

SAINT KITTS & NEVIS CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Common greetings on the islands include *Good morning*, *Good afternoon*, or *Good night*. Other more informal greetings are *Howdy*, *How you do?* or *Hey, wha' happ'nin'?* When leaving, one might say *Good-bye*, *See you*, or *Take care then till next time*. Older or rural people may still say *See you soon*, *D.V.* (*Deus Volunte*, or “God willing”).

Remembering people's names is crucial. Children are expected to address older people as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Miss* or as *auntie* or *uncle*.

Kittsians and Nevisians often touch hands or arms when meeting. A man may put his arm around a woman's shoulder or hold her hand in a friendly meeting. Hugging is more prevalent than kissing, particularly when people meet old friends and children. Formal introductions normally include a handshake.

Gestures:

As in the rest of the Caribbean, individuals “talk with their hands,” indeed many talk with the whole body.

People may pucker their mouths, toss their heads, and make a sideways motion with the thumb and hand when humorously mocking someone or indicating real derision. Individuals may purse their lips and make a sound by sucking air through their teeth (known as *sucking the teeth* or *strupes*) to indicate disgust or anger.

Chewing gum during conversation or eating in the street is not well regarded.

Holidays:

National holidays include New Year's Day (1 Jan.), National Carnival Day (2 Jan.), Good Friday, Easter Monday, Labor Day (first Monday in May), Whitmonday (seven weeks after Easter Monday), Emancipation Day (first Monday in August), and Culturama Day (an annual August festival on Nevis). Independence Day is 19 September.

The Christmas season includes Christmas Day and Boxing Day (26 Dec.). It is a time for family gatherings, gift giving, and related activities. The Carnival season runs for a week after 26 December and includes street dancing, costumed bands, calypso competitions, beauty contests, and beach parties.