

## **21 Things in the US that Puzzle Most Foreigners**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1HxW5vc\\_IU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1HxW5vc_IU)  
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You may have lived in the US your whole life without realizing that something totally normal for you seems bizarre to people from other parts of the world.

Who knew that munching on fried pickles in a highly air-conditioned room was so outlandish?

Here are some other funny Americanisms I've gathered...

#21. Sales tax is a guessing game.

When you go shopping in the US and see a price tag says \$14.88, don't expect to pay 14.88 at the register!

Sales tax is NOT included in the price of an item!

And since this tax can vary from state to state, figuring out your total can turn into the ultimate mental math challenge.

In many European countries, the sales tax is already included in the price.

It's known as a Value Added Tax, or VAT.

#20. We're total workaholics. A lot of Americans don't feel the need to take long vacations, so they often let vacation and sick hours pile up without ever using them.

Plus, most employers only give you 2 weeks out of the year!

But in a lot of other countries, like Brazil or Finland, workers are encouraged to take an average of 30 days of vacay!

Maybe I should take some time off...or perhaps I'll just keep waiting!

#19. It's not a party without red Solo cups.

In the States, this red plastic cup is synonymous with "party on, dude!"

But other countries apparently don't recognize this cup to mean the same thing.

People in the UK, for example, don't use red Solo cups at get-togethers.

They have to go to a special website to purchase the cups for American-themed parties!

#18. Deep-fried everything! Whether it's fried pickles or even fried Oreos, America has it all!

Fried fish recipes first appeared in Spanish and Portuguese cookbooks as far back as the 1200s, and the Greeks were frying food in olive oil way back in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE!

But as America does with many things, they've adopted a tradition from far off lands and took it up a notch - or five!

#17. Get everything you need right at the pharmacy.

If you're not from the US, it may be puzzling to walk into a pharmacy and see aisles and aisles of over-the-counter meds, toys, makeup, clothes, and even groceries!

Unlike in other countries where pharmacies sell medicine and medical supplies exclusively, the ones in the US are like small convenience stores where you can grab magazines, Tylenol, and a frozen pizza in one fell swoop!

#16. Fill 'er up! In America, if a restaurant doesn't offer free refills on fountain drinks, it's kind of strange.

But in other countries, once you buy one beverage, that's it!

France banned refills on sugary sodas back in 2017 in order to combat the current obesity epidemic.

But in the US, the idea of free re-fills is still alive and well.

#15. If you don't like it, return it!

Whether it's an ugly sweater from Grandma or a heinous pair of earrings from an ex, if you don't like it, you can just return it!

In America, making returns at stores is pretty normal and super easy.

I mean the US even has a National Returns Day in January conveniently held for you to return holiday gifts you weren't too fond of!

#14. Tips for everyone! Cab drivers, servers, hairdressers - you gotta tip 'em!

Tips are acceptable for almost any service in the US and sometimes consist of 25% of the bill!

But there are places in other parts of the world, such as Japan, that consider tipping incredibly rude, like in restaurants.

When you travel to different countries, it's important to learn their tipping etiquette so that you don't offend anyone!

#13. I'll take my coffee to go.

With a Starbucks on every corner, it's very normal to see people toting around a coffee as they shop, commute to work, and whatever else, at all times of the day.

But in many parts of the world, coffee is meant to be sipped on while seated and enjoying the paper or chatting with friends.

Tugging your coffee along with you through the day might be due to the fact that the cups are huge and take longer to drink.

Who's got that kind of time to be sitting in a café for hours?

#12. The land of ice-cold drinks Speaking of drinks, if it's not a hot coffee or cocoa, then it's probably got ice in it.

Tea, coffee, lemonade, soda, water - Americans like it on the rocks!

If you go elsewhere in the world, odds are you'll be sipping your soda at room temperature (or maybe slightly refrigerated) if you don't specifically ask for ice.

#11. Keeping the AC on at all times Americans must have an aversion to being hot!

In many parts of Europe, people simply don't use air conditioning as much as they do in the States.

Here, it's expected to always have the AC blaring, and a lot of visitors find it pretty strange and quite chilly!

But come on, it makes sense! If you're cold, you can layer up.

If you're hot, all you can do is suffer and complain about it!

#10. Looking at dollars is a snooze-fest.

I remember going to Europe for the first time and thinking their banknotes look like Monopoly money!

And I guess a lot of countries have bills of different colors and sizes depending on the value, like Swedish krona, Chinese renminbi, and Russian rubles.

But not in the US! It's all greenbacks, baby!

Sure, 10s look a little yellowy, 50s are kinda pinkish, and Benjamins seem bluer than the others.

But still, US dollars definitely aren't as fun and rainbowy as other currencies!

#9. Giving a thumbs up In America, even little kids know a thumbs up means "good job," "way to go," or anything positive like that.

But if you travel to Greece or the Middle East and give this common American gesture, you probably won't make too many friends.

Hey, how about giving this video a thumbs up for the useful tip! Heh-heh!

#8. The date-writing conundrum.

So many visitors to the US get really confused by the month-day-year thing because most parts of the world write the day, then the month, and finally the year.

There's no clear historical reason why the US insists on writing the date differently, but we just do!

#7. Pre-baby baby showers.

Many cultures celebrate a new baby coming into the world, but America is one of the few places that does this before the baby actually gets here.

In East Asian countries, for instance, celebrations for a new baby are held once the child is born as doing otherwise is seen as bad luck.

#6. Where "How are you?" means "Hello!"

Sure, people ask each other how they're doing in other countries, but Americans often use this phrase as a replacement for "Hey!" or "Hello!"

It doesn't even require a real response - people just answer with "Fine, thanks!" ...even if they're in a horrible mood or had a bad day!

#5. Bathroom stalls that aren't so private.

Don't like doing your business in front of complete strangers?

Americans don't either, of course, but the fact that bathroom stall doors often reveal as much as your entire lower leg seems to say otherwise!

There's no clear answer as to why there's this big gap in public bathroom stalls here, but many guess it's for safety reasons. Or ventilation? Just saying...

#4. No one uses their "inside voice"

A lot of my friends who are visiting or moved to the US tell me that locals speak so loud compared to other countries.

Whether it's talking on your cell phone or chatting with a friend over lunch, Americans seem to really like projecting their voice.

I don't know, maybe we just wanna make sure we're heard?

#3. It's all about choices.

Walk into any grocery store aisle, and you'll notice at least 10 different options for cookies, crackers, or cereal.

People in the UK don't have this many options for foods, and you'll almost never find anything in grape flavor there.

#2. Hopping into the backseat of a cab.

When getting into a cab, it's customary in the States to scoot on into the back seat.

But in countries like New Zealand and Australia, riding anywhere but shotgun can be a little rude.

#1. That classic American smile In the US, people aren't afraid to be nice and show their pearly whites... all the time.

And according to a 2015 study at Brown University, because America has always been a very diverse country, it forced people to smile at each other more since they couldn't always communicate with language.

That's just one historical theory as to why Americans tend to smile more than people in other places do. Whether you're from the US or not, can you add any more strange "Americanisms" to the list?

Let me know down in the comments! If you learned something new today, then give this video a like, share it with a friend, and here are some more cool videos to check out from the Bright Side of life!