

NEWSLETTER

Adjusting to Life in America

What does it take to adjust to American life? How can two or more cultures be balanced? Here are some helpful tips!

American Values

Although Americans come from diverse cultural backgrounds, they are mainly bound together by core values that stretch back to the beginning of the colonial times. These values are the unique characteristics of an American. In general, they are the following:

- Individualism, independence, and privacy
- Egalitarianism
- Belief in the future, change, and progress

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." - Declaration of Independence

These values lead to the belief that every person is unique in their own way but at the same time, equal opportunities and rights should be accessible to everyone. There is also the strong belief that American are hold accountable for their future and that change will bring about positive progress, improvement, and growth.

Other values include:

- Time and its importance
- Self-help
- Competition and free enterprise
- Practicality and efficiency
- Informality
- Directness, openness, and honesty
- Materialism and acquisitiveness

Culture Shock

"It's okay to experience culture shock. At first, you may feel excited and interested about the new and different culture. This is known as the honeymoon phase. However, like all honeymoons, the thrill may not last. You may experience confusion, anxiety, homesickness, uncertainty, and disorientation.

"When I first arrived here, most people are so friendly. Rarely do people judge you. There is no pressure to conform to any groups or cliques. My experience is mainly positive. However, public safety is definitely a major concern and there appears to be no reforms in sight." - International Student of 1 Year

Once the honeymoon phase has faded, the negotiation phase sinks in. You may begin to contrast the norms and beliefs of American culture to those of your home country. Sadness, frustration, and misunderstanding may set in which can lead social withdrawals and spark a longing to return home.

Culture Shock- continued...

Language barriers and assimilation difficulties may prove to be an even more difficult challenge during this time.

"I miss talking to someone who speaks the language as I do. I don't have that opportunity in my given environment."
- Permanent Resident of 8 Years

"I call my family back home once every week to let them know how I am doing. It's mostly just me rambling on, the good and bad. They give me the courage to continue on." - Professional of 2 Years on Work Visa

Next is the adjustment phase. The duration of this depends on the individual and effort must be put into it. Some people may take a few months, while others may take at least up to a year to understand customs of the new culture. You will have routines and methods to dealing with the changes that happen around you. For instance, what do you do when you are lost? Do you directly ask someone on the street, or do you head straight to a police station for help? As you begin to adjust, you will gradually accept the new cultural ways with a more positive attitude and experience less of the negative.

"While USA is not perfect, at least there is much more greenery and less crowdedness than in my home country. I also love the plethora of options available and the liberty to choose them, such as universities, food, etc." - International Student of 1 Year

Communities are extremely helpful in helping new Americans settle in. They range from student organizations to ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Little Saigon, Little India, Koreatown, etc. If you ever need assistance with anything, ranging from mental health to housing, etc., don't be shy and ask! Asians in general tend to be very communal but don't just limit yourself to that community. The U.S. is a large country with many opportunities. There are many things that are worth exploring!

References: Florida Institute of Technology. "Adjusting to Life in America", accessed 24 July 2022, <https://www.fit.edu/media/site-specific/wwwfitedu/iss/documents/Adjusting_to_Life_in_America.pdf>.

Kohls, Robert. "The Values Americans Live By", Meridian House International, 1984.



"I don't really remember, since I emigrated at a very young age. I recall doing lots of activities at my local ethnic Church." - Naturalized Citizen of 60 Years

Finally, we have the mastery phase. Once you reach here, congratulations! Not only are you able to mingle comfortably in your new culture, but you are also able to introduce, share, and integrate your home country values and customs with America. Every experience that you have gone through has come to shape who you have become and how you view the world.

There is no one formula for how to adjust to a new culture in a new environment. It is completely up to you on what and how you want it to be. That is the beauty of USA. Remember, you are not alone. Don't forget that you have friends, schoolmates, and colleagues with you! Whether you have family with you in the U.S. or back home, stay close to them as they will offer you moments of comfort and strength when you need it most.

Monthly Asian food

"Ghost Festival" duck-eating custom



Chinese's Ghost Festival is a traditional Chinese folk festival celebrated every year on the 14th and 15th nights of the seventh lunar month. It also known as Half-July, Hungry Ghost, Zhong yuan or Ullambana Festival. On this day, all families visit their family cemeteries, clean them, and honor the dead.

The tradition of serving roasted duck at the Chinese's Ghost Festival has been passed down from generation to generation. This is because Chinese harmonics of duck are "press," which indicates the suppression of "ghosts," signifying those ghosts or negative things are to be "suppressed".

Spotlight Events for August

- Aug 25 – KPOP- Seventeen World Tour [Be the Sun] - Chicago, Illinois
For more details: [Click here](#)
- Sept 3 - Lantern Festival - Chinatown Greenway Beyond "The Gate" - Newton, MA
For more details: [Click here](#)
- Sept 3 and Sept 4 - First Filipino & Pacific Islander Festival - Schertz, TX
For more details: [Click here](#)
- Sep 17 - Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving) Festival - Paramus, NJ
For more details: [Click here](#)

Copyright © 2022
All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: hello@sparklechange.io