

A QUESTION OF CULTURE...



1 Greeting

In France people usually shake hands or kiss on the cheeks every time they meet. In Japan it's more polite to bow than shake hands when you greet someone. People in the UK usually shake hands. Only very good friends hug or kiss, and British men rarely hug or kiss at all. In Russia women kiss three times, starting with the left cheek. However, men rarely do the same. They hug and pat each other on the back.

3 Gift giving

In India don't offer things made of leather and don't gift-wrap them in white or black paper. In Italy gift-wrap presents but avoid the colour purple because it's bad luck. So are the colours black and gold. In China and Japan give items in pairs if possible. Also, knives, scissors or clocks aren't good gifts for Chinese people. In Japan give and receive a gift with both hands, but don't open it until later.

2 Eating and dining

In China talking with your mouth full and slurping your food is normal. Also, when they offer you food, it's polite to refuse it a few times before accepting it. If you are invited for a meal in India, you should eat with your right hand. You don't need to try all the food on the table but it's polite to finish everything on your plate. In Italy it's rude to begin eating or leave the table before your host does and it's even ruder to keep your hands under the table.

Read again and answer the questions. Choose a, b or c.

1. How do people greet each other in France?

- a. They hug.
- b. They kiss on the cheeks.
- c. They bow.

2. Which statement is true?

- a. British people don't often hug when greeting someone.
- b. Russian men kiss three times on the cheeks.
- c. Japanese people never shake hands.

3. Which is appropriate in China?

- a. to slurp your food
- b. to refuse food before you accept it
- c. both of the above

4. Which of the following is rude when eating?

- a. to use your left hand in India
- b. to talk with your mouth full in China
- c. to start eating after your host in Italy

5. Which of the following is appropriate?

- a. using gold wrapping paper for presents in Italy
- b. giving a clock as a present to someone in China
- c. offering a present with both hands in Japan