

AUSTRALIA CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Australians greet friends with a casual *Hi* or *G'day* (Good day) and a handshake.

Close female friends and friends of the opposite sex might hug and kiss lightly on the right cheek. More formal greetings involve a simple *Hello, how are you?* From a distance, a wave is considered an acceptable greeting.

Gestures:

Rules of basic etiquette are strongly adhered to in Australia.

When yawning, one covers the mouth and then excuses oneself. Winking at women is typically considered inappropriate. Pointing at someone with the index finger may be perceived as rude.

Instead, one may point with an open hand in the person's general direction.

It is considered impolite to stand too close to people while conversing.

Interrupting a conversation or passing between conversing individuals is also impolite. Australian men generally like to maintain a strong sense of personal space.

Holidays:

Australia Day (26 Jan.) commemorates the arrival of the first European settlers to Australia.

Other holidays are New Year's Day, Easter (Friday–Monday), Anzac Day (25 April, honoring the armed forces and war dead), Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday (second Monday in June), Christmas, and Boxing Day (26 Dec.).

Boxing Day comes from a British tradition of giving small boxed gifts to service employees or the poor. It is now simply a day to visit friends and relatives. Labour Day, bank holidays, and holidays for local horse races or cultural festivals vary from state to state.

Ethnic festivals and local holidays provide an opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity and are popular throughout Australia. For example, Chinese New Year features fireworks and dragon dances. .