

TOP 10 TRAVEL FAUX PAS



Traveling to foreign countries definitely belongs to the lifestyle of people living in the 21st century. Although we live in the so called global world, the cultural differences between various countries still remain. No wonder you are very likely to make a cultural faux pas when you travel abroad. Tourism-review.com brings you the Top 10 faux pas from all over the world announced recently by Guardian.co.uk, so learn more.

1/ Thumb-up sign in Iran

In European countries and in the US a thumb up sign means in fact, that everything is OK (all correct). Showing a thumb-up sign is an easy way how to show, that you are having fun, good time or that nothing goes wrong. But this sign doesn't work like this everywhere - e.g. in Iran. The same gesture is called bilakh in Iran meaning an unquestioned insult. Literally it means "Sit on this". Another sign Americans and Europeans have to be careful of is the sign, again meaning OK, when the thumb meets the forefinger in a circle. In Turkey and Brazil this gesture tells the other person you are comparing him or her to the ... ehm ... filthiest part of human anatomy.

2/ Patting someone on the head in Thailand

Head is considered to be sacred in Buddhist countries. Head is in fact the seat of soul and touching it is insulting even for a small child. Another gesture an American or European tourist has to be careful of is pointing with finger. It is considered to be very rude for instance in Malaysia, where the people point with the whole fist and the thumb at the top indicating direction. Filipinos for instance only point to an object by shifting their eyes towards it or pursing their lips and pointing to it with their mouth.

3/ Ireland - a British Isle?

Almost every country has its taboo themes. Aborigines in Australia, dowry deaths in India, human rights in China; these are themes to cause offence. The Irish for instance don't like their Isle to be called one of the British islands. If you start chatting with foreigners it is always better to start with some neutral topics like food and beauty of the landscape. With these topics you can never make a mistake.

4/ Barbecue in Argentina and gaucho dress

Some tourist can't resist the temptation wearing a local dress while visiting a foreign country. To wear batik in Indonesia is absolutely fine. In Argentina is a faux pas to dress as a gaucho, and even more embarrassing is to visit parties and barbecues (asados) dressed like this. So whenever you visit a foreign country please get informed.

5/ Enter a Japanese temple or home with the shoes on

Not only in Japan but everywhere in the East you should be prepared to remove your shoes and drop your hat of. The Japanese will often give you a pair of slippers to take you from the front door to

their living room, where they should be removed before you step on the tatami (the red mat). Be careful, wear always clean socks!

(Photo: JNTO)

6/ Bunch of 12 wrapped carnations at a German dinner party?

Bunch of flowers seems to be a perfect gift to delight your hostess. In many countries its particular varieties, colors and numbers have its hidden meaning. Carnations are used for funerals in Germany, Poland and Sweden. In Belgium, Italy, France, Spain and Turkey they use chrysanthemums for the same purpose. In France and Austria red roses suggest romantic interest, while in Mexico and Chile are yellow roses a sign for grief and separation. Give a bunch of flowers always unwrapped in Germany, Sweden and Poland! An odd number of flowers are unlucky in China and Indonesia; even number is considered to be unlucky in India, Turkey, Russia and Germany.

7/ Names in China

The Chinese are used to write their names in different order than is normal in Europe and America. The surname goes first followed by the last name. So calling Mr. Li Wong Chee "Mr. Chee" is the same as calling Mr. James Dean "Mr. James". Not to confuse foreigners the Chinese sometimes reverse their name, which causes nothing else but mess.

8/ Giving a bottle of alcohol to Muslims as a gift

Islam does not allow people to drink alcohol. So if the Muslims drink, they certainly do not do it publicly. To give a Muslim a bottle of cognac, drawing attention to his private love for that drink, is not a very good idea. Dogs and pigs are considered to be unclean animals in Islamic countries, so your faux pas can be even bigger when you give a Muslim alcohol in a handmade pigskin bottle holder. This is then a real offence!

9/ Drinking and talking during a toast in Georgia or Azerbaijan

In northern Europe, Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union drinking toasts is taken very seriously. In Scandinavia and Germany you should always meet your eyes when saying Skål or Prost! In Russia you should drink the vodka in a single gulp. In Georgia and Azerbaijan the toasts often go for hours. They are orchestrated by the tamada or toast master. It is considered to be rude to talk or sip between the toasts.

10/ Leaving your chopsticks upright in a bottle of rice in Japan

The more you hold your chopsticks apart from your food, the more sophisticated you are considered to be. You should always hold the chopsticks at least in the two-third up. You shouldn't cross them over each other, point at people with them or rest them on the opposite side of your plate. The worst thing you can do with them is to put them upright in a bottle of rice. This is a Japanese funeral rite when the chopsticks are left by the bedside of the newly deceased.

Brought to you by Tourism-Review.com, the tourism news provider for the travel trade community worldwide. Visit www.tourism-review.com.

Date: 2009-08-10

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/top-faux-pas-travelers-should-be-aware-of-news1761>