

GHANA CUSTOMS

Greetings:

A handshake is important when greeting most people, although Muslims avoid shaking hands with members of the opposite sex.

Among some groups, male friends may shake hands first and, while pulling the palms slowly away, grasp each other's middle finger with a thumb and middle finger; then they snap the grasped finger.

Regardless of the gestures or words used in greeting, the act of greeting another person is extremely important. To ignore a greeting or to fail to greet someone is a serious insult to most Ghanaians.

Before one begins a conversation, a general greeting such as *Good morning*, *Good afternoon*, or *Good evening* is necessary.

When addressing a person of higher status, one follows the greeting with *Sir* or *Madame*.

Most greetings are in the dominant local language and are followed by questions about one's health, family welfare, journey, and so forth.

Gestures:

Courtesy is important.

Gesturing, eating, or passing items with the left hand is impolite.

Among Muslims, and some other groups who often sit on the floor, it is improper to let the sole of one's foot to point at another person.

It is not considered polite to place feet on chairs, desks, or tables—especially those being used by someone else.

Knocking the hands together, palms up, in front of the body can mean “please” or “I beg of you.”

Waving is done by moving the hand from side to side; repetitively curling the fingers with the palm faced out means “come here.”

Personal space is rather narrow in Ghana and people stand close to one another when conversing.

Holidays:

National public holidays include Independence Day (6 Mar.), Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday), Easter Monday, Republic Day (1 July), *Eid ul-Fitr* (the Muslim feast at the end of Islam's holy fasting month of *Ramadan*), *Eid ul-Adha* (the Muslim Feast of the Sacrifice), Christmas, and Boxing Day (26 Dec.).