



TRANSCRIPT – CULTURAL DIFFERENCES-USA vs. SPAIN: THE VIDEO

There are a lot of cultural similarities between the United States and Spain. And as time goes by, because of media and globalization, there are more and more. Think about the importance of the Simpsons for example. There still are, however, significant differences. If we travel to the USA, or if an American travels to Spain, it is important to recognize these differences if we want to live in that country and understand how people think and act. We will have a better time and will feel less homesick. So here are a few differences.

Food - Perhaps one of the most important differences between Spain and the USA is in terms of food. Spain is blessed with excellent cuisine and food products and is known for its Mediterranean diet, that is, lots of vegetables and fruit, bread and cereals, fish and olive oil. Although you can eat well in the USA, people eat out more and consume more fast food than in Spain. The times are different as well. The most important meal in Spain is at lunch, usually between 2 PM and 3 PM, while in the USA it is dinner between 6 PM and 7 PM. Breakfast tends to be bigger in the USA with eggs, bacon, toast and orange juice while lunch tends to be lighter, maybe a sandwich or a salad.

Greetings and Public Display of Affection - The most common way of greeting for all genders in the USA is shaking hands. In Spain, when a woman and man or a woman and woman meet for the first time they kiss each other on the cheek. In the USA, kissing on the cheek is usually reserved for very good friends and family members. Americans are usually more reserved when it comes to touching. In Spain, it is also very common to see couples openly showing affection for each other in public. In the USA, this is called PDA, or Public Display of Affection which is looked down upon.

Taking time - Although the idea that all Spaniards take a siesta is highly exaggerated, it is true that Spaniards take time more leisurely than most Americans. Lunch may last hours at the weekend and they love to enjoy time with friends just having a coffee. It is very rare to see people eating

while they are walking or driving. The USA is a society on the go, lunch is usually very short, and relaxing is seen as 'wasting time' or 'being lazy.' For that same reason Americans value punctuality very much.

Holidays and Festivals - In the USA there are 10 public holidays as opposed to 14 in Spain. In addition, there are many more regional and local holidays than the USA. This is why Spain has the reputation of being a 'festive' country. In the USA, public holidays are often related to famous people or historical events, while in Spain many are of a religious nature. Some holidays like Halloween are becoming more popular in Spain but costume-wearing is more common in Carnival in many regions. And although Spain celebrates Christmas, gift-giving is not done on the 25th of December but on the 6th of January.

All of these differences of course are generalizations. There are many Americans who take a siesta or Spaniards who eat quickly. As the world becomes more global, there are less and less differences. You can eat 'tapas' in New York and many young Spaniards love McDonalds.

But behind these stereotypes, there is a little bit of truth that speaks about how Americans and Spaniards view life.