

## Russian Customs and Culture

The Russian people are known for their ability to endure. This kind of stoic patience influences their approach to problem solving. Problems tend to be “toughed out” or ignored. Russians also may be pessimistic.

Friendship is very important to Russians, and relationships with friends are characterized by trust and openness. Russians believe in helping friends, and they know that they can rely on their friends to help them.

Russians greet by shaking hands firmly and offering a word of greeting. Full names are used when introducing one another. Titles, even those as simple as Mr. or Mrs., were replaced by “comrade” during the days of Russian Communism, and the term may still be heard. Close friends greet each other by first name.

In Russia, it is impolite to point using your index finger, or to talk with your hands in your pockets, or talk with your arms folded across your chest. It is considered bad luck to shake hands across an entrance.

Russians like to dress well in public. Western clothing is worn in urban areas. In warmer weather, American jeans and shorts are extremely popular.

Russian is the official language of the country. Even though there are approximately 120 ethnic groups in the country, all speak Russian. The other languages do not go away entirely. In rural areas and close relationships, people often speak the language of their particular ethnic group.

The dominant religion in Russia is Russian Orthodoxy. During the Soviet era, the Russian Orthodox Church and all other forms of religion were frowned upon. Today, with the collapse of Communism, religions that for decades had struggled just to survive under Communism have the government’s official permission to go on. Orthodox, Jewish, and Islamic congregations are allowed to worship freely and openly.

For further reading:

- Culture Briefings ([www.culturebriefings.com](http://www.culturebriefings.com))