

Culture Shock!

Many students find it difficult to adjust in a foreign country because they cannot understand different points of view, traditions, or values of the host country. You might feel uncomfortable at the beginning in an environment so different from home. However, remember that adjustment takes time and patience to understand the people and the culture in which you are immersed. **Know that these feelings are very normal and will pass. You are changing; becoming a global citizen.** There are many "differences" between countries around the world, so usually there isn't a specific rule to go by. If you find yourself wondering about local customs or social niceties, ask someone.

Coping with culture shock

Here are some tips to ensure that you have a more enjoyable trip.

- Read up about the country and its culture before you leave. This way the country and its people seem more familiar when you arrive. This will allow you to be aware of the differences in the new country and will help you prepare to deal with them when confronted.
- Familiarize yourself with the local customs and language. By doing so you will avoid cultural misunderstandings where you may become offended or might offend others.
- Remain open minded about the culture and customs that you will be immersed into.
- Take "time out" or rest apart from cultural exchange in order to reduce the "shock" of adjustment.