HOST CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Adapted from the International Centre, Queen's University

History

1. Generally outline the country a history - the major areas and events.
2. Name the national heroes and heroines. Explain why they are considered heroes/heroines.
3. What is the history of this country's relationship with Canada?
4. What are the national holidays? Can you, as a foreigner, participate?

Politics

1. What is the current political structure of the country?
2. Who are the major current leaders?
3. Is military service compulsory? If so, for whom and for how long?

Religion

1. What is/are the dominant religion(s)?
2. Is there an official state religion? Which one?
3. What are the sacred writings of the dominant religions?

Female/male relationships

1. Are there separate societal roles for men and women? If so, what are they?
2. What are the rules/norms for "romantic' relationships in this country? Do young people date? If so, do they date in groups, in couples? Do they need a chaperon? Are such relationships formal or informal? Can unmarried women and men have a "romantic" relationship? What is the norm regarding premarital sex? Is it acceptable to hold hands, touch or kiss in public?
3. What are the rules/norms for female/male friendships? In what types of social activities do young women and men participate together?

Family

1. What is the common form of marriage ceremony and celebration?
2. What are the attitudes toward divorce? Family planning? Contraception? Abortion?
3. What is seen as the ideal family size? Is the typical family nuclear or extended?
4. What is the legal voting age? (marriage, driving a car)? Are there differences for women/men?

Social etiquette

1. What are the special privileges of age or sex?
2. When is one expected to present or accept gifts? What kinds of gifts?
3. How do people greet each other and how do they take leave of one another? Are there differences based on social status, age, sex?

Dress

1. Is there a customary attire for women, men, children? is there a traditional or indigenous style of dress? If so, describe it. Who wears it and when?
2. What is the appropriate dress for you as a foreigner in this country?
3. Are there special dress customs you should know about? i.e. taking off one's shoes in certain places? What types of clothing might be taboo?
4. What types of clothing must you have for various occasions you might encounter?

Food

1. What foods are most popular? How are they prepared?
2. How and with what utensils, if any, do people eat? (manners, customs, etc.)
3. Are there taboo foods that are not considered edible or not permitted for traditional or religious reasons?

Leisure

1. What are the favourite leisure activities of adults, of young people?
2. What are the favourite sports? Is there a national sport?
3. How available are television and radio?

Health

1. What kind of health services are available? Where are they located?
2. Are there common home remedies for minor ailments? What are the attitudes toward folk medicine? Is it commonly practised?
3. Is the water potable?
4. Which immunizations are required to enter the country? Which are advisable?

Values

1. What things are taboo to do in this country? Which things are taboo to talk about in common conversation?
2. What type of moral code is followed? (Christian, Islamic Confucian?) How does this moral code influence attitudes toward drinking alcohol, drug-taking, gambling, pre-marital or extra-marital sex? How does this differ from what you are used to?

Education

1. Is education free? Compulsory to what age? Available to all?
2. In schools, are children segregated by age, sex, race, caste, class?
3. What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, religious?
4. What style of teaching prevails in schools? (rote learning; importance of exams; lecture...)
5. Describe the university system and how it differs from Canada. What is the school year calendar? Is there tuition? What is the grading system like?

Daily life

1. Are prices asked for merchandise for sale fixed or is one expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted?
2. Is it okay to touch merchandise for sale? Does touching indicate desire to buy?
3. When does the normal work or school day begin and end? Is there a siesta time?
4. What is the customary time to visit friends?
5. What is the currency? What is the current value to the dollar? Is it stable? Will you be permitted to carry it out of the country?

On being a foreigner in this country

1. How will your financial position and social status compare with the majority of people living in this country?
2. Do these people generally “like” Canadians? Other foreigners?
3. When you go, must you register with city officials? The police? The Canadian embassy?
4. Do you need visas to enter the country? Alien registration for longer stays? What regulations apply to you as a foreigner?
5. Will you need visas to travel to neighbouring countries?
6. What should you do if you find yourself in legal trouble?
7. Are there special laws governing the activities of foreigners that you should know about?