



Source: Kate Connolly, 'Avoiding the dumb thing: US war game recreates Iraq', *Guardian*, AFP in Sydney Morning Herald online, 06/03/07.

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Bavaria has been chosen. The idea is to set the whole exercise in a landscape simulating Afghanistan or Iraq. Bavaria.

The three-week role-play is to take place from March 20 on a 65 square mile site dotted with villages in Hohenfels, to school US soldiers in how to mix with Arabs or Afghans and 'tune in' to their culture. Shut off from the world the Arab 'extras' playing Iraqis and Afghans are being asked to stay on set, and in character, 24 hours a day, monitored by CCTV cameras and sensors.

'We're looking for more realism,' said Reggie Bourgeois, executive officer of the US Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Bavaria. 'The more actual culture we can inject into the exercise the better it is for our soldiers.'

Hand moving away from the body the palm facing down means 'Go away!'

Hand reaching out while opening and closing the hand, palm facing up means 'come here'.

Major Eric Bloom of JMRC said the US military 'owed it' to the countries where they sent troops to learn as much as possible about the cultural differences.

When talking, Iraqis touch each other and stand closer together. People of the same sex will often hold hands while talking or walking and kiss when greeting, but public affection between people of the opposite sex is discouraged.

Australian men usually shake hands (firmly) the first time they meet. Women may or may not shake hands. Young people just say 'Hello' or 'Hi'. People often appreciate it if you add their name: for example 'Hi, Mahmoud'.

'Wild koalas brought into captivity clearly display homosexual behaviour on a regular basis.' ... 'The furry, eucalyptus-eating creatures appear to develop this tendency for same-sex liaisons when they are in captivity. In the wild, they remain heterosexual.'

When you are invited to join friends for an outing to a restaurant you will usually be expected to pay for your own meal. If the friend offers to 'shout' then this means that they will pay for you.

Iraqis talk a lot, talk loudly, repeat themselves often and interrupt each other constantly. Conversations are highly emotional and full of gestures. Some common Iraqi gestures are:

Eyebrows raised and head tilted back means 'No'.

Clicking the tongue with a tsk sound means 'No'.

Forefinger moving right-to-left repeatedly means 'No'.

Hand moving up and down palm facing down means 'be quiet'.

In comparison to the sometimes elaborate formality in other parts of Germany, Bavarians are known to be more egalitarian and folksy. On hot Bavarian summer days and evenings, the long tables under shady chestnut trees are very popular and invite people to sit down next to complete strangers and share their food with them.

You may receive an invitation to an Australian barbecue and be asked to 'bring your own steak or veggie patties'. Buy a steak or patties at the supermarket (they come neatly packaged), put it in a bag and give it to your host when they greet you at the party. If you are asked to 'bring a plate', this means 'bring a plate of food' as a contribution to the meal—don't just bring an empty plate!

While having a conversation, it is rude to turn one's foot out or place it on the table so that the sole is facing the other person. The left hand is used for sanitary purposes, therefore, it is never used when eating—aside from using forks and knives.

Australians eat with their fingers only at barbecues or picnics outside the home. Inside the house, you are usually invited to sit down and to use knives, forks and spoons. If you are not sure which one to use first, wait to see what your hosts do and copy them. Do feel free to ask your host if you prefer to eat according to your own country's custom. There is no cultural significance in eating with left or right hand in Australia.

Right hand on heart after shaking hands is a show of sincerity.

Shaking the head from side to side means a lack of understanding, not necessarily disagreement.

Sources:

Kate Connolly, 'It's only a wargame! Arabs reject US army bit-part', *Guardian online*, 05/03/07.

[My Iraqi Culture](#)

[University of Queensland: Advice for International Students](#)

[Wikipedia on Bavarian Culture](#)

Roger Dobson, 'Strewth! Australia rocked by 'lesbian' koala revelation' *The Independent online*, 25/02/07.

Story compiled for performance by Barbara Campbell from a Google search.