

A nation is a group of people who share common history and usually a language and usually, not always live at the same area. Culture can be described as our everyday life: how we communicate, our language, religion, traditions, behavior, way of life - in other words, what we do each day.

People that belong to various nations may differ and they always differ from one another. For example, the Germans are regarded as scientifically-minded and industrious, they're always considered solid, intelligent, mathematical, extremely nationalistic, arrogant and even aggressive. And, for instance, Jews are believed to be mercenary, industrious, shrewd, loyal to family, religious. There is a big amount of examples we can list about national character of different people.

Proving the difference of the national stereotypes I want to compare Russian and English nations. There are a lot of features that vary. The Russians are industrious, tough, brave, progressive and suspicious. They are always considered to be nationalistic, patriotic (because of this reason they're good soldiers), we are willing to respect opinion of other people.

Speaking about Englishmen I may note that they're reserved, tradition-loving, courteous, honest, extremely nationalistic and etc. To my mind, they have a specific sense of humor. They say that they can't understand our jokes and anecdotes not only because of the different meanings of the words, but because of their humor is more delicate.

Looking at these features of the Russians and the Englishmen it is not hard to mark out the differences. The Englishmen are reserved, but the Russians are open-hearted and communicative. The Englishmen are tradition-loving and the Russians, to my mind, don't keep their traditions in such a degree.

There is a great majority of factors that influence the nations stereotype and its people's character. People that live in the southern countries have less problems than those who live in the North and because of this they're more cheerful and artistic. The history also has a great influence on the national character. The people of Asia are revengeful because their forefathers often were at war with others. In Africa many countries were colonies of the Great Britain, Holland, Spain and so on Africans were the slaves and because of this they're still hard-working and industrious.

The National Character exists. It is not a myth, it's a reality. But the National Character doesn't describe the character of every person, it describes the character of people of nation in general. Every person has its own character, but according to the person's belonging to some nation many traits of character are similar and these features may be explained as the national character.

National Stereotypes

In heaven, the cops are British, the lovers are French, the food is Italian, the cars are German, and the whole thing is run by the Swiss.

In hell, the cops are German, the lovers are Swiss, the food is British, the cars are French, and the whole thing is run by the Italians.

Stereotypes having to do with people of specific nationalities. Some of them are a little bit Truth In Television (certain others more so), due to having some basis in reality. But remember, nations are not Planets Of Hats.

For people who want to edit this trope. Remember the following:

1. We don't claim that all these types of behaviour are exclusively typical of these nationalities, only that they are very common false or exaggerated perceptions of certain countries. Most of the time these images were created by popular books, comic strips, animated cartoons, films or propaganda. We're listing stereotypes here, which means that we list all these recurring caricatural ideas about other nationalities that can be found regularly in any work of fiction.

2. So no racist or discriminative quotes claiming: "Hey this stereotype is actually true" or aggressive, offended comments like "Hey, my country or people are nothing like that!" Most countries depict their neighbouring countries as if they are all either lazy, evil, dumb, primitive or arrogant. Nothing new there and it proves that these stereotypical impressions about other countries are universal, rather than tied to one specific country.

3. We can also miss proud, arrogant, patriotic boasting remarks like "Our country is uniquely very good at this or that", which is usually also very narrow-minded nationalism. Behaviour can not be restricted to an entire race, culture or country of people. Not all Americans are fond of owning guns, not all Britons like tea, not all Frenchmen are arrogant and not all Asians are martial arts experts. Each country has its own strong liquor culture and claims that they are especially well known for being good beer drinkers. And a lot of countries have a reputation for being hospitable.

See also Hollywood Atlas, Funny Foreigner, Acceptable Nationality Targets, and Axis Powers Hetalia.

Examples of this trope by continent:

The United States

Thanks to the numerous Wild West legends and westerns the country is still seen as Americans Are Cowboys. If a character in foreign fiction is American he is either a cowboy or wearing a cowboy hat.

Even though the U.S. isn't the only country where carrying firearms is legal, the image of the "gun obsessed American" is larger than other nationalities. This again may partly be attributed to Americans Are Cowboys and numerous violent Hollywood action movies. To be fair, the number of privately owned firearms in America is the highest of any nation, per capita AND in total.

Americans helped Europe win World War I and World War II, but people usually forget that the U.S collaborated with other countries to defeat the Axis. Many war movies and documentaries paint the wrong impression that America won these wars singlehandedly. After World War II the United States were generally seen as liberators by all the countries that had been suppressed by the Nazis or Japanese. This led to an internationally positive view of the U.S. where many people across the world gladly embraced American products like Coca Cola, chewing gum, large cars and Hollywood films. But during the 1960s at the height of the Vietnam War America's foreign policy was criticized by other countries and to this day a lot of people across the globe hate the U.S.A., solely based on the actions of their Presidential Administration and the power of their multinationals (See America Saves The Day, Yanks With Tanks and America Wins The War).

People from the U.S.A. are often depicted as rich, cigar smoking business men with too much dollars to spend. This may be a result of America's aggressive consumer culture, The American Dream and the huge skyscrapers in each large city.

Outside the U.S. a stereotypical image of the dumb, fat, ignorant, self-important, decadent, prudish, obese and clueless white American exists. Most of these images are based on American fast food culture which has spawned a lot of morbidly fat people. Of course, in foreign countries sitcom characters like Archie Bunker, Al Bundy and Homer Simpson are also often seen as representative of the typical American.

Outside the U.S. Americans are often seen as devoutly religious and prudent evangelical Christians, obsessed with Jesus, praying and reacting against sex or anything progressive.

Tourist couples who visit other countries, but are more interested in shopping and souvenirs than authentic culture are usually depicted as being either Americans or Japanese. Expect to hear some jokes about American tourists wondering if the Tower of London pre-dates World War II, or pronouncing the city in The Midlands "Lie-chester", or talking about "Bucking-Hayum Palace". Examples of these ignorant American tourist couples can be found in the Fawlty Towers episode "Waldorf Salad", Monty Pythons The Meaning of Life and Flushed Away.

In the United States itself Americans are split into various sub-categories, from Deep South rednecks to New York poseurs. However, Wealthier Americans are often shown as greedy capitalists or Corrupt Corporate Executives.

All American Indians are based on plains Indians. All Sioux, by the way, are Lakota.

LATIN AMERICA

TheCarribean

Cubans are often depicted as smokers of Havana cigars and opponents/supporters of Fidel Castro. Within Spanish-speaking countries there's the stereotype that Cubans end all their phrases with the word "Chico", and generally mangle the Spanish grammar and/or pronunciation. There is a saying that "the Spanish language was born in Castille and died in Cuba".

Jamaicans are caricatured as marihuana smoking rastafari's with dreadlocks, listening to reggae.

Other countries in the Carribean are generally associated with pirates, slaves and popular musical genres like calypso, memento, reggae, soca and steelband.

Russia and Eastern European countries in general

Most people are depicted as harsh, primitive peasants who are miserably poor. They'll be cooking soup, stew, goulash or eat yoghurt, paprika or salami. If they are not working on the fields they are either spied upon by secret police or active in espionage. Most of these stereotypical images date back to the Cold War and Dracula movies, who are often set in Romania. A more modern stereotype depicts them as gangsters active in the Russian mafia. They love chess, ballet, playing violin or Russian Roulette, taking hot baths in icy temperatures and are quite likely to use some Russian Reversal ("In Soviet Russia, TV watches you!"). Russians will tend not to use articles (the words "the" and "a"), or to use the wrong ones, since the Russian language does not have any equivalent to these words. They refer to anyone as 'Comrade'. Their speech often puts a strong emphasis on the letter "r" and "g"-sounds are put in front of words beginning with the letter "h". Other popular cliché expressions are "njet" ("no") and "da!" ("yes").

The men always have heavy eyebrows, moustaches and/or beards and carry bearskin hats. They usually drink their misery away with vodka and after finishing a drink they throw their glass over their shoulder whereupon it crashes against the floor or a wall. They are either

exuberantly joyful or coldly enraged, and can switch between the two at a moment's notice. When they are excited they shout with a loud, booming voice. They are nostalgic for Soviet Russia (always referring to it as "The Motherland"), and love to do traditional dances and trepaks while drunk. When they travel they go by troika.

The women wear babushka's. Sometimes they are depicted as being more masculine than feminine.

Rich Russians will be seen eating caviar and drinking vodka in snowy landscapes.

Gypsies are also often associated with Eastern Europe.

Russian Humour

Spain

Spaniards are often caricatured as being hot-blooded and proud to the point of being idle.

They are often seen cooking olives or paella or playing and dancing to flamenco music. The rest of the time they are having siestas, which lead to the impression that they are rather lazy.

Spaniards are either bull fighters themselves or all watch bull fights for their amusement. They will shout "Olé!" or "Ayayayayay" in unison whenever the occasion is ripe.

Spaniards are Toros Y Flamenco. In England, the women are seen as fat and ugly. In America, stupid Americans consider them interchangeable with Mexicans.

All Spaniards, of course, secretly (or not so secretly) long to bring back The Spanish Inquisition.

Japan

Japanese people are often represented as extremely polite (Japanese Politeness), intelligent, and obedient but dislike foreigners. They bow extensively and are ruthless, stoic business people wearing glasses and black suits. Their stop words are: "honourable", "regrettable" and "please" (usually spoken in a Japanese English accent).

The cheerful Japanese Tourist who films and photographs everything in sight.

The cute and sexy giggling girl in school uniform. (See Joshikousei)

Japanese also have a reputation for honourable suicides, ranging from hara-kiri, seppuku to kamikaze pilots.

Japanese popular culture often baffles other countries. Anime is often ridiculed for being disturbingly dark and violent with characters who simply freeze in one position while a vague background goes by. The kaiju films are ridiculed for being surrealistic and full of bad, cheap special effects like for instance men wearing rubber monster suits.

Speaking of which, Japanese people are engineering geniuses, but they use this to create giant robots.

Other popular Japanese stereotypes are the geisha, sumo wrestler, samurai and ninja.

A more negative stereotype is of the perverted Japanese man who is a Nightmare Fetishist and possible pedophile.

Japanese people add -u to the end of every word. (This, of course, comes from katakana.)

Oddly, the Ainu get more press in America than in Japan.