

## The Power of Photography



We photo enthusiasts can easily ramble off some of the benefits of photography—from capturing memories to giving us visual records of our travels. But we seldom think about the negative power of photography—from skewing reality to being invasive and offensive. When taking photos across cultures, it is important to be aware of both the positive and negative powers of photography.

Photography Can...	But It Can Also...
Delight people	Offend people
Capture the essence and character of different cultures.	Capture only the exotic in different cultures.
Help us to see elements of a culture that we might otherwise miss.	Confirm our biases about cultures by capturing elements that fits our stereotypes and assumptions
Be a communication tool between people of different cultures	Be an invasive instrument that cuts short the possibility of connecting with people from other cultures
Create entry points into different cultures—allowing you to experience the culture more richly and deeply	Create an unsurpassable barrier between you and the culture you are experiencing—if inappropriately used
Honor other culture's values and practices when we portray photos and describe their contents in a respectful, culturally sensitive fashion	Debase other culture's values or practices if we portray photos in a way that disrespects or looks down on the traditions and customs of other cultures

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For more tips on photo-taking across cultures, download the entire *Pop Culturosimy Guide to Photography*, available at [www.culturosimy.com](http://www.culturosimy.com). This handout may be reprinted with the author's permission: email [kate@culturosimy.com](mailto:kate@culturosimy.com) with requests.