



WORLD AFFAIRS
COUNCIL OF
PHILADELPHIA



CULTURAL DIPLOMACY TRAINING

WORLD CUP COUNTRY TIPS SHEET

BRAZIL (GROUP C, JUNE 19)

- **Greeting:** Enthusiastic handshakes with good eye contact. Women often exchange kisses on cheeks (starting with the left).
- **Communication:** Brazilians are high energy and expressive. They may interrupt—it's a sign of engagement, not rudeness.
- **Pro Tip:** Avoid the "OK" hand gesture (thumb and index finger in a circle); it is considered a vulgar insult in Brazil.
- **Football Fact:** Brazil is the only nation to have played in every World Cup and has won a record five times.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (GROUP E, JUNE 14 AND 25)

- **Pronounced:** KOHT duh-VWAHR
- **Greeting:** Expect long handshakes. Close friends may "three-way" handshake (normal, then thumbs-up grip, normal again).
- **Communication:** Respect for elders is paramount. Always greet the oldest person in a group first.
- **Pro Tip:** Avoid using the left hand for eating, greeting, or giving business cards or tickets.
- **Football Fact:** Legendary striker Didier Drogba famously helped negotiate a ceasefire in the country's civil war after qualifying for the 2006 World Cup.

CROATIA (GROUP L, JUNE 27)

- **Greeting:** Firm handshakes with direct eye contact. Use "Gospodin" (Mr.) or "Gospođa" (Ms.) for a professional touch.
- **Communication:** Direct and honest. Croats value "Kava" (coffee culture) as a primary way to socialize and do business.
- **Pro Tip:** Avoid raising three fingers (thumb, index, middle) together; in some contexts, this is a sensitive Serbian nationalist symbol.
- **Football Fact:** Despite its small population, Croatia has finished in the top three in three of their six World Cup appearances.

CURAÇAO (GROUP E, JUNE 25)

- **Pronounced:** KUR-uh-sau
- **Greeting:** Friendly and multilingual. Most locals speak Papiamentu, Dutch, Spanish, and English. A warm "Bon Dia" (Good Morning) goes a long way.
- **Communication:** Generally laid-back, very warm and welcoming.
- **Pro Tip:** They value punctuality more than some of their Caribbean neighbors.
- **Football Fact:** Many of the top players for the Netherlands national team have Curaçaoan heritage.

SUPPORTED
BY:



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Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands



This program is funded in part by the Philadelphia City Fund's 2026 Milestone Grant Fund, supported by PECCO.

Disclaimer: Cultural Diplomacy Training is designed to provide a general overview of cultural diplomacy and equip participants with tools to navigate cross-cultural interactions effectively. While we may make broad statements about certain cultures or groups of people to illustrate key concepts, we recognize that cultures are dynamic, and individuals within any group have unique experiences, perspectives, and identities.

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ECUADOR (GROUP E, JUNE 14)

- **Greeting:** A firm handshake and slight nod. Close friends may use an "abrazo" (a brief hug with a pat on the back).
- **Communication:** Formality is respected. Address individuals by professional titles (e.g., Doctor, Ingeniero) if known.
- **Pro Tip:** Avoid pointing with a single finger; instead, use the whole hand or a slight nod of the head to indicate direction.
- **Football Fact:** Their Atahualpa Olympic Stadium in Quito is at an altitude of over 9,000 feet, contributing to the team's reputation for incredible physical stamina.

FRANCE (GROUP I, JUNE 22)

- **Greeting:** A light handshake or "la bise" (air kisses) for acquaintances. Always begin any interaction with a formal "Bonjour" before asking a question.
- **Communication:** Value logic and intellectual debate. Being direct is appreciated, but keep "small talk" brief and professional.
- **Pro Tip:** Maintain a moderate volume. Shouting or being overly loud in public spaces is viewed as a lack of composure.
- **Football Fact:** The reigning European powerhouse, having reached the final in three of the last seven tournaments.

GHANA (GROUP L, JUNE 27)

- **Greeting:** Handshakes are essential. Use the right hand only; the left hand is traditionally reserved for personal hygiene and is considered "unclean" for greetings.
- **Communication:** Indirect and polite. Inquiring about one's family or general well-being before getting to business is valued.
- **Pro Tip:** To beckon someone, keep your palm facing down; waving with the palm up is often reserved for hailing taxis.
- **Football Fact:** Known as the "Black Stars," they were the only African team to reach the knockout stages in both 2006 and 2010.

HAITI (GROUP C, JUNE 19)

- **Greeting:** Handshakes for men; a kiss on each cheek for women. Use a respectful "Bonjour" (morning) or "Bonswa" (evening).
- **Communication:** Haitians are very proud of their history, as the world's first free Black republic. Treat interactions with high dignity.
- **Pro Tip:** Use the formal "Vous" (if speaking French) or "Ou" (in Kreyòl) when addressing elders or people in positions of authority.
- **Football Fact:** This 2026 appearance is a massive point of pride and resilience for both the island and the large Haitian diaspora in the U.S.

IRAQ (GROUP I, JUNE 22)

- **Greeting:** Between men, firm handshakes are standard, with a hand placed over the heart after a handshake to show deep sincerity. Women typically avoid physical touch or affection.
- **Communication:** Hospitality ("Karam") is a matter of honor. If you are hosting, offer tea or a small snack to your Iraqi guests, or accept these gestures if you're being hosted. Declining these gestures of hospitality may hurt someone's honor.
- **Pro Tip:** Use the right hand only for greetings, eating, or handing over items. Avoid showing the soles of your shoes to others.
- **Football Fact:** The "Lions of Mesopotamia" famously won the 2007 Asian Cup, a victory that remains a legendary symbol of national unity.

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