

	United States	
CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES		
Greetings	In the United States, we are generally informal, introduce ourselves readily to others, and expect to be called by our first names whether at home or at work.	
Visiting	Here, too, we are mostly informal, though we do expect guests to arrive at a specified time because the meal is often served at first. Gifts are not expected when visiting. The primary goal of the host is to have guests feel comfortable, "to sit where they like, and to do as they please."	
Eating	Although in this melting pot there are some cultural variations, generally, the fork is used in the right hand for eating. The knife is used only for cutting or spreading, then put back down beside the plate. Some foods such as pizza or tacos are eaten with the hands. It is customary to leave a 15 percent tip in restaurants.	
Gestures	We are comfortable only if there is considerable space between people conversing, i.e. at least two feet. A touch on the arm or shoulder during conversation, however, is common. Eye contact is important if the speaker is to be perceived as sincere. We sit casually, crossing our legs or putting them up.	
THE PEOPLE		
General Attitudes	Generally, outspokenness and frankness are valued, and few topics of conversation are taboo, although very personal questions are avoided by those who are not close friends. Although we might "criticize the government, most of us are very patriotic and believe	

	the United States is one of the greatest countries in the world. We strongly value our freedom and independence, both as a nation and as individuals."	
Personal Appearance	Appearance and cleanliness are important to us. Style of dressing is a matter of personal choice in the United States, ranging from the casual to formal for certain occasions. Clothing is often used to make a statement.	
Population	The United States is a mix of ethnic groups. Caucasians represent 85 percent. African Americans 12 percent, and the remaining 3 percent encompass Native Americans, people of Hispanic origins, and others. "One of the fastest growing populations is that of Asian descent."	
Language	English is the predominant language, although there is also a sizable Spanish-speaking minority. American English is different from the Queen's English, using its own pronunciation, idioms, and slang.	
Religion	Nearly two-thirds of U.S. citizens has some religious affiliation. Freedom of worship and tolerance of the religious preferences of others are ideals. "About 20 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, while over 30 percent belong to a variety of Protestant or other Christian Churches. Over 30 percent belongs to no church."	
LIFESTYLE		
The Family	While the family is still important as a social institution, it has changed in the recent past. Single-parent families or blended families are common. The family also no longer stays put, but moves frequently for education or job opportunities.	

Dating and Marriage	"Dating is a social pastime in the United States." Premarital sex is common, and many people choose to live together before getting married. The average age for marriage is in the mid- to late-twenties.	
Diet	Although fast food restaurants remain popular, eating habits have changed with health concerns. The variety of ethnic foods available is great, and many people are willing to experiment with other cuisine. We "consume large amounts of candy, ice cream, and other sweets."	
Business	Common business hours are between around 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., although retail establishments often stay open until 9:00 p.m. or even twenty-four hours. A forty-hour work week is the norm, but many of us work longer.	
Recreation	We love team sports, playing them, watching our children play them, or watching them on television. We also enjoy working out by cycling, jogging, racquetball etc. "Leisure activities include watching television, eating out, picnics, attending music concerts, and traveling."	
Recreation	We love team sports, playing them, watching our children play them, or watching them on television. We also enjoy working out by cycling, jogging, racquetball etc. "Leisure activities include watching television, eating out, picnics, attending music concerts, and traveling."	