#### PEDAGOG RESPUBLIKA ILMIY JURNALI

# 6 – TOM 6 – SON / 2023 - YIL / 15 - IYUN CUSTOMS AND CULTURE OF THE USA

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Annotation: In this article, we can learn about America culture and customs. America is one of the most culturally diverse countries, with residents representing nearly every region in the world. Learn more about American culture, values, and more.

**Key words**: holidays, declaration, institutions, education, personal goals, communities, advisors, personal community.

Described as a "melting pot" of cultures, the US is the third-largest country in the world, with residents representing different ethnic groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Indigenous Americans, and Latin Americans. As a result, US culture may at once seem both familiar and different, whether its shared values, food portions, driving, fashion, and even slang. Learning about American culture in advance can give you a sense of what to expect while studying in the US!

Every country has its own set of values and principles, and this is also true for America. Speaking generally, people in the USA align with the values stated in our Declaration of Independence: that all are created equal, with unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Let's take a closer look at what this means from a cultural values perspective. From a young age, Americans are taught to be self-sufficient and independent. The importance of a person being able to mold their own identity and future via their own choices, abilities, and efforts is heavily emphasized in American culture, education, and institutions. Americans value taking care of themselves and having the freedom to pursue their own definition of happiness. This extends to university life, where students are in charge of selecting their own major and pursuing the degree program that best aligns with their personal goals.

For international students who come from a culture where everything is done collectively as one unit/family, this emphasis on individualism and autonomy could take some getting used to. Focusing on independence does not mean you are alone, however, as there are many communities, advisors, and support services in the US you can rely on in times of need. For Americans, equality means everyone is born equal and no one is inferior or superior to the other. US universities take equality seriously, and will often include statements affirming equal rights in their charter, annual reports, and student and staff codes of conduct. Additionally, anti-discrimination policies are often in place and enforced for admissions, hiring, events, etc. If you attend a US university, you can

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expect to live and study in an equitable and inclusive campus environment, where everyone can learn and freely pursue their goals.

Similar to valuing independence, culture in America places a great deal of importance on individualism. Individualism usually refers to being self-sufficient, with community and/or government assistance as a last resort. This means people are free to pursue their goals, often on their own terms, within the context of US laws. Americans hold the ideals of freedom and order in high regard, and individualism is a key component — everyone in the US is entitled to their personal beliefs. The ability to express your individual views and opinions is considered part of this freedom.

America has the largest economy in the world, built off the principles of capitalism. As a result, culture in the USA often places a strong importance on materialism. Competition and capital accumulation encourage businesses to maximize efficiency, allowing investors to profit from growth while customers benefit from cheaper pricing on a broader selection of goods. Equally, consumers are incentivized to purchase goods and services to feed back into the economy, and many financial systems in the US are designed around encouraging spending. Due to America's strong economic position and capitalist economy, people can sometimes be encouraged to assess their wealth based on personal possessions and compare material possessions with others. This materialism plays an important role in explaining inequities in America, but can depend on many factors such as your personal community, city, or the state where you live.

#### Holidays

In US culture, a few significant holidays may be new to international students. Here is a list of federally recognized holidays in the US:

New Year's Day — The first of January is a holiday in the US, with Americans celebrating the arrival of a New Year. As this day symbolizes new beginnings, many Americans start the New Year with family and loved ones.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (MLK Day) — On the third Monday of January, the US honors the life of American civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), who protested against racial discrimination and made immense contributions to end segregation and prejudice. On this holiday, Americans are encouraged to reflect on racial equality and social change, as well as to devote time to community service.

Memorial Day — the last Monday of May is dedicated to US military personnel who lost their lives in service. To honor their lives and service, Americans place flowers and flags on the graves of military personnel; many towns also hold parades. Memorial Day is also considered the official kickoff to summer, and many Americans have outdoor parties, gathering with family and friends for barbecues, swimming, and/or outdoor recreation.

Juneteenth — to recognize the day slavery officially came to an end (June 19, 1865), Juneteenth is commemorated across America with parades, fairs, barbecues, and more.

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Independence Day — Celebrated with fireworks, barbecues, parades, and live festivals, the Fourth of July marks the day the United States declared their independence from British rule.

Labor Day — The first Monday in September honors and appreciates the American labor movement, as well as laborers' contributions to the country's progress and achievements. This holiday is considered the close of summer, and Americans gather outdoors for food, swimming, games, and other festivities.

Veterans Day — Observed on November 11, Veterans Day acknowledges living veterans who previously served in the United States military.

Thanksgiving — Thanksgiving is a holiday of gratitude, commemorating the Pilgrim settlers' first harvest back in the 1600s. Now, every fourth Thursday of November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends over a hearty meal of turkey and all the trimmings.

Christmas Day — Celebrating the birth of Jesus, Christmas Day is celebrated every December 25. It is a huge holiday in America, with parades, shopping events, music, and decorations. You may experience the country getting into the festive spirit even before October ends!

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