



TRANSCRIPT – CULTURAL STEREOTYPES-THE USA AND THE UK: THE VIDEO

Cultural stereotypes often cause misunderstanding between people from different countries. When we travel to another country we have expectations of what the people and country will be like. Very often it is different than the reality. Many of these stereotypes are also very negative. People in Mediterranean countries are considered 'more relaxed' than their North European neighbours. Some peoples are considered meaner or dirtier than others. Diversity, however, is what defines the UK and the USA. It is very difficult to speak of 'the English' or the 'Americans' nowadays because there is such a rich variety of cultures and customs. So let's break away by looking at the traditional stereotypes of these countries, then talk about the realities.

Americans and the USA

The vision that most people have of Americans is based on the media and especially television. The most common stereotypes of Americans are that they are patriotic and racist, love guns, eat fast food, are materialistic, and are ignorant of other cultures and geography. Although it is true there is an obesity epidemic, Americans are also obsessed with fitness and many of the most popular exercise trends come from the USA. Guns are an important issue and they are protected by the Constitution, however, there is now a growing movement for more gun control. In comparison with countries with many borders and languages, Americans are in general more ignorant of other cultures and speak less foreign languages, but individually Americans are some of the brightest people on earth if we consider the number of famous entrepreneurs and Nobel Prize winners. As for racism, like other countries there is intolerance towards people of other races, but few have elected a President from a minority group that only represents about 13% of the population. I am speaking of course of the African American, Barack Obama. Latinos represent another 18% of Americans and now there are more than 40 million Americans who speak Spanish. Understandably, Americans are proud of and love their country. It is democratic, diverse, tolerant of religions and races and offers a lot of opportunities.

The British and the UK

Brits, on the other hand, are seen as too polite, they love the British Royal Family, drink a lot of tea, are football hooligans, eat terrible food and talk about the weather all the time. Although it is true that Brits in general drink more tea than other people, other stereotypes are less true. It is estimated for example that at least 20% of the British population are republicans and do not support the English monarchy. Another misconception about Great Britain is that the food is terrible. Perhaps traditional British cuisine is not for everybody, but the UK has been influenced by cuisine from other countries. As a matter of fact, chicken curry, originally from India, is the national dish and most people agree it is very tasty. Some of the best restaurants in the world can also be found in London. British people on the whole are polite and say 'please' 'sorry' and 'thank you' and like small talk, that's why they talk about the weather. But many British people have a keen sense of humour that sometimes can be very witty but also rude. Many people have the idea that it rains more in Great Britain than other European countries. As a matter of fact, it has less average rainfall than most countries. It is true that the British do love football and that hooliganism was a problem in the past, but the reputation of British fans is getting better despite the media.

So, to sum up, it is true that Americans and Brits have different customs and habits and that some stereotypes may represent a portion of the population. However, it would be a great mistake to extend these ideas to the whole population. You might find that the stereotypes have nothing to do with the real people.