Countries & Nationalities Knowledge Guide

国家与国籍知识手册 — 国籍·首都·地标·习俗·语言·词源

Part 1: Country & Nationality Reference Table

China	Chinese	Beijing	Chinese (Mandarin)	-ese
Japan	Japanese	Tokyo	Japanese	-ese
Korea	Korean	Seoul	Korean	-an
France	French	Paris	French	-ch
Germany	German	Berlin	German	-man
Italy	Italian	Rome	Italian	-an
Spain	Spanish	Madrid	Spanish	-ish
Portugal	Portuguese	Lisbon	Portuguese	-ese
Russia	Russian	Moscow	Russian	-an
India	Indian	New Delhi	Hindi, English	-an
Brazil	Brazilian	Brasilia	Portuguese	-ian
Mexico	Mexican	Mexico City	Spanish	-an
Egypt	Egyptian	Cairo	Arabic	-ian
Australia	Australian	Canberra	English	-ian
Canada	Canadian	Ottawa	English, French	-ian
United States	American	Washington D.C.	English	-an
United Kingdom	British	London	English	-ish
Ireland	Irish	Dublin	Irish, English	-ish
Greece	Greek	Athens	Greek	(special)
Turkey	Turkish	Ankara	Turkish	-ish
Switzerland	Swiss	Bern	German, French, Italian	(special)
Sweden	Swedish	Stockholm	Swedish	-ish
Poland	Polish	Warsaw	Polish	-ish
Netherlands	Dutch	Amsterdam	Dutch	(special)
Thailand	Thai	Bangkok	Thai	(special)
Argentina	Argentine	Buenos Aires	Spanish	-ine
Vietnam	Vietnamese	Hanoi	Vietnamese	-ese
Austria	Austrian	Vienna	German	-an
Belgium	Belgian	Brussels	Dutch, French, German	-ian
Norway	Norwegian	Oslo	Norwegian	-ian

Part 2: Nationality Suffix Patterns

Nationality words follow predictable patterns based on suffixes. Master these patterns to guess nationalities you have never seen before.

Suffix: -an / -ian

Meaning: person from / native of

Examples: Italian, Brazilian, Egyptian, Canadian, Indian, Mexican, Russian, Australian, Austrian, Belgian, Norwegian

Tip: Most common pattern. Add -an or -ian to the country name.

Suffix: -ese

Meaning: belonging to / from

Examples: Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Maltese

Tip: Often used for East Asian and some European countries. Stress falls on the last syllable: Chi-NESE, Ja-NESE.

Suffix: -ish

Meaning: belonging to

Examples: English, British, Irish, Spanish, Swedish, Polish, Turkish, Danish, Finnish

Tip: Common for European countries. Often the country name changes: Spain->Spanish, Sweden->Swedish.

Suffix: -ch

Meaning: belonging to (French origin)

Examples: French, Dutch

Tip: Only two words, but very high frequency. France->French, Netherlands->Dutch.

Suffix: -man

Meaning: person of

Examples: German

Tip: Only one word, but important. Germany->German (not Germanman).

Suffix: Special (irregular)

Meaning: must memorize

Examples: Greek (Greece), Swiss (Switzerland), Thai (Thailand), Israeli (Israel), Iraqi (Iraq)

Tip: These do not follow any pattern and must be memorized individually.

Part 3: Etymology - Where Do These Names Come From?

China

From the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE). The Qin unified China. Persian and Sanskrit traders brought the name west as "Sina" or "Cina". Marco Polo used "Catai" from Khitan, another people.

Japan

From Japanese "Nippon" (sun origin). The characters mean "sun" + "origin". Portuguese traders brought it west as "Japao" in the 1500s. The -ese suffix was added by Europeans.

France

From the Franks, a Germanic tribe who conquered Roman Gaul in the 5th century. "Frank" means "free" or "bold" in old Germanic. The -ch suffix means "belonging to".

Germany

From Latin "Germania", used by Julius Caesar. The root may be Celtic for "neighbor" or Germanic for "spear". The -man suffix means "people".

Italy

From ancient "Italia", possibly from Oscan for "land of calves" (vitulus). The -an suffix means "person from".

Spain

From Roman "Hispania", possibly from Phoenician "i-shepan-im" meaning "land of rabbits". The -ish suffix means "belonging to".

Egypt

From Greek "Aigyptos", a corruption of Egyptian "Hut-ka-Ptah" (temple of Ptah). The -ian suffix means "native of".

Brazil

From "Pau-Brasil" (brazilwood), a red dye tree. "Brasil" comes from Portuguese "brasa" meaning "ember" (red-hot). The -ian suffix means "native of".

Russia

From "Rus", the name of Viking traders who founded the first Russian state in the 9th century. "Rus" may come from Old Norse for "men who row".

Australia

From Latin "Terra Australis" (southern land). European mapmakers believed a large southern continent must exist to balance the northern land. The -ian suffix means "native of".

Canada

From Iroquoian "kanata" meaning "village" or "settlement". French explorer Jacques Cartier misunderstood it as the name of the whole country in 1535.

America

Named after Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian explorer who realized the New World was not Asia. German mapmaker Waldseemuller put "America" on his 1507 map.

Part 4: Capitals & Famous Landmarks

China	Beijing	Great Wall, Forbidden City, Terracotta Army
France	Paris	Eiffel Tower, Louvre, Notre-Dame
Italy	Rome	Colosseum, Vatican, Trevi Fountain
Egypt	Cairo	Pyramids of Giza, Sphinx, Egyptian Museum
India	New Delhi	Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Qutub Minar
United States	Washington D.C.	Statue of Liberty, White House, Grand Canyon
United Kingdom	London	Big Ben, Tower Bridge, Buckingham Palace
Australia	Canberra	Sydney Opera House, Uluru, Great Barrier Reef
Russia	Moscow	Kremlin, Red Square, Saint Basil Cathedral
Japan	Tokyo	Mount Fuji, Tokyo Tower, Fushimi Inari Shrine
Greece	Athens	Acropolis, Parthenon, Santorini
Brazil	Brasilia	Christ the Redeemer, Amazon Rainforest, Iguazu Falls

Part 5: Traditional Food & Customs

Japan	Sushi, Ramen, Tempura, Matcha	Chopsticks (hashi). Bowing to greet. Removing shoes indoors. Tea ceremony (sado).
Italy	Pizza, Pasta, Gelato, Espresso	Long meals with family. Cappuccino only before 11am. No cheese on fish pasta. Hand gestures.
Mexico	Tacos, Guacamole, Churros, Mole	Day of the Dead (Nov 1-2). Pinata

		at parties. Late dinner (9-10pm). Hot sauce on everything.
United Kingdom	Fish & Chips, Sunday Roast, Tea, Scones	Afternoon tea at 4pm. Sunday roast with family. Queueing (lining up) is sacred. Apologizing a lot.
Spain	Paella, Tapas, Churros, Jamon	Siesta (afternoon nap 2-5pm). Late dinner (9-11pm). La Tomatina tomato festival. Flamenco dance.
India	Curry, Biryani, Naan, Chai	Eating with right hand only. Many vegetarians. Diwali festival of lights. Holi color festival. Arranged marriages common.
Korea	Kimchi, Bibimbap, K-pop, K-drama	Metal chopsticks (sujeotgarak). Bowing. Removing shoes. Age matters most in social hierarchy.
Germany	Schnitzel, Bratwurst, Pretzel, Beer	Oktoberfest (Sept-Oct). Bread culture (300+ types). Sunday everything closed. Recycling is mandatory.
France	Croissant, Baguette, Cheese, Wine	Boulangerie (bakery) daily visit. Cheese after main course, not before. Long lunches (2hrs). La bise (cheek kiss) greeting.
Thailand	Pad Thai, Tom Yum, Mango Sticky Rice	Wai greeting (palms together + bow). Removing shoes. No touching head (sacred). King is deeply respected.
Brazil	Feijoada, Pao de Queijo, Acai, Caipirinha	Carnival (Feb/Mar). Samba dance. Futebol (soccer) is religion. Personal space is closer. Cheek kiss greeting.
Canada	Poutine, Maple Syrup, Nanaimo Bars, Bacon	Saying "sorry" and "eh". Hockey is national sport. Tim Hortons coffee. Multiculturalism policy.

Part 6: Languages Spoken Around the World

Brazil: Portuguese

NOT Spanish! Brazil was colonized by Portugal, not Spain. 210 million speakers.

Switzerland: German, French, Italian, Romansh

4 official languages. Romansh is spoken by only 60,000 people in Graubunden.

Belgium: Dutch, French, German

3 official languages. Dutch in Flanders (north), French in Wallonia (south), German in the east.

Canada: English, French

2 official languages. French mainly in Quebec. Bilingual labels on all products.

India: Hindi, English + 22 scheduled languages

No single national language. Hindi and English are official. States have their own languages.

South Africa: 11 official languages

Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Swazi, Venda, Ndebele.

Singapore: English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil

4 official languages. English is the working language. Malay is the national language.

Wales: Welsh, English

2 official languages. Welsh is a Celtic language. Road signs are bilingual.

Austria: German

Same language as Germany, but different accent and some vocabulary. Austrian German is softer.

Argentina: Spanish

Argentine Spanish has Italian-influenced accent. "Vos" instead of "tu". Distinctive "sh" sound for ll/y.

Part 7: Fun Facts for Memory

Australia

The only country that is also a continent. It has more kangaroos than people. The Great Barrier Reef is visible from space.

Russia

The largest country by area (17 million sq km). It spans 11 time zones. Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world (1642m).

India

The most populous country (1.4 billion). It has 22 official languages and over 1600 dialects. The Taj Mahal changes color depending on the time of day.

Switzerland

Famous for neutrality - has not fought a war since 1815. It has 4 official languages. Swiss chocolate and watches are world-famous.

Brazil

The largest country in South America. Portuguese, not Spanish, is the official language. The Amazon Rainforest produces 20% of the world oxygen.

Egypt

The Nile is the longest river in the world (6650 km). The Pyramids of Giza are the only surviving ancient wonder. hieroglyphics were decoded in 1822.

Japan

Has over 14,000 islands. The four main ones are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku. Mount Fuji last erupted in 1707. It has 200+ volcanoes.

Canada

Has the longest coastline of any country (202,000 km). It has more lakes than the rest of the world combined. The word "Canada" means "village" in Iroquoian.

China

The Great Wall is over 21,000 km long but cannot be seen from space (that is a myth). Paper, gunpowder, printing, and the compass were invented here.

United Kingdom

Drives on the left. The London Underground is the oldest in the world (1863). The Queen/King is also the monarch of 15 other countries.

France

The most visited country in the world (89 million tourists/year). French was the official language of England for 300 years (1066-1362).

Italy

Has two microstates inside it: Vatican City and San Marino. It has 55 UNESCO World Heritage sites, more than any other country. Pizza was invented in Naples.

Part 8: Memory Tips

1. Group by suffix: Learn all -an countries together (Italian, Brazilian, Egyptian), then -ese (Chinese, Japanese), then -ish (Spanish, Swedish).

2. Use etymology: Knowing that "France" comes from the Franks makes "French" logical (-ch suffix). Knowing "China" comes from Qin makes it memorable.

3. Pair country + capital as phrases: "The capital of France is Paris" - say it as one unit, not two separate facts.

4. Use food as a hook: Sushi = Japan, Pizza = Italy, Tacos = Mexico. Food is the most memorable cultural marker.

5. Map it visually: Draw a world map and label countries. Spatial memory is stronger than rote memory.

6. Watch one video per country: B站 has travel documentaries for every country. 5 minutes per country is enough.

7. Learn 5 per day: 30 countries in 6 days. Review on day 7. Spaced repetition beats cramming.

8. Use the nationality in a sentence: "I met a Brazilian student" is more memorable than just "Brazil -> Brazilian".