

Difference between the syrian and american culture history essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Syrian culture involves the culture of the Syrians who are the citizens of the United States of the Syrian nationality or ancestry and also the Syrians living in Syria. The culture of the Syrians is their own culture that they were practicing in their indigenous place while the American culture includes ideals, values, arts, traditions, customs, beliefs and innovations that were developed both locally and imported through immigration and colonization from the British Isles. Most of the prevalent ideals and ideas that evolved domestically in the American culture such as the significant national holidays, American sports, innovations in the entertainment and arts, and proud military tradition give the Americans a strong important sense of national pride among the whole population (Richard & Donald, 1991).

Syrians highly value strong family ties. Unlike the young Americans, the young Syrians find it unnecessary to leave their families in order to set up their independence; the main reason being that the Syrian society just like the wider Eastern world, the North Africa and the Southwest Asia, place great and high emphasis on the entire group rather than on the individual alone. In the west world, the individual is primary whereas the group is referred to being secondary. In the Syrian societies, the social status and respect are quite important. The men are respected for their sincerity and financial success or also their honesty. The Syrians are always and mostly characterized by their graciousness and magnanimity, ethics which are fundamental to the life of the Syrian. These are however virtuous characteristics but the Syrians have been criticized and all Arabs in general because they have the tendency toward equivocation, overstatement, intense emotionalism, intractability, and at most times aggressiveness. The

Americans are known to highly encourage individual independence (Alan, 2003).

The Syrian music is included in culture and also includes several styles and genres of music that ranges from Arabic pop music to Arab classical and from sacred to secular music. The Syrian music is mostly characterized by an emphasis on rhythm and melody rather than harmony. Some genres are polyphonic of the music of Syrian but most of it is homophonic. Syrian music is known because of the predominance of the vocal music. The musical instruments that the Syrians use include violin, rabab, Ney, oud, tableh, kanun, and riq. The Jews who lived in Syria sang the pizmonim. The modern Syrian music has also incorporated some other instruments from the West which include the cello, electric guitar, oboe and double bass and this includes influences from other jazz and also other foreign musical styles (Alix, 2003).

On the other hand, the American contemporary music is heard all over the world and the artists are famous globally. There is also live music that is popular with high top touring bands which carry the legacy of all jam bands. The popular music among the Americans contains several styles of music that were developed in the United States. These include the hip-hop, country, pop, R&B, rock & roll, swing, blues, jazz, funk, house among many others. They use the modern instruments partly because it is among the developed regions in the world and has many people who have migrated into the United States and therefore they have the modern culture of music unlike the Syrians (Bashkow, 2006).

At the federal level, the Americans have no official language although 30 states have already passed a legislation making their official language to be English and it is now considered to be de facto language nationally. The Syrians on the other hand are Arabic speakers especially the widely known Syrian Arabic which is a dialect belonging to the family of dialects known as Levantine Arabic. The Syrians understand and comprehend the dialects of most of the Arabs. Most of the aged Syrian families are slowly losing their linguistic traditions because most of the parents are not teaching the children any Arabic language. The newer immigrants are well able to maintain their language traditions. The census that was carried out in 2000 showed that nearly 80% of the Syrians who live in America are able to speak English very well. Some of the Syrians are also familiar with French language because in the years between 1918 and 1943 the Lebanon and Syria were under the French rule. There are also classes in the United States that offer the Arabic language tutorials (Gosden, 2001).

The religion in America is widespread and plays a big role in the lives of the Americans and it is the only country among the developed countries that practices the highest percentage of religious practices. The CIA carried out a survey in the year 2002, and came up with the following report. There are many religions that are practiced in the United States by the Americans unlike the Syrians who are not so much subdivided in terms of their religion. The American Christian comprises 78. 5 percent where the Protestants comprise of 51. 3 percent, the Roman Catholic comprises of 23. 9 percent, the Mormon comprises 1. 7 percent and other Christians comprise 1. 6 percent. The Jewish religion comprises of only 1. 7 percent, the Buddhist

comprise of 0. 7 percent, the Muslim religion comprises of 0. 6 percent of the Americans, the unaffiliated comprises of 12. 1% of the Americans, the unspecified Americans comprise of 2. 5% and there is a 4% of the Americans who do not belong to any religion (CIA, 2002).

The Syrians on the other hand are mostly Greek Orthodox. Other Syrians are Catholics who are sub-divided into different types depending on their language and the way that the church services are conducted and also the belief in papal infallibility. Only a few of the Syrians are Protestants. There are also Syrian Muslims who came into the United States after 1965 and are divided into various sects. These are Sunni sect which comprises of 74% of the Syrian Muslims; Alawite sect which originated in Shia Islam though these Muslims argue that there are no enough mosques in the United States and hence are not able to carry out their religious obligations well as required. There are also Syrian Jews who settled mostly in New York in 1908 and there are about 50, 000 Syrian Jews who live in the United States (Meyers, 1999).

The Americans observe holidays that are derived from the history of the United States, national patriarchs, and religious traditions. The Halloween is one of the widely observed traditions in the United States. This involves dressing up in costumes and also an emphasis on the frightening and bizarre. The Americans also celebrate their Independence Day on the Fourth of July every year. This is the anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence from the Great Britain Kingdom. This anniversary is observed by shooting of fireworks throughout the night and parades throughout the day (Ball, 1998).

On the other hand, the Syrians celebrate many religious holidays just like the Americans. These include Christmas and Easter holidays for the Christians. But because most of the Syrians are Eastern Orthodox, they celebrate their Easter Sunday on a different Sunday other than the one celebrated by the other Americans in the United States. Few of the Syrians celebrate their independence day on April 17. The Syrian Jews celebrate the holidays of Jews such as Passover, Purim, Sukkot, Rosh Hashanah, Shavuot and Yom Kippur. There is a similarity between the Syrians and the Americans in their culture as they celebrate some holidays together such as Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Thanksgiving Day. The Syrian Muslims also celebrate the Muslim holidays such as Ramadan, Eid Ul-Fitr and the Eid ul-Adha (Allan, 2003).

Most of the earliest Syrian immigrants arrived in the U. S. in search of better jobs and they engaged mostly in basic commerce especially in peddling. These Syrian Americans who were peddlers found their peddling jobs to be comfortable because it needed only mediocre vocabulary and little training. These people served as the medium for distribution for the small products of the manufacturers and this was mostly in dry goods and clothing. Most of these peddlers from Syria were hardworking and therefore successful and were able to raise enough capital to own their own businesses. They became importers and wholesalers and recruited many others and they became successful (Alix, 1993).

The Syrians started to work in different métiers where many worked as engineers, lawyers and physicians; others worked in auto industry and later they were able to work in large fields such as computer science, medicine
<https://assignbuster.com/difference-between-the-syrian-and-american-culture-history-essay/>

and banking. The Syrians have a different distribution in terms of occupation than all the Americans. According to a census that was carried out in 2000, 42 percent of the Syrians worked in professional and management occupations, compared with only 34 percent of their counterparts in the entire population. The same census showed that more Syrians worked in the sales jobs than all other American workers. The Syrians were seen to work less in other domains such as transportation, construction, and farming among others than all other American workers. The median level of income earnings for the Syrian women and men is greater than the median of national earning. The Syrian men who were employed earned about \$46, 058 annually, compared with the \$37, 057 for the Americans and also \$41, 687 for the Arab Americans. The Syrian families had a greater median income than all other families and also had lower poverty rates when compared with the rest of the general population.

The traditional dressing is not common among both the Syrians and the Americans. However, the modern Western clothing is more common and conventional in both the Americans and the Syrians. This is a common practice between the two communities. However, the Syrians wear a shirwal when performing ethnic dances which are baggy, loose pants with some elastic waist. Some of the Syrian women are used to wearing a headscarf to cover their hair usually known as hijab and this is also the case in the American Muslims (Richard & Donald, 1991).

Dating and marriage among the Syrians is widely and largely acceptable.

The traditionalist and conservative Syrians prefer the arranged relationships and openly disfavor the casual dating. The Muslims are allowed to date after <https://assignbuster.com/difference-between-the-syrian-and-american-culture-history-essay/>

a ceremonial engagement has been carried out only with other Muslims and then the two stay together for some time and thereafter a wedding takes place. The Syrians have intermarried with other American Muslims because they share similarities. However there are also differences the marriages of the Syrians are very strong and this is shown by the low rates of divorce among the Syrians unlike in the American families where divorce rates are relatively high. The Syrians tend to bear more children above the average American partners and these Syrians also tend to bear children at their early stages in their marriages. According to the census that was carried out in 2000 in the United States, nearly 62 percent of the Syrians households comprised of married-couple households unlike in the American households (Allan, 2003).

Both the Syrians and the Americans place high premium on education and view education as an important necessity in an individual's life and therefore the children of both the communities are taken to school when they reach the age of schooling. However, the Syrians are more highly educated than the average American. The 2000 census revealed that the proportion of the Syrians who have achieved a bachelor's degree or even higher is 1. 5 times that of the American total population. These Syrians now work as druggists, medical doctors, scientists and engineers (Bashkow, 2006).

The men and the women in Syria socialize separately except on the rare occasions when the entire family is involved. The art of conversations is a highly prized skill and social interactions are valued a lot. Syrians of the same sex are seen to interact more rather than the interaction between the opposite sexes. The Syrians are affectionate people unlike the Americans
<https://assignbuster.com/difference-between-the-syrian-and-american-culture-history-essay/>

who do not mind what other people are doing. The interaction is mostly between opposite sex because of the covert culture of the Syrians and the overt culture of the Americans who are open to embrace culture that will help them to advance (Meyers 1999).

In the Syrian culture, the men are considered to be highly ranked than the women whereas the American culture takes these the two, male and female as equal and can be able to carry out all the duties. These two cultures have are different and differ though they still have similarities.