

# 15 WAYS TO NOT LOOK LIKE A FOOL ABROAD

**1 CHINA, INDIA, AND AFGHANISTAN.** These three countries don't adhere to the "clean plate club." Finishing everything on your plate means you weren't given enough food in China (and could be insulting), while in India and Afghanistan, an empty plate signals that you want another helping.

**2 GERMANY AND KENYA.** On the other hand, if you don't finish everything on your plate in these two countries, your hosts may feel insulted that you didn't enjoy the dish.

**3 GERMANY.** Americans tend to smile a lot, even at strangers, but Germans primarily use their smiles to show affection to those close to them. So if you're attending a business meeting in Germany, keep things on the serious side. If you laugh during a meeting, they may frown even more.

**4 SAUDI ARABIA.** The men there stand much closer to one another than Americans do. Although it might feel like they're invading your "personal space," close proximity is the social norm for Saudis, so try not to back away.

**5 GREECE.** If you're invited to a dinner party, don't show up empty-handed. A small gift of flowers or wine is expected.

**6 AUSTRALIA.** Don't try to "speak Australian" to an Australian. "G'day, mate" won't go over well. A simple "hello there" will do. And don't mention that Australia was founded as a penal colony; that's how only a few immigrants arrived there.

**7 CANADA.** When discussing the indigenous population, avoid the terms “Indian,” “Eskimo,” and “tribe.” Each is considered offensive. Instead, say “First Nations,” “Inuit,” and “bands” or “nations” for specific tribes.

**8 MEXICO.** Don’t be insulted if you show up on time for a meeting and it takes an hour for everyone else to get there. Meeting times are approximate. For parties, however, you’re expected to be punctual.

**9 CHINA.** If a Chinese businessman gives you his business card, you are expected to give yours in return. That holds true even if a group of them gives you their cards. They should all get one in return. So bring plenty.

**10 JAPAN.** Apologize frequently during conversation, even if you have nothing to apologize for.

**11 MALAYSIA.** Pointing your index finger at someone is considered rude. Instead, point with your right thumb, with the other fingers folded into your palm.

**12 INDIA.** Cows are considered sacred, so leave your leather at home. And don’t make light of this custom (such as joking about how great cheeseburgers taste).

**13 THAILAND.** Thais consider the head to be the sacred seat of the soul, so unless you’re a monk or a family member, don’t touch anyone’s head—especially a child’s.

**14 BELGIUM.** A standard greeting is three kisses on the cheeks, alternating from one cheek to the other.

**15 ITALY.** When in Rome, do as the Romans do.