

The Culture Tree: 3 Levels of Culture

Explore This Model to Help Make Sense of Your Surroundings While Abroad

1 SURFACE CULTURE Easy to Spot

- These are the most visible elements of a culture.
- Often associated with consumer products and material goods.
- Often fun and exciting to adapt to.
- **Culture of the senses**; it's what you can see, smell, taste and hear!

Enjoy these first impressions, but reach further.

2 UNSPOKEN RULES Visible If You Look Closely

- These rules and norms govern behavior and relationships.
- They are seen as "common sense" by locals.
- Knowing the social rules will help you build trust and form friendships.
- **Social culture**; it's how you interact, socialize and communicate!

Strive to engage at this level; make it your goal.

3 DEEPLY-HELD BELIEFS Challenging to Uncover

- These are underlying values and notions of truth, identity and society.
- This level impacts the worldview of locals in ways even they may not grasp.
- Higher levels of the culture tree "grow" out of these elements.
- **Core culture**; it's how you understand ethics, power, love, life and the planet.

Start with awareness; build insight over time.

