

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Macedonians typically greet one another by saying *Zdravo* (Hello) and shaking hands. Close friends and family members kiss each other three times on alternate cheeks.

Other Macedonian-language greetings are *Dobro utro* (Good morning), *Dobar den* (Good afternoon), and *Dobra vecer* (Good night).

Initial Macedonian greetings are followed by questions such as *Kako ste?* (formal “How are you?”) and *Kako si?* (informal “How are you?”), as well as inquiries about family members such as *Kako e semejstvoto?* (How is your family?). When entering a room with several people, Macedonians tend to greet everyone individually with a handshake. While friends refer to one another by first names, formal situations require *Gospodin* (Mr.), *Gospogja* (Mrs.), or *Gospogjica* (Miss).

Gestures:

Waving the index finger means “no,” as does making a clicking sound with the mouth, though both are generally considered rude.

It is impolite to nod in conversation, which indicates one wants to interrupt a speaker, or to nod one's head instead of saying “yes.”

Macedonians take offense if they are not looked in the eyes before drinking a toast.

Older rural women, upon hearing of someone's misfortune, attempt to ward off bad luck by pretending to spit three times down their blouse and saying *Loshoto da ne chue* (in Macedonian) or *Skraja da e* (in Turkish), meaning “Do not let evil hear.”

Holidays:

Holidays include International New Year (1 Jan.); Orthodox Christmas (7 Jan.); *Stara Nova Godina* (literally “Old New Year,” on 14 January, marked according to the Julian calendar still used by the Macedonian Orthodox Church); International Women's Day (8 Mar.), when women receive gifts and attend parties thrown by and for women; Easter; Labor Day (1 May), spent relaxing and barbecuing outdoors; *Ilinden* (2 Aug.), celebrating the uprising against the Ottoman Turks in 1903; Independence Day (8 Sep.) marking the day Macedonia declared its separation from Yugoslavia; and the People's Uprising Against Fascism (11 Oct.).

In addition to national holidays, Macedonians celebrate their *imenden* (name day), personal holidays that commemorate the saint after whom a person is named. On this day (considered even more important than one's birthday), the person throws a party and receives gifts from friends and family.