



District 5360 Youth Exchange Information Sheet #5 – Host Culture Questionnaire



Giving some thought to and seeking out answers to the questions listed here is an important part of preparing for your exchange experience. Tap into the resources around you including former exchange students, current inbound exchange students, your Rotary club and other cultural resources in your community and in Alberta.

Obviously it is not possible to be 100% prepared or to learn everything there is to know about your host country in advance. Nor would you want to – learning through your in-country experiences is a huge part of being a youth exchange student. Doing some advance preparation for the culture you will be living in over the next year will help jump start your in-country learning, get you involved sooner and go a long way to making your exchange a more rewarding and positive experience.

History

- ◆ Generally outline the country's history – the major areas and events
- ◆ Name the national heroes and heroines – why are they considered heroes/heroines
- ◆ What is the history of the country's relationship with Canada
- ◆ What are the national holidays? How can you, as a foreigner participate?

Politics

- ◆ What is the current political structure of the country?
- ◆ Who are the major current leaders?
- ◆ Is military service compulsory? If so, for whom and how long?

Religion

- ◆ What is/are the dominant religion(s)?
- ◆ Is there an official state religion? Which one?
- ◆ What are the sacred writings of the dominant religion?

Gender Relationships

- ◆ Are there separate societal roles for men and women? If so, what are they?
- ◆ What are the rules/norms for relationships in this country? In what types of social activities do young men and women participate together?
- ◆ How can you (as a male or female) expect to be treated?

Family

- ◆ Do people typically get married? If so, what is the common form of marriage ceremony and celebration?
- ◆ What is seen as the ideal family size? Is a typical family nuclear or extended?
- ◆ What is the legal age for voting? Driving? Drinking? Are there differences for men and women?





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Social Etiquette

- ◆ What are the special privileges of gender or age?
- ◆ When is one expected to present or accept gifts? What kind of gifts?
- ◆ How do people greet each other and take leave of each other? Are there differences based on social status, gender, age?

Dress

- ◆ Is there customary attire for women, men and children? Is there a traditional or indigenous style of dress? Who wears it and when?
- ◆ What is the appropriate dress for you in this country? At home? At school?
- ◆ Are there special dress customs you should know about? i.e. taking off shoes in certain places? What types of clothing might be taboo?
- ◆ What types of clothing should you have for various occasions you might encounter?

Food

- ◆ What foods are most popular? How are they prepared?
- ◆ How and with what utensils, if any, do people eat? (manners, customs etc...)
- ◆ Are there taboo foods that are considered inedible or not permitted for traditional or religious reasons?

Leisure

- ◆ What are the favourite leisure activities of adults? Of young people?
- ◆ What are the favourite sports? Is there a national sport?
- ◆ Are there sports teams at school? In the community?
- ◆ How available are TV, radio, Internet?

Health

- ◆ What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located? How are they accessed?
- ◆ Are there common home remedies for minor ailments? What are the attitudes toward folk medicine? Is it commonly practised?
- ◆ Is the water potable?
- ◆ Which immunizations are required to enter the country? Which are recommended?

Values

- ◆ What things are taboos to do in this country? Which things are taboos to talk about in common conversations?
- ◆ What type of moral code is followed? How does this moral code influence attitudes toward alcohol, relationships etc... How does this differ from what you are used to?





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Education

- ◆ Is education free? Compulsory to what age? Available to all?
- ◆ In school are children separated by age, gender, class, etc...?
- ◆ What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, religious?
- ◆ What style of teaching prevails in schools?

Daily Life

- ◆ Are prices asked for merchandise for sale fixed or is one expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted?
- ◆ Is it okay to touch merchandise for sale? Does touching indicate a desire to buy?
- ◆ When does the normal work or school day begin and end? Is there “siesta” time?
- ◆ What is the currency? What is the current value to the dollar? Is it stable?
- ◆ What is the best way to handle money? Use credit cards? Open a local bank account?
- ◆ Are there charges for telephone calls? Local? Long distance?
- ◆ Is the use of cell phones common? Should having a cell phone be a consideration?
- ◆ What are public toilet facilities like? Available? For a fee?
- ◆ What is the public transportation like? How easy is it to get around?

Rotary

- ◆ What is the history of Rotary in your host country
- ◆ Is Rotary the same in your host country as here?
- ◆ Are there women in Rotary in your host country?
- ◆ How many clubs are there in your host district?
- ◆ How many exchange students will there be in your host district? How long has your club been involved with the exchange program?
- ◆ How often will you be expected to go to Rotary meetings?
- ◆ What is the appropriate attire for going to Rotary meetings?

On being a foreigner in this country

- ◆ How will your upbringing and social status compare with the majority of people living in this country?
- ◆ Do these people generally “like” Canadians? Other foreigners?
- ◆ When you go must you register with city officials? The police? The Canadian Embassy?
- ◆ If you are an ethnic Canadian (e.g. Asian, Indian) how will that change, or not, your interactions within this culture?

