



Vistas and Voices

Sample Student Writing from SELI 2007

SUMMER ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE • COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAMS
SUMMER SESSIONS • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

How to Become a Welcomed Traveler

Hello. We are ESL8 students. Have you ever experienced a problem in other countries? We are going to introduce some culture differences between our classmates. We will give you some information about traveling to our countries.

In Europe and South America, it's common that people kiss each other on cheeks instead of shaking hands, except when two men meet; men only shake hands. In France or Brazil, people kiss each other whenever they meet, while in Austria and Germany they only do that when they go out in the evening.

Sometimes, visitors are very surprised when they are greeted in that way, so we have to explain our behavior. In our countries, just shaking hands or saying "Hi!" without kissing is considered cold or even impolite. There is no kissing in business settings.

In Chinese culture, including China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the concept of social hierarchy is very obvious. For example, on the issue of addressing people, people would not call the senior's name directly. In school, students should not call the teacher's name directly; instead they should address people by adding Mr/Mrs/Ms in front of their surnames. Also, when we are having meals, the oldest person starts eating first.

In addition, it is a special phenomenon that the Chinese always insist on paying the bill, and they look like arguing sometimes. If you don't do that, it will be considered as losing face or very rude. So, even if you do not intend to pay for others, you should at least pretend to do so.

In Taiwan and China, politics is a very sensitive issue. So, please do not ask others about their political views. Otherwise, it might trigger a fight sometimes.

There are different life styles between Korea and other countries. Koreans take off their shoes indoors because there are places to keep the shoes next to the door. You may also walk round indoors without slippers. Everyday, we clean our floors with a vacuum and a mop. It's very clean, so you don't need to be worried about that.

Koreans have a "JJigae" culture of sharing. JJigae is a kind of soup. It has many vegetables and meats in JJigae, so it is one of Koreans' main dishes. When Koreans eat the JJigae, they usually don't have a private dish for each person. They put the spoon together in the same bowl.

Is this information surprising to you? If you keep this advice in mind, you can be a welcomed traveler. We hope you have a good time traveling with our advice.

From the students in ESL 8, section 7

The Critique of 'Seoul Garden'

We the ESL 8 students in Davon's class, went to Seoul Garden to have a experience of Korean foods. It was in Japantown. The location was really good, because it was easy to find (Japantown in on Geary St.). Also, the taste was great. We ordered on tofu soup, one kimchi soup, and one kimchi-seafood panke. Moreover, 2 galbi and 1 bulgogi was ordered. We were pretty full when we finished eating. The price was not bad. It was quite expensive compared with Korea, but all around San Francisco's restaurants are expensive. We paid 21 dollars each.

However, in Seoul Garden, there was a problem. It was the tip. The waitress in Seoul Garden required 18% for tip. We gave her about 15 dollars or less, but she demanded 46 dollars for tip from us. We were discomfotable because of the actions of waitress. Therefore, we gave her 40 bucks. The tip was not mandatory, so we didn't need to give her an 18% tip. This part should be corrected, I think.

Haikus

A son went away
Forgot a mother behind
Painful in the heart.

By Eric

Spring is the best season.
Cherry blossoms, good weather.
The date of my birth.

By Yuri Goto

Please don't lie to me.
I know you are a nice guy.
Tell me all the truth.

By Yi-hua Christine Yeh