Dressing neatly in clean clothes is important. It is not uncommon for a woman to wear a scarf on her head.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

A handshake is commonly used in greeting. A person claps hands when asking how things are. Traditionally, to pass a stranger without any word of greeting is considered bad manners, but this is no longer true in cities. Titles are not commonly used, except in urban areas where English customs are often used.

### Gestures

Traditionally, an item is given and accepted with both hands. A person may clap the hands as a gesture of gratitude or politeness. Women and girls, especially in rural areas, often curtsy as a gesture of politeness. Direct eye contact during conversation is considered rude, principally in rural areas, because it shows a lack of respect.

### Visiting

Unannounced visits are common, especially in villages. Small practical gifts for both urban and rural families are appreciated but not customarily expected. Zimbabweans are hospitable and try to make their guests comfortable. It is impolite to refuse refreshments or offers of food. Patience and politeness are important in conversation.

### Eating

While many people use Western utensils, it is also common to eat with the fingers in rural areas. Regardless of what is used, water is first provided for washing hands. When guests are invited, the hostess usually serves each

plate, and it is polite to leave a little food behind to show one is not greedy. When finished eating, a person asks permission of the others to leave the table. Breakfast is eaten before one goes to or begins daily work, and the main meal is eaten after work. Lunch is usually light.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

The father in Zimbabwe is usually the leader of the family, but the mother also exercises influence in the home. The father expects to make all final decisions and to support his family (including children, wives and any mistresses). Polygamy is still common among some groups. The traditional, extended family unit is strongly evident in rural areas, with more than one generation living together. Urban families, however, tend to be more nuclear. Still, family ties are strong and important. A child is an investment; parents take care of their children and expect to be taken care of in their old age. The concept of nursing homes is highly offensive. The elderly are considered a family treasure and there is always room for them.

### Dating & Marriage

Public affection, while not widespread, is not unknown. Young people usually choose their marriage partner. When a couple is ready to marry, customary visits and gifts are exchanged between the groom's representative and the bride's family. A bridal token, known as a *roora* is paid to the bride's parents. It is not uncommon for men to engage in extramarital affairs with the knowledge of their wives. This culturally accepted practice is considered necessary by men to prove virility.

### Diet

*Sadza*, a stiff porridge made from maize (cornmeal), is the staple food of most Zimbabweans and is served at nearly every meal. Tea is popular with meals and in the office.

### Holidays & special days

Independence Day	18 April
Labour Day	1 May
Africa Day	25 May
Heroes Day, Defence Forces Day	11-12 August

# Part II

## Appendix

### Ethnic Resources Directory In The ACT

# CANBERRA - A MULTICULTURAL CITY

## Origins

22.3% of Canberrans come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

22.6% were born overseas, slightly lower than the national figure (23.1%). They come from more than 125 different countries. One in ten Canberra residents come from countries where English is not spoken as a first language. (C:2000 database ABS Census 2001 unpub.)

## Language

Over 100 languages are spoken by Canberrans, and 14% speak a language other than English at home. The three most common languages spoken at home other than English are Chinese (1.6%), Italian (1.2%) and Croatian (0.9%)

## English Proficiency

Most Canberra residents born overseas have proficiency in English, and about 42 % speak a language other than English.

Speaks English	% of Overseas Born LOTE speakers
Very well	57.8%
Well	27.7%
Not well	11.5%
Not at all	3.0%

## Religion

More than 12 religions are practised in the ACT. 64% of people in the ACT identified as Christians. 20% reported no religion. Of non-Christian religions, 50% identified as Buddhist. Of the total population, 1.1% identified as Muslim.

The 10 most common religious affiliations are:

- Western Catholic
- No religion
- Anglican and Uniting Church
- Presbyterian
- Buddhism
- Christian (No further defined)
- Greek Orthodox
- Lutheran
- Baptist
- Islam
- Hinduism

## New Settlers

Approximately 986 new migrants from overseas settled in Canberra 2000-1  
About 728 come from countries where English is not spoken as a first language.

Settler Arrivals to ACT for Financial year 2000-2001

	ACT	Australia
Persons	986	63,515

**Major countries of origin:**

England  
New Zealand  
Germany  
Scotland  
Italy  
Vietnam  
China  
USA  
India  
Croatia  
Malaysia  
Philippines  
Sri Lanka  
Netherlands

*(C:2000 database ABS Census 2001 unpub.)*

**Major language groups other than English:**

Chinese  
Italian  
Croatian  
Greek  
Vietnamese  
Spanish  
German  
Polish  
Arabic

**Groups with the greatest proportion of people who do not speak English at all:**

Chinese  
Vietnamese  
Italian  
Spanish speaking  
Croatian

*(C:2000 database ABS Census 2001 unpub.)*



## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### Belconnen

**Major Language Groups:**

Chinese  
Italian  
Greek  
Vietnamese  
Croatian

Spanish-speaking

Of people that live in Belconnen, 83.2% are of English speaking background, and 16.8% are from linguistically diverse (NES) countries.

The Belconnen Region makes up 28% of the ACT population, and has 4.7% of the total linguistically diverse (NES) population.

### Central Canberra

**Major Language Groups:**

Chinese  
Greek  
Italian  
German  
Vietnamese  
Spanish-speaking

Of the people that live in Central Canberra (North and South Canberra), 81.4% are of English speaking background, and 18.6% are of linguistically diverse (NES) backgrounds. 15,613 people speak languages other than English in Central Canberra. Central Canberra makes up 20.5% of the ACT population, and has 3.8% of the total NES population.

### Woden Valley

**Major Language Groups:**

Chinese  
Italian  
Greek  
German  
Croatian

Spanish-speaking

Of the people that live in Woden Valley, 82.5% are of English speaking background, and 17.5% are of NESB.

Woden Valley makes up 10.9% of the total ACT population, and has 1.9% of the total NESB population.

### Weston Creek

**Major Language Groups:**

Italian  
Chinese  
Croatian  
German  
Spanish  
Greek

Of the people that live in the Weston Creek Region, 87% are from an English speaking background, and 13% are linguistically diverse (NES) background.

Weston Creek Region makes up 8.6% of the total ACT population, and has 1.1% of the total linguistically diverse (NES) population.

## Tuggeranong

### Major Language Group:

Chinese  
Croatian  
Spanish  
Vietnamese  
Italian  
Greek

Of the people that live in Tuggeranong, 85.2% are of English speaking background, and 14.8% are of linguistically diverse (NES) background.

Tuggeranong Region makes up 22.6% of the total ACT population, and has 3.4% of the total linguistically diverse (NES) population.

*(C:2000 database ABS Census 2001 unpub.)  
Snapshot of Canberra 2001 Census ABS web-site*

# KEY MIGRANT SERVICES IN THE ACT

## **Migrant Resource Centre of Canberra and Queanbeyan**

1st Floor, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Canberra City ACT 2601  
Tel: 6248 8577

### **Available services within MRC**

- Welfare Services- Assisting newly arrived migrants and refugees to establish themselves in the ACT region by helping them to find housing, find appropriate educational opportunities (including English classes).
- Community development- providing standard English classes, pronunciation classes, conversation groups, health education, information on Australian customs and the law, and social activities.
- Employment and training assistance- assistance with job seeking skills, including training in addressing selection criteria, resume writing, adjusting to the Australian working environment, referrals to other appropriate training, work placements.
- Homework and study skills for youth - university students volunteering as tutors and mentors to secondary students from linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Migration Agent offers Immigration advice
- Emergency Relief Fund
- Regional settlement assistance offered through the Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre, a sister organisation to the MRC  
Ph: 62976110 Fax: 62970386.  
12 Rutledge St,  
Queanbeyan, NSW, 2620
- Social Activities
- Meeting rooms for community groups

### **Ethnic Communities Council of the ACT**

Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: 02 6249 8994.

### **ACT Multicultural Council Inc**

Tel: 02 6249 8994/ fax 02 6248 6767  
Email: actmc@bigpond.com.au

### **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)**

Tel: 131450

### **National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)**

Suite 1, Playoust Building, Hawker Place, HAWKER ACT 2614  
Tel: 02 6255 1888 / fax: 02 6255 1889

### **Migrant Health Unit - Health Care Interpreters**

Tel: 02 6205 3333

Interpreting : Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese free service

Translating and Interpreting service for all other languages - fees are charged to Departments, Agencies etc.

**Bilingual Community Educators Network of Canberra and Queanbeyan**  
Contact 02 6205 3333

**Centrelink Multicultural Services Officer**  
131202 or 02 6219 3233

**ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs**  
Level 4 Canberra Nara Centre  
Cnr London Circuit and Constitution Avenue, Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: 6207 2382 / Fax: 6207 5862  
Services below:

- ACT Government Work Experience and Support Program  
Tel: 6205 0528
- Overseas Qualifications Assessment  
Tel: 6205 0528

**Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre**  
12 Rutledge Street, Queanbeyan NSW 2620  
Tel: 02 6297 6110 / fax: 02 6247 1416

**Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma Inc**  
41 Fairfax Street  
O'Connor ACT 2602  
Tel: 02 6247 7227

**Multicultural Womens' Advocacy Inc. (CSSS funded)**  
Room G10  
Griffin Centre  
19 Bunda St  
Canberra City  
Tel:02 62411663

# COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT SERVICES SCHEME

## Community Settlement Services Scheme

(DIMIA Funded) Settlement Workers can be contacted in the locations below:

**Belconnen Community Service**  
Chandler Street, Belconnen  
Tel: 02 6251 5926 Fax: 6253 2901

**Migrant Resource Centre**  
1st Floor, Griffin Centre  
Bunda Street, Civic  
Tel: 02 6248 8577

**Woden Community Service**  
Corinna Street, Woden  
Tel: 02 6282 2644

**Croatian Welfare Centre**  
1st Floor, Griffin Centre  
Bunda Street, Civic  
Tel: 02 6249 7801 Fax 02 6249 7804

**Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre**  
12 Rutledge Street  
Queanbeyan NSW 2620  
Tel: 02 6297 6110 Fax 6247 1416

## Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Telephone: 131881  
Internet: [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)  
Settlement: [www.immi.gov.au/settle](http://www.immi.gov.au/settle)

Citizenship: 131880  
[www.citizenship.gov.au](http://www.citizenship.gov.au)

## Translating and Interpreting

Telephone 131450

# ACT ETHNIC CLUBS

## **Australian Croatian Club**

Cnr McCaughey and David Streets TURNER 2601  
Tel 02 6248 8782; FAX 02 6257 3012

## **Austrian Australian Club Inc**

Heard Street MAWSON ACT 2607  
Fax 02 6286 2832  
Email: [austrianclub@one.net.au](mailto:austrianclub@one.net.au)

## **Canberra Dutch Club**

PO Box 77 MAWSON ACT 2607  
Tel 02 6296 2835; 02 6244 7500  
Fax: 02 6244 5912  
Email: [meg@pcug.org.au](mailto:meg@pcug.org.au)

## **Canberra Mandarin Club Inc**

Block 4 Section 49 MACQUARIE ACT  
Tel 02 6291 9383; FAX 02 6291 9885  
[ngcanbra@dynamite.com.au](mailto:ngcanbra@dynamite.com.au)

## **Canberra Swiss Club Inc**

PO Box 3211 Manuka ACT 2603  
Tel 02 6231 9533; Fax 02 6273 3428

## **Harmonie German Club**

Jerrabomberra Ave NARRABUNDAH 2604  
Tel 02 6295 3519; 02 6297 2322  
[safbenz@dynamite.com.au](mailto:safbenz@dynamite.com.au)

## **Hungarian Australian Club**

Kootara Crescent NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604  
Tel 02 6258 3253; 02 6295 8205  
Fax: 02 6295 6899

## **Italo-Australian Club**

78 Franklin St FORREST ACT 2603  
Tel 02 6295 1015; 02 6295 1588  
Fax 02 6295 2274

## **Portuguese Australian Club**

PO Box 3188 MANUKA ACT 2603  
Tel 02 6241 9829

## **Serbian Cultural Club (St Sava)**

Heard Street Mawson ACT 2607  
Tel 02 6286 2696  
Fax 02 6286 6811

## **Slovenian Australian Club**

19 Irving St PHILLIP ACT 2606  
Tel 02 6282 1083; Fax 02 6282 3510

## **Rosehill Tongan Community Centre**

30 Scattergood Place  
Spence 2615  
Contact: 02 6259 1821 or 02 6259 3365

**Spanish Australian Club**  
5 Narupai Street NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604  
Tel 02 6258 1265; 02 6282 4747

**White Eagle Club (Polish)**  
34 David St Turner ACT 2601  
Tel 02 6248 8563

(For a full list of Ethnic community Associations, see Directory of Multicultural Resources 2001/2002)

# ACT MULTICULTURAL PLACES OF WORSHIP

**Asia Pacific Church**  
ANU Tel: 02 6258 6740

**Austral-Asian Church**  
82 Limestone Avenue AINSLIE  
Tel 02 6255 2548

**Buddhist Society of ACT**  
245 Goder St NARRABUNDAH 2604  
Tel: 02 6288 2970; 02 6239 7194

**Canberra Chinese Christian Church**  
56 Dryandra St O'CONNOR 2602  
Tel 02 6286 4289; 02 6247 8080

**Canberra Korean Presbyterian Church**  
82 Limestone Avenue, AINSLIE 2602  
Tel 02 6241 2546  
[kwangho@apex.net.au](mailto:kwangho@apex.net.au)

**Canberra Korean Uniting Church**  
56 Coranderrk Street REID 2612  
Tel 02 6288 5909  
[cheonil@dynamite.com.au](mailto:cheonil@dynamite.com.au)

**Canberra Missionary Church Inc**  
50 Bennelong Crescent MACQUARIE 2614  
Tel 02 6251 4149

**Canberra Mosque**  
Tel 02 6291 6115 or 02 6244 6071, Fax: 02 6292 6043  
**Islamic Society of the ACT**  
Tel: 02 6259 1347 or 02 6288 6904  
130 Empire Circuit YARRALUMLA 2600

**Canberra SAIVA Temple and Educational Association**  
151 Beasley St TORRENS 2607

**Croatian Catholic Centre**  
262 Beasley St FARRER 2607  
Tel 02 6286 2280  
[franco@interact.net.au](mailto:franco@interact.net.au)

**Finnish Lutheran Church of Canberra**  
22 Watson St TURNER 2612  
Tel 02 6247 9493  
[tuomo@dynamite.com.au](mailto:tuomo@dynamite.com.au)

**Free Serbian Orthodox Church**  
Diocese for Australia & New Zealand  
453 Wallaroo Rd HALL 2618  
Tel 02 6230 2424

**Gee Yeung Khor Moral Uplifting Society Inc**  
GPO Box 3479 BELCONNEN 2617  
Tel 02 6258 2326; 02 6253 2149



**Greek Orthodox Church of St Demetrios**  
5 Ernest St QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

**Greek Orthodox Church of St Nicholas**  
Wentworth Av KINGSTON 2604  
Tel 02 6295 1460

**Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre of the ACT**  
81 Ratcliffe Crescent FLOREY 2615  
Tel: 02 6258 4849 or 02 6268 4959 or 02 6242 0700, Fax: 02 6268 8443 or  
02 6268 5672

**Italian Catholic Mission**  
PO Box 3072 MANUKA 2603

**Jewish Community ACT**  
Tel: 02 6295 1052

**Macedonian Orthodox Church, Cultural & Educational Centre, St Kliment of Ohrid Canberra**  
400 Goyder St NARRABUNDAH 2604  
Tel 02 6295 3650

**Russian Orthodox Church**  
1 Matina St NARRABUNDAH 2604  
Tel 02 6295 7798

**Sakyamuni Buddhist Centre**  
32 Archibald St LYNEHAM 2602  
Tel 02 6257 5517

**Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the ACT Inc**  
18 Hickey Court WESTON 2611  
Tel 02 6288 1999

**Thai Temple**  
80 Archibald St LYNEHAM 2602  
Tel 02 6249 8594

**Vietnamese Catholic Community**  
36 Fouveau St AINSLIE 2602  
Tel 02 6248 6387

**Wat Lao Bhuddha Nimit- Temple**  
20 Jenke St KAMBAH 2902  
Tel 02 6231 3365

# FREE LEGAL SERVICES

## Legal Advice Bureau

1 Farrell Place, Civic, Tel: 02 6247 5700

## Welfare Rights and Legal Centre

Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Ave. Turner. Tel: 02 6247 2177

## Legal Aid Office (ACT)

4 Mort St Civic. Tel: 1300 654 314

Email: [legalaid@legalaid.canberra.net.au](mailto:legalaid@legalaid.canberra.net.au)

## Women's Legal Centre

Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Ave. Turner.

Tel 02 6257 4499

## ETHNIC SCHOOLS

### ACT Ethnic Schools Association

GPO Box 1353

Canberra ACT 2601

Community Schools Liaison Officer

Tel: 02 6230 5191/ Fax 02 6230 5033

## ACT ETHNIC MEDIA

- Community Ethnic Broadcasters Association Inc  
Tel 02 6230 0100, Fax 02 6248 5560
- Community Radio 2XX 1008 AM  
Tel: 02 6230 0100, Fax 02 6248 5560
- Ethnic Broadcasters Council of the ACT and Surrounding Districts Inc.  
Tel 02 6287 7058, Fax 02 6287 4348
- Canberra Multicultural Service FM 103.1  
Tel 02 6287 7058
- SBS Radio Canberra, Tel 02 9430 2828, Fax 02 9430 3700
- Ethnic Newsletters and newspapers, Tel 02 6205 0522
- ACT Multicultural Council Inc produces *Multicultural Voices*  
Tel 02 6207 6199
- **ACT Office of Multicultural and Community Affairs produces *Communicado* newsletter monthly**  
Tel 02 6207 6199
  - **Community Radio 2XX 1008 am**  
GPO Box 812, Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: 6230 0100 Fax:6248 5560

(for further details see Directory of Multicultural Resources 2001-2)

## CANBERRA MULTICULTURAL SERVICE FM 91.1

Curtin Place, CURTIN ACT 2605  
Tel: 6287 4347 (Studio) 6287 7058 (Office)

Day	Time	Language	Day	Time	Language	
Mon	7-10	International Satellite	Thurs	7-10	International Satellite	
	10-12	Tongan		10-11	International Music	
	12-14	Yama-Aboriginal		11-12	Croatian	
	14-16	Chinese		12-14	Yama Aboriginal	
	16-17	Youth		14-15	Austrian Alpine Hour	
	17-18	Irish		15-16	Dutch	
	18-19	Swiss		16-18	Hungarian	
	19-20	Polish		18-19	Tutti-Frutti	
	20-21	Croatian		19-20	Sinhalese	
	21-22	Chilean		20-21	Tamil	
	22-24	Serbian		21-22	Macedonian	
Tues	7-8	International Satellite	Fri	7-12	International Satellite	
	8-10	Serbian Settlers		12-14	Yama Aboriginal	
	10-12	Slovenian		14-17	International Music	
	12-14	Yama Aboriginal		17-18	Brazilian	
	14-15	Slovakia-Czech		18-19	Islam-Arabic	
	15-16	Communicado		19-20	Bosnian	
	16-17	International Music		20-24	Greek	
	17-18	Italyca		Sat	7-8	International Music
	18-19	Tutti-frutti			8-9	Czech-Slovak
	19-20	Indian			9-11	Thai
	20-22	German-Austrian			11-12	International Music
22-23	Macedonian	12-13	Macedonian			
23-24	International Satellite	Sun	13-15	Mandarin		
Wed	7-10		Samoan	15-17	Cantonese	
	10-11		Swiss	17-19	Serbian Settlers	
	11-12		German-Austrian	19-20	Sri Lanka	
	12-14		Yama Aboriginal	20-21	Cyprus	
	14-16		Irish Celtic	21-24	Greek	
	16-17		Meli-Melo/Swiss	7-10	Samoan	
	17-18		French	10-11	Indian	
	18-19		Tutti-frutti	11-12	Scandinavian	
	19-20		Slovenian	12-14	International Bouquet	
	20-21		Croatian	14-16	Slovenian	
	21-23	Spanish	16-18	International Music		
23-24	International Satellite	18-19	French			
			19-20	Croatian Youth		
			20-21	International Music		
			21-22	Polish		
			22-24	Serbian		

## SBS RADIO 105.5 FM- 6.00 AM - 12.00 PM

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
6.00	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	Alchemy	Alchemy	6.00
7.00	Greek	Arabic	Greek	Greek	Greek	Finnish	Maltese	7.00
8.00	Italian	Italian	German	Croatian	Serbian	Italian	Italian	8.00
9.00	German	Slovenian	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	German	Vietnamese	Hindi	9.00
10.00	Cantonese	Filipino	Dutch	Filipino	Mandarin	Dutch	Urdu	10.00
11.00	Russian	French	Filipino	Portuguese	French	Portuguese	Hebrew	11.00
12.00	Dutch	Maltese	Aboriginal	Maori	Armenian	Hungarian	Yiddish	12.00
1.00	Polish	Spanish	Polish	Spanish	Polish	Turkish	Polish	1.00
2.00	Hungarian	Indonesian	Burmese	Korean	Hebrew	Persian/Farsi	Tamil	2.00
3.00	Tongan	Lithuanian	Turkish	Estonian	Indonesian	Russian	Sinhalese	3.00
4.00	Macedonian	Ukrainian	Latvian	Macedonian	Dari	Swedish	French	4.00
5.00	World View	World View	World View	World View	World View	Danish	Finnish	5.00
6.00	Laotian	Greek	Italian	Italian	Italian	Greek	Greek	6.00
7.00	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Russian	Arabic	Vietnamese	Arabic	Vietnamese	7.00
8.00	Romanian	Cantonese	Mandarin	German	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin	8.00
9.00	Portuguese	Croatian	Serbian	Khmer	Aboriginal	Thai	Czech	9.00
10.00	Spanish	Japanese	Irish	Scottish	Spanish	Welsh	Slovak	10.00
11.00	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	Alchemy	African	Alchemy	Alchemy	11.00
12.00	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	BBC	Soccer/ Music	12.00

SBS Radio Canberra  
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