

## **SUMMARY OF GIFT-GIVING CUSTOMS ARRANGED BY COUNTRY**

**NOTE:** This document is current as at July 2016.

The document should be used as a guide only.

The document is held by the Australian Government's contracted gift provider 'Intandem' which provides advice to Australian Government departments/agencies on gift protocols by country. Distribution should be for in-house reference only.

## **AFGHANISTAN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam (Sunni 80%; Shia 20%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Pashto, Dari (Persian).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchange of gifts is a low key exercise not a ceremony and photo taking of the exchange is not recommended. Gifts are presented using the right hand, or both hands. The left hand is never used alone to hand someone a gift, as it's considered unclean. It is not advisable for men to give gifts to the wife of a male dignitary.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

All gifts presented to the President or other high office holders are likely to be searched robustly. Gifts that are simple in structure or easily disassembled and reassembled are more likely to reach the recipient intact.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Afghanistan is an Islamic country therefore gifts must be 'halal' (i.e. no Alcohol, pork products, pigskin objects, etc.). Objects depicting animals or people, other than in a highly stylised way, are also unacceptable. It is not advisable to give men silk, gold or perfume as gifts. Dogs are considered unclean, so any dog item, even something with a picture of a dog would not be given. And knives because they have a sharp edge – severing relationships- are not appropriate.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Ceramic items (especially large bowls or plates) and well done, artistic wood carving would be acceptable. Any sort of Australian precious stones would be desirable. In the clothing line, good quality sheepskin jackets for men, sheepskin rugs, lambskin coats would go well.

## **ALBANIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country. Islam (60%), Christianity (17%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Albanian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange through protocol of Parliament/government.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial limitations. Expensive gifts not presented.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

**ALGERIA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French and Arabic.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts valued at more than 2,000 Algerian Dinars (AUD 300) cannot be retained by recipient. Gifts not retained are held by the state for display in Museums etc.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Algerian society is traditionally Islamic and conservative. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sun-bathers, videos of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam - alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

**ANDORRA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Catalan and Spanish.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

According to the MFA, gift exchanges are customary for initial high-level meetings with HOG and ministers, but there is no written protocol. In practice, the Andorran authorities are responsive to recommendations, such as if the visiting State advises against gift exchanges.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Traditional Andorran crafts include fancy carved pinewood items, pottery and ironwork. Unless there is something very distinctive about Australian items, these should be avoided.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

**ANGOLA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Nil.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Portuguese. Few speak English so avoid books with too much text.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are to the office not the individual. Gift should make clear where from (eg maps of Australia or Australian flora/fauna on packaging).

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Should be appropriate for the office eg wall hanging.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal items should be avoided.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The more distinctly Australian (whilst sophisticated) the better. Safest items are prints, wall hangings etc which can be displayed publicly. Wine would be suitable if it can be given in amount that a group of people can enjoy.

**ANTIGUA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with distinctively Australian Flavour. Wine and cricket memorabilia are popular.

## **ARGENTINA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Books should be in Spanish preferably although books in English and French are acceptable.

## **AUSTRIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

German.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Austria is moving away from elaborate gift exchange on the government level. The trend is to exchange gifts corresponding to local customs. Examples of gifts exchanged between politicians such as ministers and parliamentarians are porcelain plates, small Swarovski crystals, shawls, CDs, coffee table books. There are special rules for government officials relating to the acceptance of gifts (see below). It is customary to take a small gift "Mitbringsel" (a box of chocolates, flowers, a bottle of wine, etc.) whenever hospitality is accepted privately. Packaging is important.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There are legal rules for government employees relating to the acceptance of gifts, but not for politicians. Government employees are not entitled to retain gifts, except for customary gifts of low value or symbolic gifts. For acceptance of gifts, a government employee is required to obtain approval of his office. The gifts become the property of the federal government, which stores and, after some time, sells them for charitable purposes.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Cheap and vulgar objects are not appreciated in this environment, nor would some items of clothing apart from ties for men and scarves, shawls for women. Nor would items of kitchen equipment, e.g. tea towels be appreciated. Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism would not be appreciated.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts should be gracious and generous. Gifts which show meanness of spirit are embarrassing to the giver and recipient.

## **BAHAMAS**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Protestant.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a beach/coral reef/maritime flavour are popular.

## **BAHRAIN (SEE GULF STATES)**

## **BANGLADESH**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Bengali.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is traditional and takes place when dignitaries meet each other during overseas visits and on official calls. In most cases it is pre-arranged. The use of black in packaging should be avoided.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts worth Taka 500 (AUD 8) may be kept for personal use. More expensive gifts to government figures are supposed to be deposited with the Cabinet Division or clearance obtained for retention for personal use. Gifts deposited with Cabinet Division are ultimately sold at an auction.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

No liquor or wine at all.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable.

**BARBADOS****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Protestant (Anglican 40%).

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are usually given at the end of meetings.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The receipt of gifts is normally reported to the Permanent Secretary. Gifts of small value (up to \$250) may be retained by the recipient. Gifts of higher value are handed over to the Ministry for display for a period of 5 years. Gifts given to Ministers in their Ministerial capacity become the property of the Government and do not need to be declared.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and cricket memorabilia are popular.

## **BELGIUM**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French, Dutch.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Varies with the rank of the person but gift exchanges are common with parliamentary groups. It has not been the custom for Ministers who regularly visit the European Commission to give gifts.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts usually retained.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Books could be in French or Dutch if the first language of the recipient is known. Otherwise safest to stick with English but concentrate on picture books rather than literature. It is worth making sure that you have enough gifts suitable for presentation to wives/husbands of recipients where hospitality is given to visiting Ministers etc who are travelling with spouses.

## **BELIZE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity - Roman Catholic (40%) Protestant.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges between visitor/host are common on official calls. No special protocol - usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts are generally not expected.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.



## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (coral reef, rainforest, indigenous etc.) are popular.

## **BHUTAN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism, Hinduism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Dzongkha and English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Quite relaxed about accepting gifts. It appeared customary to provide gifts of high quality handicrafts to each member of visiting team at major official functions.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No specific rules - quite liberal in accepting gifts.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to requirement of compulsory national dress, formal Western attire and accessories such as ties, cufflinks, etc. are of limited use.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Islam, Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Bosnian (official), Croatian (official), Serbian (official).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of official gifts should be made through protocol sections. If the guest does not present the host with a gift, in principle, neither does the host. This should be confirmed with protocol beforehand as well as to whether a proposed gift would be acceptable / appropriate.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

If officials receive gifts which value exceeds Euro 150 they must pass them to a relevant verifying authority for evaluation.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

When meeting a Bosniak official, the usual sensitivities about gifts to Muslims apply. Generally, avoid wine, brandy, oils (olive/lavender), tea as they are produced locally.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **BRAZIL**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic, Evangelical Christians.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Portugese.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

It is normal for Ministers to exchange gifts with their opposite number although agreement could be determined prior to the visit taking place NOT to exchange gifts. Small gifts are required for those who may have been of particular assistance during the visit eg liaison officer, interpreters, drivers etc. Gifts to Ministers should be easy to unwrap in the event that the recipient wished to open the gift immediately.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil. Gifts are retained.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Books in English unless they have decorative coloured graphics/pictures are not appropriate unless specifically requested. The leather industry in Brazil is well advanced, gifts of leatherware would not be highly regarded.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Small gifts (kangaroo pins, koala bears for children) peculiar to Australia are very appropriate for officials/assistants down the line. The post should be contacted each time a Ministerial visit occurs, sometimes gift exchanges can be avoided by mutual agreement.

## **BRUNEI**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Malay, but no problem with books with English text.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchange between visitor/host are common on official calls. No special protocol - usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting. Wrapped gifts are not opened in the presence of donor. Yellow/gold paper, reserved for royalty, should be avoided.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Standard Muslim taboos - alcohol, pig products etc. Gifts should not “outrage modesty” - nudity, erotica, etc is not acceptable. Paintings should be strictly representational and preferably landscape.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Preference would be for decorative items with strong visual impact and suitable for display.

## **BULGARIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Major religions - Eastern Orthodox (59.4%), Muslim (7.8%), None/Unspecified (31.1%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Bulgarian is the major language spoken. Books in English and French would be welcomed.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts should be made through the protocol department of the parliament/government.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal clothing and food items would be inappropriate.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **CAMBODIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhist (96%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Khmer. English is the preferred second language, particularly among younger people. French is often spoken by the older generation of Cambodians.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are appreciated, offer gifts with your right hand or both hands. Avoid black or white packaging. Bouquets of flowers are often gifted at significant official events, national days or funerals.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Knives (weapons). Wine is considered inappropriate gifts for royal or religious ceremonies.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **CANADA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian - Protestant, Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English/French.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

In general, Canada prefers not to engage in gift exchange. However, for those occasions when a gift is warranted, Canada's preference is to exchange gifts "Protocol to Protocol" avoiding personal gift exchanges between Principals. Nevertheless there are exceptions and Global Affairs Canada advise they will adapt preferences as appropriate.

For incoming State Visits longstanding practice at Rideau Hall has been to have a private viewing of the gifts usually immediately prior to the State Dinner. The Governor General and Visitor are escorted to area where gifts are displayed (no media, official photographers only) to briefly view the gifts prior to moving on to the State Dinner.

For the Prime Ministers it depends on their preference at any given time for incoming visits. In most cases gifts are exchanged Protocol to Protocol but some Prime

Ministers have opted for brief private viewings of gifts on margins of official meeting at the Prime Minister's Office.

For Ministers the usual practice is Protocol to Protocol though on occasion some Ministers have wanted to personally hand over the gift.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts valued up to \$200 Canadian dollars can be kept by recipient. Gifts valued between \$200 and \$999 Canadian can be kept by recipient but must be "Declared". Gifts valued at \$1000 Canadian or more are normally "forfeited" (eventually turned over to Archives) though the recipient does have the option to keep the gift if they accept to "declare" the gift and personally repay to the Crown the estimated cost of the gift (\$1000 or more).

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

### **CHILE**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The same as Australia. No special customs in Chile relating to exchange of gifts.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Currently no financial limitations or other restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

While Chile does not have items which could be considered restricted or inappropriate (other than those which would fall into those categories in Australia), most Australian wine should be avoided, with the exception being Australian Shiraz, which Chileans often love. Although customs can be difficult: post suggests only a few bottles of quality Shiraz are brought for gifts given in Chile.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Customarily, Chilean ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. As a general rule Chile presents gifts of a high-quality, such as silver and lapis lazuli objects or jewellery to women. High-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves etc.) are also popular.

## **CHINA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Clocks (particularly to older, traditional Chinese); Handkerchiefs (symbolise tears and death); Knives and scissors (symbolise severing a relationship); Commemorative medals or tokens (may be mistaken for foreign currency which cannot be accepted).

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

In general obviously expensive gifts may cause embarrassment and sensitivity should be shown when a gift is presented. Avoid writing in red ink. Australian wine has been well accepted.

## **COLOMBIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Practice flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Customarily, Colombian ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. Popular items include Australian wine and high-quality items for display such as coffee table books, decorative plates, and items with an indigenous print (ties, scarfs, wood carvings etc).

## **COMOROS**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Comorian and French.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Best to check with post as the occasion arises.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

The usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Books should only be in French if chosen as a gift.

## **COSTA RICA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Traditional.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Woollen items not suitable because of climate.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **CROATIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Croatian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No specific customs. Official gifts are normally exchanged with Guests-of-Government only. Gifts exchanges between Heads of State/Government are usually determined by protocol offices beforehand, while gifts are not customary for ministerial or working-level visits.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No restrictions for HOS/HOG or ministers; ethical standards relating to receiving gifts are similar to those in Australia. Gifts valued in excess HRK 500 (AUD 100) must be recorded in official inventory lists.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Care should be taken with any gift which displays the Croatia coat-of-arms or the traditional Croatia “red and white checks” motif. A check motif which starts (top left-to-right) with a white check is commonly associated with extremist right-wing groups.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts such as handicrafts, books and local produce (such as wine) are appropriate at the regional and municipal level.

## **CUBA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No fixed rules.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Wool not appropriate because of climate.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Cubans usually give what they call “representative” gifts, e.g. paintings by Cuban artists or crocodile leather belts, which they consider one of their best handicrafts.

Books in Spanish preferable as most Cuban officials do not speak or read English. They frequently give books as gifts. While wool is inappropriate due to the climate, silk is very much appreciated. It is not usual to give gemstones but opals might be considered a “representative” gift.



## **CYPRUS**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Orthodox Christian (80%) (Republic of Cyprus controlled areas) / Sunni Islam (18%) (Turkish-Cypriot areas in the north not controlled by the Republic of Cyprus).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Greek (80%) . Turkish (18%). As former UK colony (1960) English in major cities is widely spoken/understood.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

While exchange of gifts is expected during official visits at Head of State, Ministerial level, the matter is usually discussed prior to a particular visit.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts are usually retained or on rare occasions given to very close family members.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Overly 'rustic'/'alternative'-style handicrafts may not elicit the enthusiastic response being sought. Identifiably 'Australiana' objects will be appreciated. Cypriot gifts to others/themselves are overwhelmingly fist or hand-sized silverware objects/religious icons/ancient & classical art reproductions/plaques which usually then expected to be displayed together in similar sets.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Predominantly non-religious, traditionally Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Czech.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country's cultural and artistic strengths.

## **DENMARK**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Lutheran Church - 95% of population.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Danish, (Faroese - Faroe Islands), Greenland – Inuit.  
English and German widely spoken and/or understood.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Preference is not to exchange gifts. If the visitor insists, the gift exchange should only be between guest and host. Ministers/officials should not bring gifts for the Queen (if they have a chance to meet her), gifts for the Queen are only for official state visits.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts should be kept at a low price, under AUD100.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid woollen blankets or sheepskin rugs. These are available locally. Denmark is a major food exporter so food items (except perhaps tropical fruits) should be avoided.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia. Most Danes read and understand English. Danish Ministers and officials travelling abroad frequently carry gifts in the form of Danish craftware of Royal porcelain, books etc. The value of the gift is attuned to the occasion eg the Queen and Consort carry more expensive gifts on official trips and the value would taper down with level of importance of the mission.

## **DOMINICA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts of higher value (over \$1000) are to be declared.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (rain forests etc.) are popular.

## **ECUADOR**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Practice flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid leather goods.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Customarily, Ecuadoran ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. Australian wine and high-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves etc.) are popular.

## **EGYPT**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islamic, Christian minority.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are relatively common, particularly at higher levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel.

Personal items and clothing gifts (cufflinks, ties), particularly those that require 'size' to be known (e.g. hats). Cheap and vulgar objects are not appreciated in this environment, nor are items of kitchen equipment eg tea towels.

Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism.

Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sun-bathers, DVDs of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence.

Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather.

Woollen items not suitable because of climate.

Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally.

Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic.

Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable.

Books, small carpets/rugs, scarves, decorative items such as ornamental boxes, ceramics and small replicas of Egyptian artefacts are commonly given as gifts by Egyptians. Coptic Christians often give religious iconography.

## **EL SALVADOR**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Usually give paintings.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

No woollen items due to climate. Hats are not usually worn in El Salvador.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **ESTONIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Majority atheist, followed by Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Estonian and Russian. A basic level of English is widely spoken, particularly by those under 30.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchange of gifts at senior official levels can be done directly or indirectly, though a direct exchange of gifts is practiced between Heads of State during State and Official visits. During the ceremonial gift exchange of a State visit, the gift should be presented unwrapped.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

In general, no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Flowers should be presented in odd numbers, as an even number of flowers are reserved for when a person is in mourning. Roses should be avoided as they are used at funerals.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Estonians are generally quiet, reserved and softly spoken, and do not enjoy drawing attention to themselves. Gifts, though well received, should not be expensive. Estonians tend to appreciate gifts which have a recognisably Australian character. Gifts of Australian paintings, books and other cultural material would be welcome.

**ETHIOPIA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Ethiopian Orthodox (Christian) 60%, Islam 40%.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Amharic.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Best to check with post as the occasion arises.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **FIJI**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Fijian - Methodist/Christian.

Indian - Hindu/Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English (National language).

Fijian (not widely spoken by Indo-Fijians).

Hindi (not widely spoken by indigenous Fijians).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

There is no set protocol for official gift exchanges. Australian practice is followed.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Financial limitation of FID 500.

If not retained gifts are given to the relevant government ministry.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Cow or calf hide to Hindu, pig skin to Muslim. Wine is not generally or widely consumed. Apart from religious restrictions with individuals there are few gifts which would be considered offensive. Hats are rarely worn.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **FINLAND**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Evangelical Church of Finland (Lutheran), Finnish Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Finnish and Swedish, though English is spoken by a majority of the population.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchange of gifts at official levels is a very old and valued tradition in Finland. It is a normal practice that gifts are exchanged through Protocol in all visits except incoming State visits. In incoming State visits, gifts between the Presidential couple and the visiting Head of State are exchanged discreetly in person. It is Finnish custom that the guests present more gifts than the host.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Finnish officials may only accept gifts of a minor monetary value, though there is no specific instruction determining the value of the gift.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Finland has world-renown homewares and glasswares industries, so unless there is something distinctive about an Australian gift from either of these sectors, they should be avoided. Finnish officials usually present objects of Finnish design, glass or art as

gifts. Flowers should be given in event numbers, and never in white and yellow, as these are colours reserved for funerals.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Design, functionality and simplicity underscore gift giving in Finland. Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia as the majority of Finns read and understand English. Premium Australian wines and merino wool products are very well regarded.

## **FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Macedonian Orthodox, Muslim.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Macedonian, Albanian (both are official languages).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Prior to the visit the Protocol inquires with the delegation whether the guest has any hobbies or special interests so that a gift can be selected accordingly.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The value of gifts should not be very high. No exact values have been indicated.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal clothing and food items.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The origin and meaning of gifts should be clear. If there is a certificate that goes with a gift it should be translated. The gift should be elegantly wrapped.

When giving a gift the Macedonians take care that the gift is linked to Macedonian history, culture, ethnography and was produced in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Gifts usually given by officials are copies of museum artifacts, souvenirs, Ohrid pearls, filigree, and paintings.

## **FRANCE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian - Catholic majority.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are always exchanged at Head of State level and are frequently exchanged during official visits. Exchanges are not usual practice during working visits. French officials take into account custom of host country. Contact is made through the Protocol Section of the Foreign Affairs Dept. which will deliver gifts if requested.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No restrictions on the value of gifts. The President may decide to present a prestigious item such as Lalique crystal or Sevres porcelain. French authorities always seek to choose a gift corresponding to the tastes and interest of the recipient and of a value comparable with that offered to the French counterpart.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Wine and food unless of finest quality. Opals are widely believed to bring bad luck.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

French people tend to appreciate gifts which have a recognisably Australian character.

## **FRENCH POLYNESIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Protestant, Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French and Tahitian.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

At a ministerial/parliamentary level, an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrator (the High Commissioner), the President of French Polynesia, the President of the Territorial Assembly, Ministers and Mayors. With the senior French administrator and the President of French Polynesia, a more substantial gift is usual (ie ceramic, artwork). For the others a book, preferably pictorial, is usual. Although the presentation of traditional flower or shell garlands is very common, there is no requirement to reciprocate.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **GABON**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity, Animism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French.



### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures incl State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). As a general comment when in doubt give a gift.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Something distinctly Australian most suitable.

## **GAMBIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Predominantly Islam with a few Christians.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures inc. State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). As a general comment when in doubt give a gift.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid "unclean" items for Muslims - Avoid pork-based products, religious insignia/symbols, alcohol.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Something distinctly Australian most suitable.

## **GERMANY**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

German (English is the first foreign language taught in schools).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No particular protocol issues relating to the exchange of gifts - practice varies with the individual.

Gifts are not given to interlocutors of a higher protocol rank ie a visiting Prime Minister would not give a gift to the Federal President, nor would a visiting Minister give a gift to the Chancellor.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

In general no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts, however the Federal President must relinquish all gifts on retirement.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gifts made of products derived from endangered or threatened species, also some sensitivity about the giving of arms or weapons (eg ceremonial swords) and wooden objects as gifts.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Wine very favourably received.

Gratuities given to official drivers, police escort and any service personnel. Small souvenirs should be given to any security guards, guard of honour, helicopter crew, protocol officers and officials present at any calls.

Business gifts are seldom exchanged in Germany, so if there is such a presentation ensure it is appropriate and low key.

## **GHANA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity, Islam, Animist.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures inc. State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). As a general comment when in doubt give a gift.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Pork based products. Overtly religious material or designs that may appear religious. Alcohol in the north can be a problem.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Ghanaians are interested in distinctly Australian products and show particular interest in Aboriginal art and books/prints showing the diversity of the Australian landscape.

## **GREECE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Greek Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Greek.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are often exchanged at high-level meetings and at meetings in regional Greece. Post would normally discuss exchange of gifts before calls.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

By arrangement but depends on level of call.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

None specified.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **GRENADA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity- Roman Catholic (65%), Protestant.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (rain forests etc.) are popular.

## **GUATEMALA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchange between presidents and ministers only at the beginning of a visit. Gift is given to the Directorate of Protocol to pass on to the President. Receiving state gives gift to the other country's Ambassador. When meeting at a reception, for example, the Presidents appreciation is expressed. Gifts are not usually exchanged between Ambassadors, but they are exchanged between Foreign Ministers and between other Ministers on a reciprocal basis. There is usually an exchange of decorations between Foreign Ministers and in that case a gift is not usually necessary.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil, but excessively expensive gifts are not in good taste.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **GULF STATES (BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, OMAN, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE AND YEMEN)**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islamic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gulf countries are traditionally Islamic and conservative. Personal items should be avoided. Avoid clothing gifts that require 'size' to be known. Cheap and vulgar objects are not appreciated in this environment, nor would items of kitchen equipment eg tea towels be appreciated. Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Items

depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism would not be appreciated. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sun-bathers, videos of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam - alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate. Ties and cufflinks would not be appropriate as they are not compatible with national dress. Woollen items not suitable because of climate. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Dates are commonly given as gifts by these countries. Gifts which show meanness of spirit are embarrassing to the giver and recipient.

## **GUYANA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (50%); Hinduism (33%), Islam (10%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Very often presented at the end of a meeting, but generally a token gift only.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine, tropical Australia themes (rainforest, wildlife) and cricket are popular.

## **HAITI**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Roman Catholic (80%); Vodou (official religion).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Kreyòl, French.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

All types of gifts are acceptable.

## **HONDURAS**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Wool as the climate is warm most of the year.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **HUNGARY**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Roman Catholic, Protestant .

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Hungarian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchange on the political level is important. Gifts at the highest level (President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly) should be organised through protocol office. They are usually not handed over in person. At Ministerial level, it is more usual for gifts to be exchanged in person, but going through protocol offices is optional. The process for exchanging gifts below Ministerial level is less formal. Packaging is usually simple. Examples of gifts that are often given by Hungary include music, handicraft, porcelain, books, wine and food.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is no set limit for the value of the gift. Usually, offices coordinate about the value of gifts when preparing a visit, including to prepare a gift in return.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Hungary has a gift-giving culture.

## **ICELAND**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (Church of Iceland).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Icelandic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are generally not expected. Gift exchange at Ministerial level should be arranged in advance.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Icelandic officials are not permitted to accept expensive gifts personally.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

None known.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **INDIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Hinduism 82%, Islam 11%, Christianity 3%, Sikh 2%, Buddhism 0.7%, Others 1.3%.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Hindi is the official language of India. It is the most widely spoken language and primary tongue of 41% of the people. English enjoys the status of subsidiary official language and is widely used in national, political and commercial communication.

There are 21 other recognised (scheduled) languages in the Constitution: Bengali (8.1%), Telugu (7.2%), Marathi (7%), Tamil (5.9%), Urdu (5%), Gujarati (4.5%), Kannada (3.7%), Malayalam (3.2%), Oriya (3.2%), Punjabi (2.8%), Assamese (1.3%), Kashmiri, Sindhi, Sanskrit, Bodo, Dogri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Santhali. These languages are ordinarily spoken by the majority in a particular state or region.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts of a modest value, usually of a cultural nature, exchanged during official calls, particularly in cities and states outside capital, New Delhi.

Expectation is that gifts would be of a modest value (Indian gifts perhaps less than AUD \$50).

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid giving gifts made from animal skin or leather, which could cause offence. Handkerchief, knives and cutlery are also not acceptable gifts.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **INDONESIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam (87.2%), Christianity (9.9%), Hinduism (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%), Confucianism and others (0.2%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Indonesian.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

In formal meetings, an exchange of gifts usually signals the end of the meeting. State guests exchange gifts with the President at the official dinner. However, in most cases the exchange of gifts is not done by leaders. Rather it is done behind the scenes via protocol officers.

All videos are supposed to be surrendered on arrival for viewing by the State Censorship Board.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil. The President usually puts his gifts in display cabinets at the State Palace.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Alcoholic beverages, any product made from pig. Indonesian officials rarely wear ties or cufflinks. Warm clothing is inappropriate. Wombats are not well received as it is felt they resemble pigs.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Obviously Australian items well received. With books, most of the elite speak good English, though books with many illustrations are most appropriate (check for pictures that may be offensive to their religious beliefs). Art (both originals and prints) of the Australian landscape are well received and hung in prominent places. Even if a gift exchange is not expected or scheduled, it often occurs nevertheless.



## **IRAN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Shiite Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Farsi.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchange common practice.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial restrictions at any level.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Short sleeved shirts, ties, visual representation of unclad or semi-clad male or female form, videos, music, products (food, hide) from pig, any pork or alcohol products. Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Any products related to or bearing symbols relating to Christianity, Judaism or any religion. Jewellery is best avoided

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **IRAQ**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic, Kurdish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Arab tradition - gifts should praise the receiver and should not be of a type which cannot reasonable be reciprocated.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Anything obviously cheap.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **IRELAND**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Irish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is not expected. Where it is the intention of an Australian Minister or Parliamentary Delegation to give a gift, the Irish would appreciate prior knowledge of the gift and its value so that a reciprocal gift can be arranged.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

An officer may accept and retain gifts of modest value (e.g. diaries, pens, etc.). Any gift of more significant value will be refused or, if such refusal would cause offence, will be handed over by the civil servant concerned to his or her Department/Office.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Ivory of any sort, fur items, snakeskin and crocodile items, live or dead specimens of endangered species, foodstuffs, cash, vouchers or similar items that can be handed over for cash.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts should only be exchanged on significant visits or occasions.

## **ISRAEL**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Judaism, minority of Islam (Israeli Arabs).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

All official communications are in English.  
Hebrew, Arabic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

If it is an official visit then the gift is usually left at the hotel (or alternatively given to a representative of the receiving country to take back to the hotel). The visiting country may, if they wish, present their gift at a meeting/dinner/reception - but usually informally - ie not a lot of fanfare, usually at the end of a speech. Certain colour combinations should be avoided - i.e. white, red and black (Nazi flag), red, black and green (Palestinian flag).

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts should be kept to within a reasonable price range; expensive gifts would be inappropriate. Gifts of a value greater than 350INS cannot be accepted by Members of the Knesset.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Any pork products, any shelled seafood, in fact all foodstuffs should be avoided. Any books or pictures that allude to the New Testament of the Bible, any books of World War 2 or the Holocaust, anything alluding to Christmas, anything to do with Christianity (or any other faith), no calendars (Christian year differs from the Jewish and Moslem year). In general anything with a religious theme should be avoided in case of offence.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

#### **ITALY**

##### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholic.

##### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Italian.

##### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot. Should seldom be carried "off stage" by the recipient in person.

##### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Much the same as Australia, tending towards greater generosity on the part of the Italians.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Clothing, leather goods, jewellery of the "coal to Newcastle" category.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Italy is perhaps the world's leading style/design centre, so where possible it would be best to ask the post for comment in relation to proposed recipients.

#### **JAMAICA**

##### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Protestant (62%); mainly Anglicans, fundamentalists.

##### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

##### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

##### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No apparent limitations.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gifts of a personal nature.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Jamaicans will be receptive to a gift during a first time official/business meeting, but nothing too expensive. Wine, especially with cricket and tropical environmental themes (mainly environment, birds, animals).

## **JAPAN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Shinto religion, Buddhism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Japanese.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Very strong tradition of gift-giving and exchange. Culturally, the tradition of gift-giving should be seen in the context of social reciprocity - the duty/obligation basis upon which most social relations in Japan are based. Gifts are normally exchanged at the beginning of a meeting and should be passed and received with both hands. Gifts are not usually opened in front of the giver.

The Japanese consider it impolite to give a gift without wrapping. Traditionally, they believe that wrapping a gift in a white wrapping protected it from all evils, but nowadays it is sufficient that the article be properly packaged and suitably gift-wrapped. Elaborate bows are not pleasing to the Japanese eye.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts to Japanese Ministers, unlike the case of the Prime Minister, may be accepted personally and retained. The Prime Minister and spouse may not receive gifts personally, regardless of the value of the gift, the gifts will be received by the Official Residence and remain at the Residence. There is no financial limit on gifts received by Ministers.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

If gifts come in more than one component the numbers 4, 7 and 9 should be avoided as they are considered to bring bad luck in Japan. Generally speaking, given Japanese pre-eminence in this field, pottery and ceramics from other countries may be of lesser appeal in Japan although high quality Australian pottery can be popular.

Folk/Aboriginal art is likely to be suitable only in cases where the recipient is known to have a particular interest in such items.

Gifts of containers such as ornate wooden boxes, which are empty, have been known to cause confusion among their Japanese recipients.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Most Japanese have either been to Australia or know people who have and are therefore familiar with the value and type of souvenirs and gifts available in Australia. Emphasis should be on high quality, well-made and suitably packaged items. Traditional gifts such as koalas and kangaroo pins should be avoided. Australian designer goods are well known in Japan and would be suitable. Sporting goods popular (golf/tennis items in particular).

## **JORDAN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic (but English widely used).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No limitations.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sun-bathers, DVDs of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic. Need to avoid offending the King or the monarchy. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Decorative boxes or Dead Sea products are commonly given as gifts by Jordanians.

## **KENYA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (80%), Islam (approx. 15%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Kiswahili, but English is widely spoken.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Not a great emphasis on gift exchange, done through officials.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **KIRIBATI**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian denominations.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Gilbertese.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No particular customs, although visits to traditional Maneabas (meeting houses) are usually occasions for the presentation of small gifts to the Maneaba as a whole eg tobacco, books, food bowls.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No apparent limitations. However modest gifts are best since Kiribati is a poor country and very lavish gifts could not be reciprocated.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **KOREA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism.

Christianity (Catholicism/Protestant).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Korean.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are exchanged as a matter of course. In the case of official visitors, gifts should be taken for every call and the spouse of the host (if the visitor's spouse also

accompanies). Gifts should be presented and accepted with both hands. Names should not be written in red ink. Gifts usually not opened at presentation. Strong emphasis is placed on presentation

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

For officials there are value limits on gifts that may be accepted so a very valuable gift may cause embarrassment to a government official.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Leather goods are readily and cheaply available in Korea. The number 4 is considered unlucky so do not give a set of 4 items.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Golf and tennis items popular also good Australian wine.

### **KOSOVO**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Islam.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Albanian and Serbian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The value of a gift should be based on reciprocity, and not exceed the “limits of courtesy and legal limits”.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The exchange of gifts may be discussed and agreed upon with Protocol in advance. The following Kosovan representatives usually present gifts during official visits: President; Prime Minister; President of the General Assembly; Minister of Foreign Affairs.

### **KUWAIT (SEE GULF STATES)**

### **LAOS**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism

## **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Lao

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The Lao MFA Protocol advised that all gifts for Ministers and Prime Minister should be delivered/exchanged through the MFA Protocol Department.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No restrictions.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

The Laos would be unlikely to take offence at any gift.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Smiling and laughing at any time during a meeting is common.

## **LATVIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Latvian and Russian. A basic level of English is widely spoken, particularly by those under 30.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchange of gifts at senior official levels can be done directly or indirectly, though a direct exchange of gifts is practiced between Heads of State during State and Official visits. The exchange of gifts should be initiated by the visiting state.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

In general, no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Flowers should be presented in odd numbers, as an even number of flowers are reserved for when a person is in mourning. Roses, particularly red roses, should be avoided as they are used at funerals.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Latvians tend to appreciate gifts which have a recognisably Australian character. Gifts of Australian paintings, books and other cultural material would be welcome.

## **LEBANON**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Predominantly Islamic and Christian.



**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic, English, French.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Personal items and clothing gifts (cufflinks, ties, scarves), particularly those that require 'size' to be known (e.g. hats). Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism. Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather would be inappropriate for Muslims. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Individually-engraved plaques (often in English) are commonly given as gifts by Lebanon, as are high-end chocolates and glossy picture/history books

**LITHUANIA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Lithuanian.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING****RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS****INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS****GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country's cultural and artistic strengths.

**LUXEMBOURG****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French, German, Luxembourgish.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Varies with the rank of the person.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts usually retained

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Most Luxembourg officials will speak fluent English, so giving a book in English will be acceptable.

If giving flowers, avoid chrysanthemums which are commonly used in funerals in Luxembourg.

It is worth making sure that you have enough gifts suitable for presentation to wives/husbands of recipients where hospitality is given to visiting Ministers etc who are travelling with spouses.

**MADAGASCAR****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Indigenous beliefs (50%), Christianity (40%), Islam (7%).

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Malagasy, French.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The Madagascans have adopted the Western (French) practice.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Would not appear to be any financial limitations.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Madagascan hierarchy is sophisticated and travel regularly to Europe. Any gifts should consequently be of an appropriate standard.

**MALAWI****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Scottish Presbyterian.

## **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Chi Chewa.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Frequent giving to “Big Men” who are by and large expected to share  
Packaging needs to allow gift to be easily opened before a crowd.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

With books there is heavy censorship on moral political grounds. Videos best avoided unless pure geography (country has no TV and few videos).

No wine.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Best gifts public - wall hangings (animals or flora).

Unless to the Life President or very small (ties, cufflinks) should be capable of being enjoyed by many eg wall hangings, pictures.

Is a very conservative country, and very formal (women wear gloves and hats and skirts to at least mid-calf).

## **MALAYSIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam 61%, Buddhism 20%, Christianity 9%, Hinduism 6 %.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Malay, although English is widely spoken. Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew) and Tamil also spoken.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Ornate packaging is appreciated, but not required. Gifts placed in a dedicated gift box, bag or simply wrapped will suffice. White, blue, black, and yellow gift-wrap should also be avoided. Red and green are good colour options for gift wrapping or adornments.

While it is customary to give gifts in Malaysia, the Western practice of not giving and receiving gifts is well known, and gifts from Australian officials are generally not expected, although appreciated when given.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is no limit on the value of the gifts for Malaysian officials.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Generally avoid pewter and alcohol products. As pig-based are offensive to Muslims and cow-based products are offensive to Hindus, it would be wise to avoid leather products altogether. Toy dogs or gifts that picture dogs, gifts with images of nude or partially clad women (even in paintings or sculptures with artistic merit) should be avoided. Yellow colour is reserved for royalty. Australian chocolates are widely known and liked, but avoid those that may include gelatine.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Coffee table books, small ornate items, stationery and fabric/shawls (for women) are the most commonly presented items to Australian officials. Reciprocating in kind is appreciated.

### **MALDIVES**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Divehi.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is customary and takes place when dignitaries meet each other during overseas visits and on official calls. The use of black in packaging should be avoided.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

No liquor or wine at all.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered acceptable.

### **MALTA**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Maltese and English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

A visiting Head of State would be expected to pass his gift to the President of Malta through the office of the Chief of Protocol early in the visit to enable reciprocation to be arranged during his farewell call on the President. Similar arrangements apply for

visiting Prime Ministers. Ministers usually exchange gifts during calls on their counterparts.

Official Maltese gifts are usually packaged in the national colours of red and white.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There are no limitations stipulated for acceptance of gifts however gifts judged to be of great value or artistic significance would be expected to remain the property of the State.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Maltese are generally both hospitable and generous and share the same cultural values as Western Europeans and Australians. The extensive grass roots in things Australian, resulting from the presence in Australia of large numbers of people of Maltese origin ensures that gifts of Australian painting, books and other cultural material would be well received. Valuable or unique Aboriginal artefacts would be less likely to be understood and appreciated. Gifts from the Australian War Memorial relating to Gallipoli would be appropriate given the significant number of injured ANZACs that the Maltese cared for in Maltese hospitals during World War 1”

#### **MAURITIUS**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Hindu (50%), Christianity (30%), Islam (15%).

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Creole, French, English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are exchanged at the conclusion of ceremonies, usually with considerable public/press coverage.

The usual gift from the Government of Mauritius is a scale model sailing ship valued at about \$500.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **MEXICO**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts between Heads of State or Government are always exchanged personally in a private meeting.

Gifts for Ministers or Senior officials are sent to the Directorate General of Protocol of the MFA who will deliver the gift to the recipient.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

It is important to ensure the gift's value is relative to the wage structure, given restrictions on public officials receiving gifts. Post can provide further advice as required.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal clothing items.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **MICRONESIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift giving is widely practised. A brief speech is made by the giver and receiver. The gifts are normally exchanged at the end of a visit but if an appropriate occasion arises during a visit gifts can be exchanged at that time.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No official restrictions or regulations covering gift giving, gifts are normally of symbolic rather than high commercial value.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

No reasonable gift is likely to cause offence. Liquor and wine would be more suitable for men than women. Any aboriginal artefacts should be accompanied by representation of the aspects of our culture. Ties and cufflinks are not used.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Either decorative or functional items are appropriate. Ceramic or wooden items are suitable. Fishing is about the only outdoor sport. Cotton is the preferred fabric. The temperature and humidity need to be recognised in the choosing of gifts. Australia is very well regarded. The President is attracted to dried wild flower arrangements. Our fauna is almost as well-known as Crocodile Dundee and Ox and Palm beef. US sports are played.

## **MONTENEGRO**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Montenegrin .

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

During the official visit of the President of a foreign country, President of the Parliament or Government of a foreign country to Montenegro, the host presents the guest with a gift either personally or through State Protocol after the official meetings with Montenegrin dignitaries, depending on the agreement that is made prior to the visit. However, exceptions can be made if guests request to exchange gifts with their counterparts directly. Gifts are given if the visit is official and in case of reciprocity. Gifts can also be presented to the members of the official delegation and symbolic gifts may be given to personnel in charge of technical support.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Money, sovereign securities or precious metal. An appropriate gift of smaller value is of value up to 50 EUR. The market value of the gift on the day of its acceptance is taken as the value of the gift.

Protocol gifts become the property of the state/municipality regardless of their value.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Example of gifts given by Montenegrin officials: books, clothing items, souvenir with national motives/details, wine.

## **MYANMAR**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Myanmar, English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Traditionally, gift exchanges are common in high-level meetings. This practice may evolve during the term of the NLD Government. In an attempt to crack down on corruption, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has banned officials from retaining gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat (US\$21). Gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat

are to be declared to the Government and are either used by the organisation or donated to charity.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Government officials are unable to retain gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat (US\$21).

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Nil provided that the gift matches the rank of its recipient. As Government Ministers and officials continue to wear traditional dress in meetings, ties are rarely worn and are not valued as gifts.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Appropriate gifts could include books, pens, or Australian red wine. Golf is a popular pastime amongst men.

### **NAURU**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Congregational, Roman Catholic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts would usually be exchanged at welcoming stages or during function at State House.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial limitation/restriction on acceptance or retention of gifts.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Alcohol available duty free. Climate is very hot so woollen goods inappropriate.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Prefer traditional mementoes and not European goods. Gifts are usually prominently displayed in offices, rather than used for personal purposes.

### **NEPAL**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a Hindu state. It has a significant Buddhist minority.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Official language is Nepali. English is widely spoken in government and industry.



## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchanging of gifts is a widespread social custom.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Ties and cufflinks would not be appropriate as they are not compatible with national dress.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The preference of the Nepalese would be for items that are not readily available such as the products of advanced western technology including electronic and electrical items. Given the sophistication of high ranking Nepalese items of a decorative nature should be of a high quality. Quality opal jewellery for example would be appropriate as would such items as coffee table books and perhaps good quality scarves for women.

Liquor is a popular gift. The exchanging of gifts is a widespread and popular social custom at all levels of Nepal society and great care should be exercised in the selection of gifts in order to elicit an appropriate response

## **NETHERLANDS, THE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Dutch, although English is widely spoken.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

With packaging, orange is usually reserved for the Royal family.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The King is not allowed to keep any gift. The Prime Minister and Ministers are not allowed to keep any gift once they have left office. Gifts of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs are displayed in showcases at the Ministry of General Affairs.

Civil servants are not allowed to keep gifts with a value of more than €50. Those gifts are stored in the ministry. Gifts valued at less than €50 are usually raffled off amongst staff members of the directorate of the civil servant concerned at the end of the year.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

None.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

In principle, the Netherlands discourages the exchange of gifts unless the other party insists. Should there be an exchange of gifts, it is generally managed through both protocol departments.

### Policy on giving gifts

The Prime Minister and Ministers have requested the protocol department to keep a low profile and therefore not to buy very expensive gifts. If the Prime Minister and Ministers travel to other countries, only the head of a delegation will receive a gift, not his or her staff members. Dutch citizens who work abroad, for instance directors of factories, will never receive a gift.

### Value of gifts

The value of gifts from the Prime Minister are generally limited to to appr. €500, but in most cases the gifts have a lesser value. The value of gifts from Ministers is limited to appr. €300, but most of the gifts have a lesser value. The limit for gifts to be handed out by the Secretary-General (that is: if she represents the minister) is €50.

## **NEW CALEDONIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic, Protestant.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French and local Melanesian languages.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

At Ministerial/parliamentary level an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrator (the High Commissioner), the President of the Government of New Caledonia, the President of the New Caledonian Congress, Ministers, Presidents of Provincial Assemblies and Mayors. With the senior French administrator and the President of the Government of New Caledonia, a more substantial gift is usual (ie ceramic, artwork). For the others a book, preferably pictorial, is usual.

There are also customary exchanges during meetings with Kanak customary authorities, including the President of Customary Senate. As a code of social relations, custom (“coutume” in French) is central to the Kanak community, in short similar to “Welcome to country” ceremony in Australia. For a visitor, custom is basically a gift presentation to the Chief responsible for the place the visitor wants to enter; it entails specific rules. By doing custom, the visitor pays his/her respect to Kanak culture, acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and asks permission to be present on traditional land. The traditional gifts (which can be acquired locally) are:

- A piece of cloth, the length of which reflects the importance of the visitor
- Yams
- A token amount of cash money (usually XPF1000 or approximately AUD15).

Australian Indigenous-themed gifts are an appropriate addition to the traditional gifts.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is a certain order to customary exchanges. Post in Noumea will provide briefing and prepare set remarks for the occasion. As the customary exchanges occur in French, HOP Noumea can introduce and speak on behalf of the visitor.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

While gift exchanges are usual, gifts of an extravagant nature are not required. Tobacco or cigarettes are often given as part of a customary exchange. However, Australian Government policy prohibits giving tobacco or cigarette. This restriction is understood and accepted locally.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **NEW ZEALAND**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Protestant and Catholic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Maori and sign language.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

None.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The practice of gift giving in New Zealand is essentially the same as in Australia. We note that Australia and New Zealand do not routinely exchange gifts for bilateral meetings. The exceptions will be personal gifts (for example, the Prime Ministers have exchanged gifts such as wine) or, conceivably, significant events/anniversaries (for example, centennials). However, as a general rule, both sides will discourage an exchange of gifts.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

We note that there may be gift protocols involved if Australians were involved with a visit to a marae in New Zealand, but that we have not come across this at post in recent memory (and would assess on a case by case basis what was appropriate/required). By way of background, it is traditional for all visitors to a marae to present a *koha* or gift to their hosts during the welcome as a token of their gratitude for the hospitality received and an expression of their regard for the hosts. It is not a payment (as this would be to spurn the open hospitality given by the hosts) but rather an acknowledgement of the hosts' efforts. It is usual to leave a gift of money in an envelope as a *koha*. There is no standard amount for a *koha*, that depends on the visitors – they give as little or as much as they are able. The *koha* is placed on the marae by the last speaker from the visitors group at the conclusion of the song accompanying his speech.

## **NEW ZEALAND REALM COUNTRIES - COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Protestant and Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Polynesian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

None.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

New Zealand MFAT has advised that gift protocols for the Cook Islands and Niue are determined on a case by case basis. This is consistent with our own approach. We would generally establish whether there are specific gifts/protocols/expectations for each visit (especially if it is a high-level visit, e.g. Leader or Ministerial).

Each gift would be approached on an individual basis, taking into account the purpose of the visit, previous gifts (if relevant) and the individual or group concerned.

## **NICARAGUA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are usually exchanged at the end of the first official meeting ie between Heads of State or Foreign Ministers.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

The Nicaraguans have indicated that items of clothing are nor usually suitable for gifts.

Cufflinks are not suitable as Nicaraguans do not usually wear suits.

Woollen items/sheepskin rugs are not suitable due to the climate.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nicaragua usually gives original paintings by Nicaraguan painters or Nicaraguan handcrafts.

## **NIGERIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian 40%, Islam 40%, Animist/Traditional 20%.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English is the official language.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures inc. State Governors, Traditional leaders, Federal leaders (less so but preferable). As a general comment when in doubt give a gift.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid “unclean” items for Muslims - pork based products. Avoid religious insignia/symbols. Alcohol dicey in Muslim north.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Distinctly Australian gifts good.

## **NORWAY**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Norwegian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

There is no tradition for exchange of gifts. If there is a gift exchange at Ministerial level it should be handed over through protocol.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The value of the gift should not exceed NOK500,00 (about AUD100).

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Live animals are not acceptable gifts. Nor are products/artefacts made from animals defined as endangered under international conventions.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **OMAN (SEE GULF STATES)**

### **PAKISTAN**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islamic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

National language is Urdu, English is widely understood, particularly by likely recipients of such gifts.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

In Pakistan it is customary to present gifts to official or state visitors. Reciprocity is therefor expected.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There do not seem to be any limitations. There are no rules laid down, of which we are aware, on acceptance or retention of gifts. It should be assumed that a gift to a Pakistani dignitary will be kept by him as a personal item. This makes it important to try to give something appropriate for that person.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything in gold or silver should be genuine and obviously costly and NOT plated. In jewellery Pakistani women do not customarily wear brooches nor do men wear cufflinks (unless it is a personal affectation). Offensive gifts would be liquor or containers for liquor (eg crystal decanters, silver hip flasks, wine jugs) and especially anything made from pigskin or the like.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Ceramic items (especially large bowls or plates) and well done, artistic wood carving would be acceptable. Any sort of Australian precious stones, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and particularly opals, would be desirable. In the clothing line, good quality sheepskin jackets for men, sheepskin rugs, lambskin coats would go well. Any jewellery should always be set in 18 or 22 Carat gold or be sterling silver. The High Commission should always be asked to sound out personal likes and dislikes of the principal host and hostess in advance.

## **PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islamic, Christian minority.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic (English and French also widely spoken).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Personal items should be avoided. Avoid clothing gifts (cufflinks, ties), particularly those that require 'size' to be known (e.g. hats). Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism would not be appreciated. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sun-bathers, videos of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam - alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols. Glassware (as it is a significant industry in Hebron).

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Ornamental gifts, usually from Jerusalem or Bethlehem and often with Christian motifs, are commonly given as gifts. If a Palestinian kufieh scarf (black and white) is received, recommend it is not worn for photographs. Be alert to gifts portraying maps (e.g. of historic Palestine).

## **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglican).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Tok Pisin (Pidgin English), Hiri Motu (language of Port Moresby (the capital) and surrounds).

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

For formal visits, Papua New Guineans welcome gift exchange. Art work (including Indigenous art work) are well received, as are gifts related to Australian sporting teams which are popular (particularly rugby league). In the Highlands region, senior visitors may be gifted a pig. It is appropriate to donate the pig back to the community, or to a local hospital or school.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

There is a large Seven Day Adventist community in PNG who do not consume alcohol or pork.

**GENERAL COMMENTS****PANAMA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholicism.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Practice flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS****INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS****GENERAL COMMENTS**

Australian wine is a popular gift.

**PARAGUAY****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish and Guarani (native language).

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING****RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gifts which offend accepted behaviour and morality.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**



## **PERU**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts at Ministerial level or above would expect to be exchanged except where there is prior agreement not to. Small gifts are normally given to those people (drivers, ceremonial, liaison, interpreters) who have been of particular assistance during the visit. Gifts to Ministers should be easy to unwrap in the event that the recipient wished to open immediately.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Peru has a very large textile/handcraft industry. Gifts of textiles, unless outstanding should be avoided as should handcrafts. Silver is a major mineral product in Peru and should also be avoided.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Small gifts peculiar to Australia are always popular. The post should be consulted on gift requirements prior to a Ministerial visit. Sometimes exchanges of gifts can be avoided by mutual agreement.

## **PHILIPPINES, THE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholicism 85%.  
Islam 4%.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English and Filipino, based on Tagalog, is the official language, English is widely spoken. There are about 20 indigenous languages.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are often exchanged at senior government level. Gifts should not be opened in the presence of the giver.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The code of conduct and ethical standards for public officials prohibit public officials and employees from soliciting or accepting anything of monetary value when this is given by reason of his/her official position. A thing of monetary value is one which is evidently or manifestly excessive by its very nature.

Gifts are usually retained or given to colleagues/friends except for the President who keeps all gifts received in a museum at the Presidential Palace.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities - both Roman Catholic and Moslem, need to avoid any material which might be considered lewd or racist (including literature and art). No wine, chocolates, tobacco, pig leather.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Wealthy Filipinos very generous with gifts, often quite expensive, and would expect the same in return. Filipinos are very fond of good food and wine and like to receive these as gifts.

### **POLAND**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Polish.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country's cultural and artistic strengths.

### **PORTUGAL**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Portuguese.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No gift protocols in Portugal. In general, Portuguese will give gifts that are representative of the country or of a particular region. This can include books, ceramics or textiles. Post recommends conventional gifts for exchange.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None known.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **QATAR (SEE GULF STATES)**

### **ROMANIA**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Eastern Orthodox (81.4%)/Roman Catholic (4.33%).

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Romanian.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts should be made exclusively through Protocol Department of the Parliament/Government

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is no financial limitation on acceptance of gifts. However, if officials receive very expensive gifts they must pass them to the competent authorities.  
Gifts such as works of art would be displayed in Parliament/Government buildings.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal clothing and food items would be inappropriate.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Romanian gifts are usually souvenirs.

### **SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Anglican (50%).

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift exchanges between visitor/host are common on official calls. No special protocol - usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) go down well.

**SAINT LUCIA****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Roman Catholic (60%).

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) are appreciated.

**SAN MARINO****MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Italian.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange through protocol of Parliament/government at the level of Ministers and heads of Government and State. In the case of the Ambassador's presentation of credentials, the exchange of gifts would be done directly.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Officials may not accept gifts of a value higher than 100 euro. At the level of heads of state and government and ministers there is no financial limitation but expensive gifts are not appropriate.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Expensive gifts.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

In general, since San Marino is quite a formal country the type of gift chosen should not be too original.

## **SAINT VINCENT AND GRENADINES**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Anglican, Pentecostal Methodist.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gifts of a personal nature.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) are appreciated.

## **SAUDI ARABIA (SEE GULF STATES)**

## **SERBIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Serbian Orthodox.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Serbian.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts should be made through the Chief of Protocol or protocol officer at the conclusion of the visit.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

If officials receive expensive gifts these must be passed to the Palace of Serbia.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Personal clothing and food items.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts given include crystal, fresco copies, items from the national souvenir shop such as coffee or tea sets, tablecloths, wallets, attaché cases etc. ceramic, leather, collections of silver or gold ducats, sometimes original paintings.

## **SIERRA LEONE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam, Christianity, Traditional/Animist.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures inc. State Governors, Traditional leaders, Federal leaders (less so but preferable). As a general comment when in doubt give a gift.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid “unclean” items for Muslims - pork based products. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Distinctly Australian gifts good.

## **SINGAPORE**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Hinduism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Mandarin, English, Malay and Tamil.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts should be wrapped, please avoid black and white colours. Checking with Post in advance is always a good idea. While officials in Singapore suggest it is a country where gift-giving is not required, we sometimes find that gifts are presented to our visitors anyway. Having small gifts 'just in case' is good practice.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts should be presented with both hands to the recipients.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid gifts which have a negative local cultural connotation: clocks; watches; sharp objects (knives, scissors); and items made from cow or pig for Muslim/Hindu recipients.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Advice has been that it is inappropriate to present gifts to Singapore Ministers. This should always be checked with our post.

## **SLOVAKIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Slovak is the major language spoken.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts should be made exclusively through the Protocol Department.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is no financial limitation on acceptance of gifts, but the unspoken rule of modesty applies.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Avoid crystal glass, ceramics items, objects made of leather as they are produced locally.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **SLOVENIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Officially a secular country.  
Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Slovene.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

In general, gifts should not exceed the value of EUR 60. Rules on the exchange of gifts depend on the office holder, and should be agreed upon beforehand on a case by case basis. In general, gifts are opened in the presence of the visitor. Exchange of gifts takes place either at the conclusion of a meeting, or after lunch/dinner. If the visitor is

of a lower rank (for instance a minister visiting the President), then gifts will be received by protocol in advance, with no gift to be received in return.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Weapons (eg knives), unless the receiver is a known collector of these items.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**SOMALIA**

**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Somali.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No particular traditions.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

The usual sensitivities about gifts to Muslims apply.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**SPAIN**

**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

**MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

**CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No special protocol relating to gift exchanges, spontaneity and affection surpass formality in choice of occasion to exchange gifts.

**RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil. If a gift is to an official and that person does not retain it, then it is displayed in an official place.

**INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Spain has a traditional ceramics industry and ceramic items, and Spanish leather goods are top quality and world famous. These should be avoided, unless there is something very distinctive about Australian items.



Wooden items should also only be selected if they are distinctive, silver is a better choice if item tends towards functional (ie bowls).

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Timing, simplicity and elegance, together with affection and attention to detail are the most important elements of gift giving in Spain.

## **SRI LANKA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Sinhalese, Tamil, English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is customary. This can be either directly or through protocol, by negotiation during visit planning.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No specific limits on value.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Generally avoid alcohol or wine, as some visitors may be representatives of the Muslim community. Animal-product gifts should also generally be avoided (leather, etc). Avoid gifts with colonial themes or references.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered acceptable.

## **SURINAME**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity – Roman Catholic (40%); Hinduism (27%); Islam (20%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Dutch (official), although English is widely spoken, Sranan, Hindi.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Nil.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Gifts of a personal nature.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Wine and gifts with a tropical Australian theme (rainforests, wildlife, indigenous).

## **SWEDEN**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Church of Sweden (Lutheran).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Swedish, though English is spoken by a majority of the population.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The exchange of gifts at official levels is a very old and valued tradition in Sweden. Gifts should be presented in an elegant box/container that may be easily opened. Royal colours of blue and yellow should be avoided in packaging.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The value of a gift to be presented by a Swedish official to a high-level host/counterpart is approximately SEK 1000 (A\$180). Swedish gift recipients must declare the gift to customs authorities – if they are not able to retain the gift, it is displayed in an official place.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Sweden has sizeable homewares, glassware and apparel industries, so unless there is something distinctive about an Australian gift from any of these sectors, they should be avoided.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Design, functionality and elegance are the most important elements of gift giving in Sweden. Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia as the majority of Swedes read and understand English. Premium Australian wines, as well as R M Williams footwear, are very well regarded by both sexes.

## **SYRIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Arabic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are usually not exchanged directly between the visitor and host government representative but at a protocol level between a delegation official and the person in charge of protocol in the host government representative's office.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There are no formal financial or other restrictions on acceptance of gifts.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Alcohol. Pig-related products.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **TANZANIA**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam 35%, Christian 30%, other 30%. 97% of population on Zanzibar are Muslim.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Swahili, English is also spoken.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No particular traditions.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **THAILAND**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism (Theravada tradition) (94.6%), Islam (4.6%).

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Thai.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts both for Royalty and for Head of Government are delivered prior to the major official function of the visit and displayed. It should be kept in mind that Thai gifts are often elaborate and impressive. In other situations involving the services eg visit by Chief of Staff, the gift is exchanged during the call on the Thai counterpart. Black should not be used in packaging.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Tradition is not to give sharp objects (such as a knife, dagger-type letter opener, etc.)  
Cufflinks only useful for very senior Thais who move in international circles.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Golf equipment popular.

## **TONGA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity - Wesleyan Methodism, some Mormonism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Tongan, English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gift giving is very significant in Tongan culture. It is reciprocal and participation may incur obligations of a social or other nature. Implications should be checked with post beforehand.

Presentation should be public. Gift may be placed on a suitable tray or cushion. Gifts to Royal Tongans may be passed on to attendants quite quickly.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Anything which obviously or by implication makes fun of Royalty, the Church or Polynesia.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Tongans like to give and to receive. Gift exchanges are symbolic public gestures and should therefore be given appropriate publicity.

## **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic (20%) Protestant (32%), Hinduism (18%); Islam (5%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are usually given at the end of meetings, sometimes with a photo.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts should not be lavish or expensive.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Items of a personal nature.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Australia, cricket themed gifts or books are popular.

## **TUNISIA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

French and Arabic.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No limitation.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Tunisia is an Islamic country therefore gifts of material proscribed by Islam (Alcohol, pork products, pigskin objects) should be avoided.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Tunisians are worldly and sophisticated and a wide range of Australian gift items would be acceptable and appreciated. If it is known that the person concerned drinks alcohol, even gifts of Australian wine would be appreciated

## **TURKEY**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Turkish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Usually gifts are exchanged after the first formal call on each individual. However where a host Minister or another host individual is concerned, this tradition varies: either at the end of the first call or during speeches at the formal dinner. The post seeks clarification before each visit. Spouses tend to exchange gifts at luncheons organised by the host spouse. Gifts to officers involved with the visit eg interpreters are usually given at the end of the visit eg at the airport.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial limits or restrictions.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Pork based or pigskin. Religious motifs. Liquor, wines. Leather goods. Clothing apparel for females.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Turks tend to be lavish in selecting their gifts but do not expect gifts in return of equal value. Turks place great importance on gift exchanges. Australian woollen artefacts or office knickknacks are recommended. For women jewellery or decorative knickknacks.

## **TUVALU**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No set protocol. Australian practice is followed.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Tuvaluan people are strong Christians. Gifts which may offend Christian morality, such as depictions of the nude human body, r-rated videos etc should be avoided.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

In clothing or decorative pieces bright colours are preferred.

## **UGANDA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (85%), Islam (15%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

No particular traditions.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Nil.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (SEE GULF STATES)**

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Reform and Baptist.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is not expected.

Where it is the intention of an Australian Minister or Parliamentary Delegation to give a gift the British would appreciate prior knowledge of gift and value so that a reciprocal gift can be arranged.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There is a £125 financial limit on gifts that can be retained by MPs and Officials.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Ivory of any sort, fur items, snakeskin and crocodile items, live or dead specimens of endangered species, foodstuffs.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts should only be exchanged on significant visits or occasions.

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English, Spanish.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange of gifts is not expected.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Gifts are never lavish and are always viewed more as mementos or bear company logos.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Expensive/gifts of a personal nature.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Gifts may be in the form of entertainment (dinner, play or a sporting event, travel).

## **URUGUAY**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Gifts are exchanged between Heads of state or Heads of Government. The exchange takes place either at the President's office or the President's residence.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs exchanges gifts with his counterpart at the Foreign Ministry. The same procedure applies with other high level government officials. Officials of a lower rank exchange gifts through the Department of Protocol.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

The Legislative and Judiciary Powers may give a medal commemorating the visit. The Executive Power gives different types of gifts.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

None.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

## **VANUATU**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

National language is Bislama, Bislama, English and French are the official languages.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchanges of gifts form an integral part of Vanuatu's culture and visiting dignitaries could be expected to be presented with gifts during their stay. Visitors should be prepared to reciprocate. The atmosphere attending gift exchanges is generally informal with the exchange accompanied by brief remarks on both sides. From the Vanuatu side the most common type of gifts presented are wood carvings and handicrafts.



## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial restrictions.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Ties and cufflinks are not worn, likewise leather goods tend to deteriorate in the hot, humid conditions. Wool is not a tropical fabric. Gifts which are likely to offend public morality, which may, in certain circumstances, include alcohol.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Acceptable gifts: aboriginal art and artefacts, desk sets, pens, pottery, diaries, books. For males - Akubra hats, Females - Australian jewellery, scarves, bags shawls.

## **VENEZUELA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholicism.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Spanish.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Practice flexible. An exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Nil.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Australian wine very popular and high-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves, etc.) are also popular.

## **VIETNAM**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

None (80%), Buddhism (9%), Catholicism (7%).

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Vietnamese.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

The Vietnamese are very conscious of observing the formalities and so tend to give gifts at most functions. It's appropriate to give gifts in return. Gifts should be presented and received using two hands, and the exchange normally takes place at the end of meetings. Photos will usually be taken.

## **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

There are no particular rules relating to the acceptance of gifts, apart from receiving it with both hands. The gift-giver will sometimes open the gift to show it to you. If they don't, you can either accept the gift and leave it wrapped, or you could ask if you should open it – normally they will say yes.

## **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

Best to avoid black or white items, as these colours are associated with death and funerals. Owls are considered unlucky so avoid gifts that depict owls.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Both decorative and functional gifts would be acceptable– Coffee table books on Australian wildlife, landscape, cities, society, are generally appropriate. Australian wine – especially red wine – is popular with the more worldly elite. Other identifiably Australian items, including Indigenous Australian, are also suitable. Wrapping and presentation is important, gold and red are favoured colours. Avoid handkerchiefs, knives, anything black or white, and chrysanthemums (often used at funerals).

Vietnamese prefer odd numbers to even numbers, so if giving a collection of items, an odd number is preferable – but this is not essential.

## **WALLIS AND FUTUNA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

Official National language is French, however French could also be a second language with some parts of Wallis and Futuna. Wallisian is the first spoken language in Wallis and Futunian is the first spoken language in Futuna.

## **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

At a ministerial/parliamentary level, an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrators (the French Prefect in Wallis and his delegate in Futuna Island), the three (3) Kings of Wallis and Futuna (1 King in Wallis and 2 Kings in Futuna), the President of the Territorial Assembly of Wallis and Futuna, the MP, the Senator.

For the three Kings, a more Australian indigenous-themed gift is appropriate. For the others a book, preferably pictorial, or vases are usual.

As a code of social relations, custom (“coutume” in French) is central to the Wallisian and Futunian community. For a visitor, custom is basically a gift presentation and verbal exchange with the Kings of Wallis and Futuna (or their representatives in their absences). By doing custom, the visitor pays his/her respect to Wallisian and Futunian culture, acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and seeks their symbolic approval to undertake their mission on traditional land. The visitor also describes the work/mission intended to be done in Wallis and Futuna.

The traditional gifts include (in addition to the Australian Indigenous-themed gifts):

- There is an expectation for gifts of cash money (usually XPF10,000 or approximately AUD 150) with the amount reflecting the context and/or hierarchy of the visitor and the importance of the meeting/event. Seek Post's advice beforehand as to the necessity and/or appropriateness of offering such sums.
- A wrapped bottle (preferably in its original box) of Australian spirits (whisky/rum but not wine) is also usually given as a western substitute for the traditional Kava root.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

When meeting with the Kings it is advised to be accompanied by an intermediary to announce your visit to the receiving custom authorities. The intermediary can either be a nominated person by the Prefect or the Prefect himself or an official translator nominated by the customary authorities office or a representative of the customary authorities. Usually, there is a certain order and procedure to customary exchanges. Seek post advice.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

While gift exchanges are usual, gifts of an extravagant nature are not required.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Normal business dress code applies. Hats are not allowed at Coutume. Women should note that shoulders should be covered and skirts/dresses should be below knee-length; business trousers are acceptable.

## **WESTERN SAMOA**

### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English and Samoan.

### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Exchange normally takes place at the final function before departure and is accompanied by a short informal speech. Farewell dinner is the normal venue.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

No financial limitation.

Gifts to the Head of State are displayed at his Official Residence.

### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

None.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Samoans are very hospitable and exchanges of gifts frequent.

## **YEMEN (SEE GULF STATES)**

### **ZAMBIA**

#### **MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

#### **MAJOR LANGUAGE/S**

English.

#### **CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING**

Generally reciprocal - gift giving very common. People open gifts when they are presented - so packaging needs to unfurl so contents can be seen.

#### **RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

None - Important gifts are considered as belonging to the state eg the President's collection of paintings. Gifts to office holders are regarded as going to the office.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS**

It is a hot climate so wool is largely out. People are very sensitive about colonialism but love materials which show Australian outback looking like Central Africa. Anything with a "Whites only" image (eg classical music) is considered somewhat tasteless.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

People like distinctively Australian gifts especially Aboriginal ones or those featuring Australian flora and fauna. They would be disappointed with a wallet (which could come from anywhere) unless it had a boomerang fastening or something equally distinctive.