

A WORLD GUIDE TO *Good Manners* How not to behave badly abroad

by Norman Ramshaw

Travelling to all corners of the world gets easier and easier. We live in a global village, but this doesn't mean that we all behave in the same way.

• Greetings

How should you behave when you meet someone for the first time? An American or Canadian shakes your hand firmly while looking you straight in the eyes. In many parts of Asia, there is no physical contact at all. In Japan, you should bow, and the more respect you want to show, (1) _____. In Thailand, the greeting is made by pressing both hands together at the chest, as if you are praying, and bowing your head slightly. In both countries, eye contact is avoided as a sign of respect.

• Clothes

Many countries have rules about what you should and shouldn't wear. In Asian and Muslim countries, you shouldn't reveal the body, especially women, who (2) _____. In Japan, you should take off your shoes when entering a house or a restaurant. Remember to place them neatly together facing the door you came in. This is also true in China, Korea, Thailand, and Iran.

• Food and drink

In Italy, Spain, and Latin America, lunch is often the biggest meal of the day, and can last two or three hours. For this reason many people eat a light breakfast and a late dinner. In Britain, you might have a business lunch and do business as

you eat. In Mexico and Japan, (3) _____. Lunch is a time to relax and socialize, and the Japanese rarely drink alcohol at lunchtime. In Britain and the United States, it's not unusual to have a business meeting over breakfast, and in China it's common to have business banquets, but you shouldn't discuss business during the meal.

• Doing business

In most countries, an exchange of business cards is essential for all introductions. You should include your company name and your position. If you are going to a country where your language is not widely spoken, you can get the reverse side of your card printed in the local language. In Japan, you must present your card with both hands, with the writing facing the person you are giving it to.

In many countries, business hours are from 9.00 or 10.00 to 5.00 or 6.00. However in some countries, such as Greece, Italy, and Spain, (4) _____ then remain open until the evening.

Japanese business people consider it their professional duty to go out after work with colleagues to restaurants, bars, or nightclubs. If you are invited, you shouldn't refuse, even if you don't feel like staying out late.

EXTRA TIPS

HERE ARE SOME EXTRA TIPS BEFORE YOU TRAVEL:

- 1 In many Asian cultures, it is acceptable to smack your lips when you eat. It means that the food is good.
- 2 In France, you shouldn't sit down in a café until you've shaken hands with everyone you know.
- 3 In India and the Middle East, you must never use the left hand (5) _____.
- 4 In China, your host will keep refilling your dish unless you lay your chopsticks across your bowl.
- 5 Most South Americans and Mexicans like to stand very close to the person they're talking to. You shouldn't back away.
- 6 In Russia, you must match your hosts drink for drink or they will think you unfriendly.
- 7 In Ireland, social events sometimes end with singing and dancing. You may be asked to sing.
- 8 In America, you should eat your hamburger with both hands and as quickly as possible. You shouldn't try to have a conversation until it is eaten.