

Reader's Guide

Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 2nd Edition, is a valuable resource exploring the lifestyles of many of the world's fascinating and diverse culture groups. Now in full-color, this updated, nine-volume set profiles more than 320 culture groups globally, including 27 new groups for this edition.

Arranged alphabetically by country, this encyclopedia parallels the organization of its sister set, *Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations*. Whereas the primary purpose of *Nations* is to provide information on the world's nations, this encyclopedia focuses on the traditions, living conditions, and personalities of many of the world's culture groups.

Defining groups for inclusion is not an easy task. Cultural identity is shaped by such factors as history, geography, nationality, ethnicity, race, language, and religion. Sometimes the distinctions are subtle, but important. Most chapters in this encyclopedia begin with an article on the people of the country as a nationality group. For example, the chapter on Kenya begins with an article titled "Kenyans." This article explores the national character shared by people living in Kenya. However, there are separate articles

on the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, and Luo—five of the major ethnic groups living in the country. They are all Kenyans, but each group is distinct. Many profiled groups—like the Hmong—inhabit lands that cross national boundaries. Although profiled in the chapter on Laos, Hmong are also important minorities in Southern China, Vietnam, and Thailand.

The 975 colorful photographs that illustrate the articles show a wonderfully diverse, fascinating world. From the gaucho riding his horse in Argentina to the Balinese farmer tending his rice terraces in Indonesia, people share the struggles and joys of earning a living, bringing children into the world, teaching them to survive, and initiating them into adulthood. Although language, customs, and dress illustrate people's differences, the faces of the subjects featured in these volumes reinforce humanity's similarities. Whether outside one's home in Guatemala or at a market in Senegal, a kind smile on someone's face transcends the boundaries of nationality and cultural identity to reveal something common in everyone. This point is illustrated by photographer Cory Langley's image of Gambian

family members on page 235 of volume 3 and of a Wolof girl on page 86 in volume 8.

The picture of the world seen in this second edition of the encyclopedia is much different from that found in the first edition (1999). And, it will certainly differ from the world discovered in future editions. People in South Sudan (Volume 8, page 259) are celebrating the emergence of their new country, which gained its independence from Sudan in July 2011. People throughout the world are embracing technology—such as the Internet, cell phones, and social networking—in record numbers. In many countries, the number of mobile phones far surpasses the number of traditional landlines.

As the global economy expands, traditional diets are being supplemented with fast food; once remote areas are being cleared for development; and old traditions are being replaced with new activities. Although traditional music, games, activities, and cultural heroes are being replaced by elements of pop culture, many groups are working to preserve their languages, histories, and traditions.

The influence of pop culture and international events can be seen in remote areas. For example, an image of young Nigerian women (Volume 6, page 207) shows them working together to clear the land for farming. The women appear to be far removed from Western culture until one looks a little closer. The woman on the left is wearing a T-shirt with an image of U.S. President Barack Obama on it.

Organization/Entry Format

Within each volume, the chapters are arranged alphabetically by country. A cumulative table of

contents for all volumes in the set follows the table of contents of each volume.

Each chapter covers a specific country. The country name is followed by a mini table of contents, listing the culture groups profiled within the entry and the starting page numbers. A brief overview paragraph describes the population of the country.

At the beginning of each culture group entry is a section that outlines the pronunciation of the group's name, a listing of alternate names by which the group is known, the group's location in the world, its population, the languages spoken, and the religions practiced. The article follows and is organized according to a standard 20-heading outline (described below). This structure allows users to make comparisons between cultures and enhances the accessibility of the information.

Articles are illustrated with maps showing the primary location of the group and photographs related to the culture group being profiled. The 20 standard headings included in each entry are:

1 Introduction: A description of the group's historical origins provides a useful background for understanding its contemporary affairs. Information relating to migration helps explain how the group arrived at its present location. Political conditions and governmental structure(s) that affect members of the profiled culture group are also discussed.

2 Location: The location of the group is discussed. This section often includes population size of the group based on official census data

from various countries and/or estimates. Information on the size of a group's population located outside the traditional homeland may also be included, especially for those groups with large, scattered populations. A description of the homeland includes information on location, topography, and climate.

3 Language: Each article lists the name(s) of the primary language(s) spoken by members. Descriptions of linguistic origins, grammar, and similarities to other languages may also be included. Examples of common words, phrases, and proverbs are listed for many of the profiled groups, and some include examples of common personal names and greetings.

4 Folklore: Common themes, settings, and characters in the profiled group's traditional oral and/or literary mythology are highlighted. Many entries include a short excerpt or synopsis of one of the group's noteworthy myths, fables, or legends. Some entries describe the accomplishments of famous heroes and heroines or other prominent historical figures.

5 Religion: The origins of traditional religious beliefs are profiled. Contemporary religious beliefs, customs, and practices are also discussed. Some groups may be closely associated with one particular faith (especially if religious and ethnic identification are interlinked), while others may have members of diverse faiths.

6 Major Holidays: Celebrations and commemorations typically recognized by the group's

members are described. These holidays commonly fall into two categories: secular and religious. Secular holidays often include an independence day and/or other days of observance recognizing important dates in history that affected the group as a whole. Religious holidays are typically the same as those honored by people of the same faith worldwide. Some secular and religious holidays are linked to the lunar cycle or to the change of seasons. Some articles describe customs practiced by members of the group on certain holidays.

7 Rites of Passage: Formal and informal events that mark an individual's procession through the stages of life are profiled. These events typically involve rituals, ceremonies, observances, and procedures associated with birth, childhood, the coming of age, milestones in education or religious training, adulthood, and death.

8 Relationships: Information on greetings, body language, gestures, visiting customs, and dating practices is included. The extent of formality to which members of a certain ethnic group treat others is also addressed, as some groups may adhere to customs governing interpersonal relationships more or less strictly than others.

9 Living Conditions: General health conditions typical of the group's members are cited. Such information includes life expectancy, the prevalence of various diseases, and access to medical care. Information on urbanization, housing, and access to utilities is also included.

Transportation methods typically utilized by the group's members are also discussed.

10 Family Life: The size and composition of the family unit is profiled. Gender roles common to the group are also discussed, including the division of rights and responsibilities relegated to male and female group members. The roles that children, adults, and the elderly have within the group as a whole may also be addressed.

11 Clothing: Many entries include descriptive information (design, color, fabric, etc.) regarding traditional clothing (or national costume) for men and women, and indicate the frequency of its use in contemporary life. A description of typical clothing worn in modern daily life is also provided, especially if traditional clothing is no longer the usual form of dress. Distinctions between formal and work attire and descriptions of clothing preferences of young people are described for many groups as well.

12 Food: Descriptions of items commonly consumed by members of the group are listed. The frequency and occasion for meals is also described, as are any unique customs regarding eating and drinking, special utensils and furniture, and the role of food and beverages in ritual ceremonies. Many entries include a recipe for a favorite dish.

13 Education: The structure of formal education in the country or countries of residence is discussed, including information on primary,

secondary, and higher education. For some groups, the role of informal education is also highlighted. Some articles include information regarding the relevance and importance of education among the group as a whole, along with parental expectations for children.

14 Cultural Heritage: Since many groups express their sense of identity through art, music, literature, and dance, a description of prominent styles is included. Some articles also cite the contributions of famous individual artists, writers, and musicians.

15 Employment: The type of labor that typically engages members of the profiled group is discussed. For some groups, the formal wage economy is the primary source of earnings, but for other groups, informal agriculture or trade may be the usual way to earn a living. Working conditions are also highlighted. Unemployment rates are presented when available.

16 Sports: Popular sports that children and adults play are listed, as are typical spectator sports. Some articles include a description and/or rules to a sport or game.

17 Recreation: Listed activities that people enjoy in their leisure time may include structured pastimes (such as public musical and dance performances) or informal get-togethers (such as meeting for conversation). The role of popular culture, movies, theater, the Internet, and television in everyday life is also discussed where it applies.

18 Crafts and Hobbies: Entries describe arts and crafts commonly fabricated according to traditional methods, materials, and style. Such objects may often have a functional utility for everyday tasks.

19 Social Problems: Internal and external issues that confront members of the profiled group are described. Such concerns often deal with fundamental problems like war, famine, disease, and poverty. A lack of human rights, civil rights, and political freedom may also adversely affect a group as a whole. Other problems may include crime, unemployment, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Information specific to women's issues is often provided.

20 Bibliography: References cited include works used to compile the article, benchmark publications often recognized as authoritative by scholars, and other reference sources accessible

to middle school researchers. Web site addresses are provided. The Web site citation includes the title of the site, the URL, and the date the authors' accessed the site.

Each volume includes a glossary after the table of contents. A general subject index appears at the end of each volume.

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Comments and Suggestions

We welcome your comments on this work as well as suggestions for future cultural titles. Please write: Editors, *Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 2nd Edition*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, MI, 48331-3535; call toll-free: 800-347-4253; send fax to 248-699-8066; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.