

# Culture corner



Have you heard of Carnaval? It's one of the biggest parties in the world, and it happens in my hometown! Seven weeks before Easter every year, Rio de Janeiro has a four-day celebration in the streets. The final day is called Mardi Gras, which means Fat Tuesday. The Catholics in Brazil prepare for the quiet time before Easter (Lent) with a huge outdoor party. The festival is for everyone and it is all about having fun. The streets are full of people wearing colourful costumes and playing lively music. You don't need to know anyone to join the party, you just follow along and sing and dance with the crowd. Everybody is welcome!

My city also has one of Brazil's biggest tourist attractions. A 38 meter tall statue of Jesus welcomes all visitors to Rio. "Christ the Redeemer" stands on top of Corcovado mountain overlooking the city. If you visit me, I will bring you there!

The most popular part of Rio is along Copacabana beach. You can walk along white sand and blue water for four kilometers, enjoying the sunshine and great view.



I live in one of the most exciting and beautiful cities in the world. I hope you will visit some day.



## Find the answer

What is the name of Rio's festival?	
When does it happen?	
What does "Mardi Gras" mean?	
How tall is "Christ the Redeemer"?	
What is the name of Rio's beach?	

## What do you think?

1. Would you dance with a stranger during Carnaval?
2. Does your city have a special statue or monument?
3. Where would you take a tourist in your city?



# Culture corner

Imagine a white jewel rising from blue water and that is Alexandria. My city is known as the pearl of the Mediterranean. There are great and tragic stories that begin and end in Alexandria. You have heard of Alexander the Great? My city is named for him! Cleopatra, Marc Anthony and Julius Caesar have all travelled through beautiful Alexandria.



Only 225 kilometers away is Cairo, the capital city of Egypt. When friends visit me, we can take a train from Alexandria and arrive quickly in Cairo. The city is busy, modern and frantic! It is difficult to imagine that the ancient pyramids are only a short distance away. Did you know that the pyramids are burial tombs for former Kings? You can go right inside to explore. If your feet are tired, you can ride on a camel over the hot sand.

One of the best ways to see the beauty of Egypt is from a boat. All sizes of boats travel up and down the Nile, the longest river in the world. In the daytime, you can watch life going on as it always has on the banks of the river as you drift along. At night, you can stargaze on the deck. Egypt has history and beauty. I hope you will have a chance to visit someday.



## Find the answer

What is the nickname of Alexandria?	
Name three famous people who travelled through Alexandria.	
What is the capital of Egypt?	
What were the pyramids used for?	
What is the name of the longest river in the world?	

## What do you think?

1. Anthony and Cleopatra is a historical Egyptian love story. Does your country have an ancient love story?
2. What three things would you pack on a trip to Egypt?
3. What is the most interesting historical attraction in your country?
4. Is there an animal associated with your country?



by Zak from Egypt



# Culture corner

Ireland is a great country. In fact, in 2005, *Economist* magazine decided that Ireland was the best place to live. What makes it such a good place?

First, Ireland is a beautiful country. It's called the Emerald Isle because it is so green. Of course, it's only green because it rains so much—about 170 days a year. However, you're not likely to get too wet because it usually only rains for a few minutes and then stops. You can bring an umbrella if you like, but most people don't mind the soft rain. It gives them a chance to drop into the pub for a few minutes for a quiet pint.



Pubs are important in people's social lives in Ireland. People drop in to meet friends, have a pint of Guinness, listen to music, or play games like darts or billiards.

Ireland's strong economy is another reason for the *Economist's* choice. Unemployment is only about 4% and people have much more money to spend than in the past. Unfortunately, that means inflation, and prices of houses and land in Ireland have gone up enormously.

Most people in Ireland speak English as their everyday language. In fact, Ireland is becoming more and more popular as a destination for students who want to improve their English skills. In some parts of the country, especially along the west coast, Irish is still spoken. Irish is a very different language to English. For example, to say "I love you" in Irish, you should say "Ta gra agam duit."

The population of Ireland is only four million people, but there are millions more with Irish blood living in countries like the United States and Australia. Ireland was not always such an easy country to live in and it is only in the last 15 years that it has become the number one country that the *Economist* magazine describes.

## Find the answer

Which magazine rated Ireland number one?	
What is a nickname for Ireland?	
What is a famous Irish beer?	
What percent of Irish people have no job?	
How do you say "I love you" in Irish?	

## What do you think?

Would you like to visit Ireland?

Where do you think is the best country to live?

Would you like to try Guinness beer?

What do you know about Irish history?



# Culture Corner

I am so proud to be from New Zealand. It's a small country with a population of only three million people, but it's one of the most special places on Earth. There's something for everyone.

New Zealand is divided into two main islands. The capital, Wellington, is on the North Island. The North Island has lots of great beaches where you can swim with dolphins. Or you can explore the hot springs and beautiful forests. The South Island is for the real adventurer. You can go out on a boat to watch whales, jump on a river raft—or my favourite—walk on glaciers. Of course, if you're really crazy, you can try a bungee jump. Just don't ask me to join you.



The original people of New Zealand are called the Maori. They came by long canoes from Hawaii about 700 years ago. They called their new home *Land of the Long White Cloud*. I love Maori art. It shows their close relationship to nature, and the importance of song and dance in their culture.

New Zealand is special in other ways, too. For example, it is aiming to be the first country in the world to become greenhouse-gas neutral. This means that the country will not add to global warming. It will achieve this by using alternative energy.



## Find the answer

How many people live in New Zealand?	
On which island can you watch whales?	
Where did the Maori come from?	
What was New Zealand's original name?	
How will they become greenhouse-neutral?	

## What do you think?

1. Would you like to visit New Zealand?
2. Would you like to go bungee jumping?
3. What kind of art do you like?
4. What is your country doing about global warming?

## Culture corner

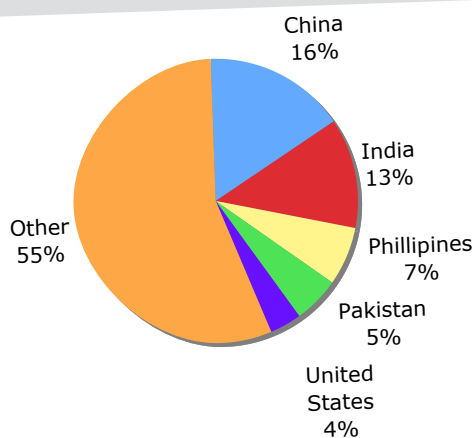
When my friends ask me; "What is Canadian culture?" I answer that it is a little bit of everything. Quite often, the average Canadian you meet has had a parent or grandparent who was born in another country. If you go for a walk down a Toronto street, the faces that greet you may be from Europe, Africa, Asia, or the Caribbean. However, you shouldn't be surprised to find that many of these people are... Canadian!



As you can see from the graph, the biggest number of immigrants come from China, India, and the Philippines, but they come from all over the world to start a new life in Canada.

Canada opens its doors to thousands of immigrants every year. Many immigrants will go on to become citizens of Canada. Because of our open immigration policy, Canada's

largest cities, Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal are among the most multicultural in the world. When you visit downtown Toronto, you will hear many different languages, see colourful ethnic clothing, and be able to taste foods from around the world. This blend represents culture Canadian style. I hope you will be able to come and try some Canadian culture soon.



### Find the answer

Which countries have immigrants in Canada?	
What will some of these immigrants become?	
What are the three largest cities in Canada?	
What will you be able to hear, see, and taste in downtown Toronto?	
What does the blend of nationalities represent?	

### What do you think?

1. Are there immigrants in your country?
2. Is immigration a positive thing for your country?
3. Some people are against immigration. Why?
4. Would you ever consider moving to another country?
5. Would you ever consider changing your citizenship?





# Culture corner



I really hope that you can come to South Africa some day. Its name explains its location, right at the bottom of Africa. So, of course, the climate is much cooler than most of Africa. The temperature is comfortable throughout the year. But the best time to visit for safari is between May to August. That's the winter because South Africa is in the southern hemisphere and there is less rain so you can see the animals more easily.

In the past, a safari in Africa used to be very expensive. It's still not cheap, but you can probably do a three day safari for about one thousand dollars or so. Of course, you'll also have to pay for your flight to South Africa. You might think it's expensive, but it's worth it because a safari is really a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Where else are you going to see zebras, elephants, tigers, rhinos, and giraffes outside a zoo?



Since my parents moved to South Africa in 1965, the country has changed a lot. South Africa is a mix of several races, mainly black (75%) and white (15%), but also many Indians and Malaysians. The total population is forty million. In the past, white people held all the power and the system of Apartheid made life very difficult for black people, but thanks to the work of leaders like Nelson Mandela in South Africa and opposition from other countries, Apartheid came to an end in 1989. My family was originally from Holland, but now many of my friends are black. It took a long time but South Africa is finally becoming a better country for everyone.

## Find the answer

When is the best time to go on safari?	
How much would a three day safari cost?	
What animals would you see on a safari?	
How many black people live in South Africa?	
Why did Apartheid end?	

## What do you think?

1. Did you know about Apartheid?
2. Would you like to go on a safari?
3. What other experiences do you think are "once-in-a-lifetime?"



# Culture Corner



Korea is an old country. We can trace our history back more than 5,000 years. The ancestors of today's Homo Sapiens were living in Korea almost one million years ago! You can see this history today in the form of great temples such as the old Buddhist temple of Bulguksa. This was built in the eight century.

Although Korea is an old country, it is not stuck in the past. It is one of the most modern countries in the world. The use of broadband internet in Korea has made it the most wired country in the world. I often hang out in Internet cafes with my friends, playing online games. It's really cheap and the connection is fast.

Korean pop music, or K-pop for short, has many great artists such as BoA, TVXQ, Shinhwa, Rain, and Se7en. My friends listen to rock, R&B, and hip-hop. Boy bands and girl bands are very popular but I don't like bubblegum pop so much.

The population of Korea is 50 million people and we don't have very much space. Most people live in apartments in the city. My apartment block in Seoul looks exactly the same as hundreds of other blocks in the city. It's pretty boring on the outside, but inside the apartment, we add our own personal touches.

Young Korean people study English very hard. Most of my friends went to cram schools three times a week to study English. One of my friends went to the United States to study at a university over there. It is a challenge to study in a foreign language but we think that English is very important for our future, so we are willing to work hard.



## Find the answer

When was Bulguska built?	
Who lived in Korea one million years ago?	
What are some popular Korean pop groups?	
How many people live in Korea?	
What city is Sung Mi's apartment in?	

## What do you think?

1. Would you like to visit Korea?
2. What Korean pop culture do you know?
3. Is English important for your future?
4. Why is the age of a country important?
5. Is your country as "wired" as Korea?
6. Why do think Koreans value English education so much?
7. Would you ever go for a homestay in Korea?
8. What three things would you do on a trip to Seoul?



# Culture corner



Quick! What is the first thing you think of when I say "Italy"? Did you say pizza or spaghetti? Italian food is excellent (check my pasta recipe below) but there is more to Italy than its wonderful food!

Rome is Italy's capital city. Vatican City is inside Rome, and this is where the Pope (the leader of the Catholic church) lives. The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is where you can see the beautiful artwork of Michelangelo. Can you recognize the painting in the photo? Italy

produced many other famous artists, including Leonardo da Vinci and Raffaello.



The city I am from is famous for its canals and gondolas. Venice is my hometown. Can you imagine a large city without cars or trucks? To get around Venice, you have two



choices—you can walk or take a boat. There are 400 footbridges connecting the city. If you don't want to walk, you can take a gondola or water taxi. Venice is the largest carfree city in Europe. That's great for the environment, don't you think?

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 (8 ounce) package mostaccioli pasta
- 1 (28 ounce) jar spaghetti sauce
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach
- 8 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot with boiling salted water cook mostaccioli until al dente. Drain.
2. In a large bowl combine spaghetti sauce, grated Parmesan cheese, and cooked and drained pasta.
3. In a separate bowls place cooked spinach and shredded mozzarella cheese. Reserve 1/2 cup of shredded mozzarella cheese for top.
4. To assemble, in a 1 1/2 quart casserole dish layer half of the noodle mixture, spinach, and shredded mozzarella cheese. Repeat. Cover with aluminum foil.

## Find the answer

What are two popular Italian foods?	
What is the capital of Italy?	
Where does the Pope live?	
Where are Michelangelo's paintings?	
How many bridges connect Venice?	

## What do you think?

1. Where would you like to visit - Rome or Venice?
2. Is there a special residence for a leader in your country?
3. Could you live without a car, moped, or motorcycle?
4. What Italian food would you like to learn to cook?

