



United States Culture





Welcome to the U.S.A!

You Are Welcome Here

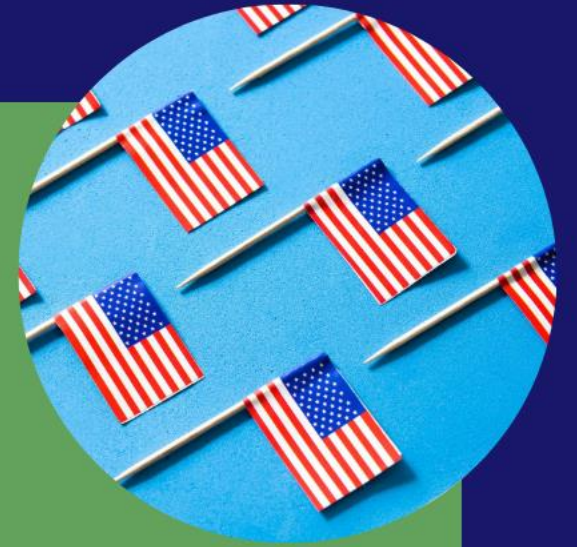
Coming to a new place can be a challenge. Take a few minutes to learn more about the culture in our country and community.

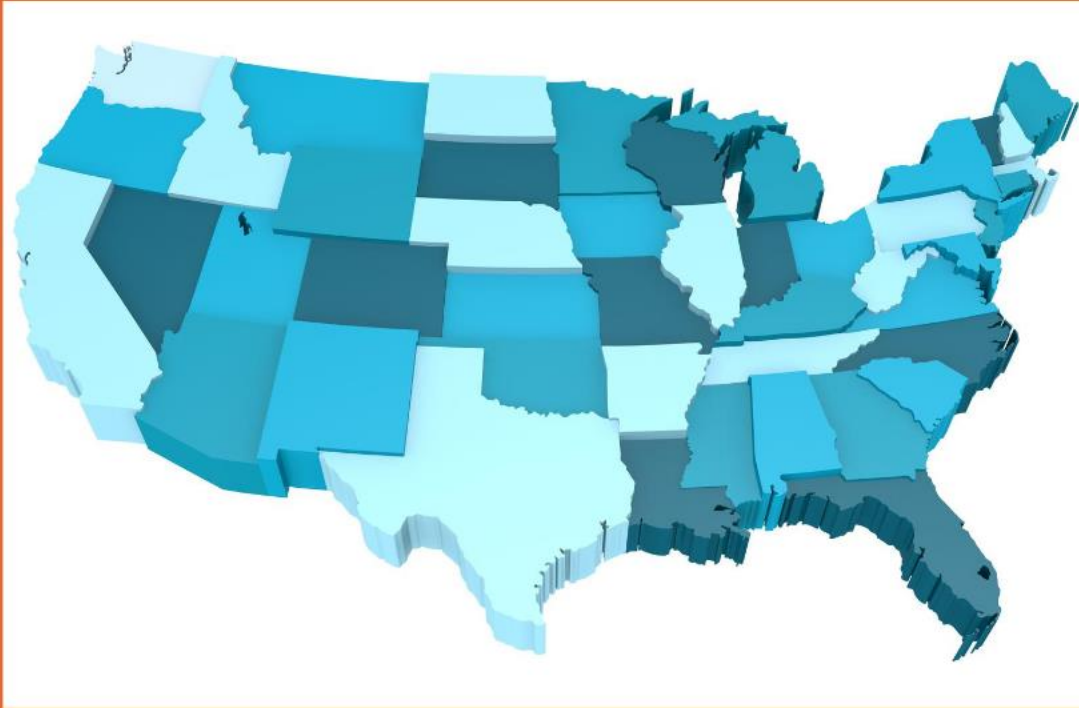
Depending on your home culture, some of these descriptions may be things you are used to, but don't assume everything will be like home. You may be surprised about some of the differences you experience.



Let's start with some basic information

The United States of America





The U.S.A.
is a Very
Large
Country

50 States



Each state has its own government and laws.

Each state also has unique cultures and traditions.



It will take you 4 to 6 days of travel If you drive across the U.S. from coast to coast.

There are also at least five distinct regions (and maybe more depending on who you ask)



The U.S. is the third most populated country in the world (behind China and India)

More Than 331 Million People



Kentucky

The "Bluegrass State"

Located in the Southeast
Region of the United States

Famous for:
The Kentucky Derby
Horse Farms
Mammoth Cave National Park
Kentucky Fried Chicken



What about the people?

There is no such thing as a typical American



**Most
Americans
can trace
their history
to several
national,
cultural, and
ethnic groups**

Diversity

**Many Americans
also enjoy the
fusion of the
cultures around
them and have
adopted traditions
from other
cultures as their
own.**

Many Americans are like peaches with a soft outer layer, but a harder interior that they are less willing to share with people they don't know very well.



Friendly and Open

Many people are very friendly when you first meet them. They may tell you details about themselves, their families, and their friends that you only share with people you know well.

It is often easy to start a casual friendship.

Relationships

You may be from a culture where it is harder to get to know someone when you first meet them, but once you get past the hard exterior, you are used to being open with one another- like a coconut.



Sometimes it can be more difficult to build a deeper personal relationship.

Make the effort to build good relationships



Question

Mentimeter Survey 1

Scan the QR code and participate in the survey.



Informality

The U.S. culture is much more informal than many other cultures in the world.

Most people call one another by their given first name when they meet and don't use honorary prefixes in most circumstances.

Exception: You should call your professors Dr. and use their last name, unless they tell you something else. (For example- Dr. Carter)

Hint: If you don't know someone's preferred name, listen to how they introduce themselves and watch how they sign emails.



Inclusion

Americans don't like to think that some people are not welcome in a group or activity. We also don't like to think that some people may have more opportunities than other people.

Truthfully, people are still left out and some people do have more opportunities than others, but in the U.S. most people will say its wrong and look down on people who are okay with class distinctions.



Authority

In the U.S., leaders are expected to care about the people they have authority over.

Many Americans value team work and believe that everyone should have the opportunity to present their ideas and share their opinions, even if they disagree with one another or with their leaders.

Caution- there are wrong ways to disagree. Treating everyone respectfully is important.



**Speak up and tell
people what you
think, even when
they are leaders**



**Treat everyone
with respect**



**Be welcoming to
others, even when
they are from a
different social
group**



**How does
this effect
me?**

**Tell people your
preferred name
and call them their
preferred name
too**



**Remember that
informality isn't a
lack of respect**



**If you become a
leader, care
about your team
and ask for their
input**



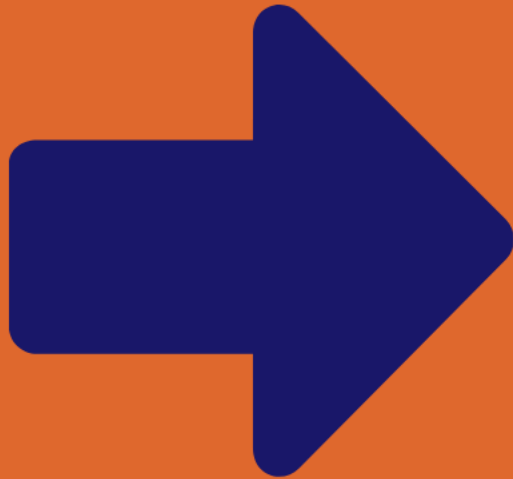
**What you do
matters more
than your social
rank**



Communication Tips

In the U.S. most people prefer to focus on the reason they want to talk to you before they talk about their day or what is going on in their lives. In your culture, you may be used to having a conversation before you mention the reason you have contacted someone. In the U.S. most people talk about the reason first.

Be clear and direct



Watch Your Hands



Hand gestures mean different things in different cultures. Be aware of how you use your hands in conversation and confirm that the signs you are used to don't mean something else here. Also, if someone makes a gesture, confirm that you understand what it means.

When you speak to people in the U.S., especially those who are older than you, eye contact is important. In the U.S. looking directly at someone while you talk with them shows that you care about them and what they are saying. It can also help the person feel like you are trustworthy.

Eye Contact Shows You Care



Communication Tips

It is difficult to understand jokes and humor in other cultures, especially when you are speaking another language. Be patient with yourself and others when you don't understand one another's humor. Ask questions when you don't understand or it seems like they said something wrong.

Understanding Humor



The Personal Bubble

People in the U.S. can be very sensitive about touching others. It is a good idea to observe how comfortable a person is touching other people before you try to hug them or touch their arm while you are talking. Each person is different. You can also ask how comfortable they are touching others.

Most people in the U.S. like to leave space between themselves and others. Americans often leave chairs between themselves and others and may step away if they feel like someone else is too close to them. When people do this, they are trying to be comfortable, not mean.

To Touch or Not to Touch?



"How Are You?"

is another way to say hello

Normally people aren't asking for a detailed answer when they ask this question.



Most people are not expecting you to tell them details about how you are really doing.

That doesn't mean they are uninterested. If they are a friend they may ask follow-up questions. Otherwise, they are using it as a greeting.



Question

Mentimeter Survey 2

Scan the QR code and participate in the survey.



Next- Traditional Values

Independence
Equality
Patriotism



Independence

This has been one of the United States' core values since before we were a country.

The value of independence influences our country in many ways

Individuality



"Be Yourself"

The U.S. is one of the most individualistic countries in the world. Most people who grow up in this culture believe that having the freedom to choose who they want to be and how they want to live their lives to be extremely important.

Personal Freedom



"Have It Your Way"

Self Determination



"Choose Your Own Path"

Most Americans plan lives based on their personal goals and talents. We may ask for other's opinions, but usually we make decisions on our own. We also normally believe people should enjoy the benefits or suffer the consequences of the decisions they have made.

Personal Responsibility



"Stand on Your Own Feet"

Equality

**Understanding how this value
influences U.S. culture can be
complicated**

We are more successful in some areas than others.

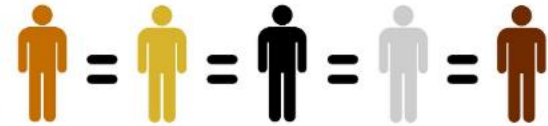
"Created Equal"

The U.S. was founded on the belief that its citizens should be given equal treatment under the law and equal opportunities to pursue their own happiness

Social Class



Race



Disability



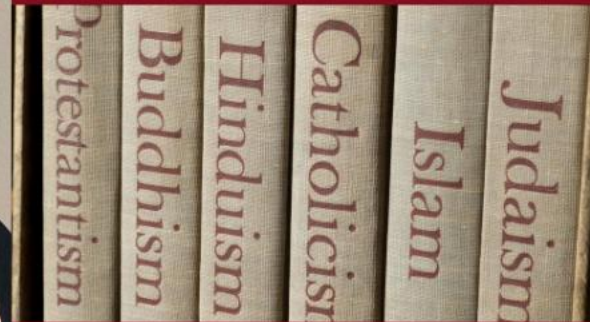
Gender



Ethnicity



Religion



Do inequalities still exist?

Yes

Over the years, there have been many positive changes and equality continues to be important in American culture.

That does not mean that there is not discrimination or unequal treatment, but the laws of the U.S., Kentucky, and CU rules support all people, including immigrants and international visitors, and cases of discrimination are treated seriously.

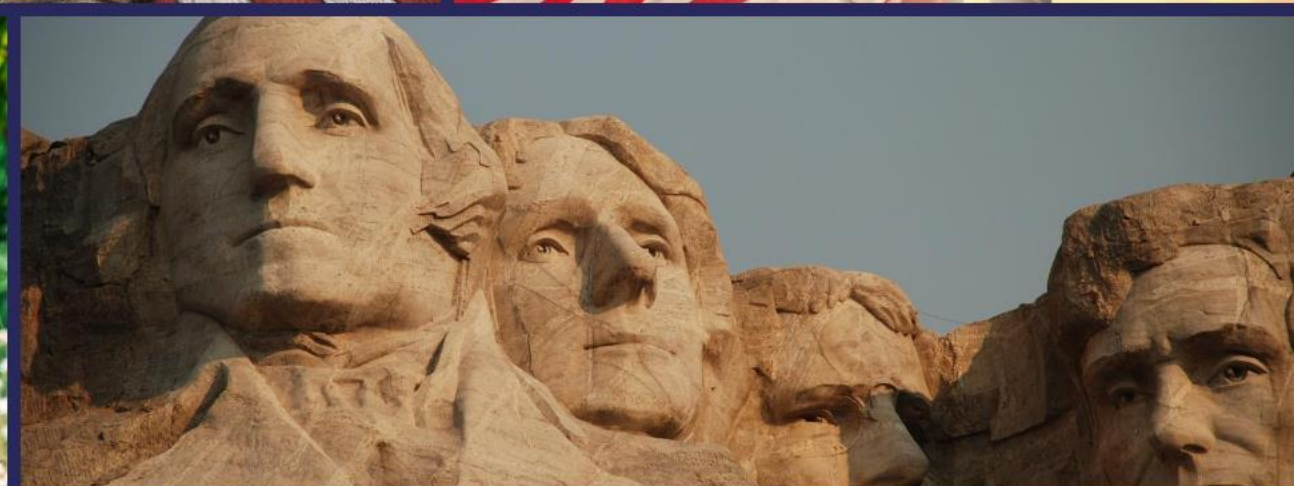
While you are in the U.S., you will probably see news about the ongoing struggle for equality in the U.S. We encourage you to become more informed and to take part in campus events that focus on these issues.



Patriotism

**Many international students are
unprepared for the ways that people
in the U.S. express their patriotism.**

Take a look at some examples



People in the U.S. are interested in learning about and experiencing other cultures.

However, you will probably be asked some questions that show ignorance about where you are from and where it is located.

Remember that most of the time the people asking these questions are truly interested in learning more, and please and be open to sharing your stories.

Free
Speech



You can believe
what you want,
but you cannot
force others to
agree or do
anything you
want as a result of
your beliefs.



Other
Values
You
Should
Know
About

You are allowed
to say what you
want, but
people don't
have to listen or
like it.

to be best in
point of view
Belief [br'li
confidence
religious f
believed; c
hot i

Respect
people's time.
"Time is
money."
So be on time
or early





Question

Mentimeter Survey 3

Scan the QR code and participate in the survey.



THERE'S MORE!

Watch for opportunities throughout the year
to learn about U.S. culture and to share your
culture with the CU community