

How to avoid being 'Ugly American' in Europe

A: Some suggestions:

- Don't dress inappropriately. At home, no one might blink if you run errands in ratty cutoff jeans and flip-flops, but if you traipse around Paris dressed like that, you'll stick out like a sore thumb.
- Learn some phrases in the local language, such as: "Hello," "Goodbye," "Please" and "Thank you." And it wouldn't hurt to learn "Excuse me" and "I'm sorry."
- Don't assume everyone speaks English. While many Europeans do, it's polite to learn to ask — in their language — if they speak English.
- Don't complain if something isn't exactly the same as it is at home. So what if you're not allowed to pick out your own apples at the market or your hotel doesn't have unlimited hot water. You don't have to like these things — it's just not appropriate to whine about them (or, worse, attempt to convince the locals their way of doing things is wrong).