

Job Habits around Europe



1. Supporting Icelandic Parents

When an Icelandic family welcomes a new baby, each parent gets three months of parental leave. Then the couple gets an additional three months of leave to share. Each parent earns 80 percent of his or her salary while on leave. The hope is that both parents have an equal chance to learn childcare skills and to bond with the new baby.

2. Swedish Coffee Breaks Are Serious Business

The Swedes believe that taking breaks seeds productivity, which is why they take coffee breaks, or fika, very seriously. Fika gives Swedish workers an opportunity to relax and enjoy a beverage and a sweet with their colleagues. Some Swedish businesses have formal fika, breaking daily at 9 and 3 to invite conversation and camaraderie among staff.

3. Logging Off in France

French workers are protected by a Right to Disconnect Law, which stipulates that most French professionals are not responsible for responding to emails that come in after hours. The measure was adopted to protect employees from being overworked.

4. Siestas — which are afternoon rests or naps — traditionally occur in the summer, when it is considered too hot to work. Spanish workers who take a siesta during the work day end up working much later — until around 8 p.m.

5. In the Netherlands, even though lunch tends to take place from 12.30 p.m. to 1 p.m., it is acceptable to take multiple coffee breaks during the work day. Workers begin at around 8.40 a.m. and leave the office at 5.10 p.m., on average.



What nationality am I?

1. When a new baby is born in my family, my mom and dad get three months of parental leave. Then they can receive an additional three months of leave to share. Each parent earns 80 percent of his or her salary while on leave.

a) Swedish b) Icelandic c) Spanish d) Dutch e) French

Answer: b

2. In my country people believe that taking breaks helps productivity, which is why we take coffee breaks, or fika, very seriously. Fika gives workers an opportunity to relax and enjoy a beverage and a sweet with their colleagues.

a) Swedish b) Icelandic c) Spanish d) Dutch e) French

Answer: a

3. In my country workers are protected by a law which says that they do not have to answer emails after office hours. The measure was adopted to protect employees from being overworked.

b) Swedish b) Icelandic c) Spanish d) Dutch e) French

Answer: e

4. Most people in my country take siestas — which are afternoon rests or naps — traditionally occur in the summer, when it is considered too hot to work.

a) Swedish b) Icelandic c) Spanish d) Dutch e) French

Answer: c

5. Where I live, even though lunch tends to take place from 12.30 p.m. to 1 p.m., it is acceptable to take multiple coffee breaks during the work day. Workers begin at around 8.40 a.m. and leave the office at 5.10 p.m., on average.

a) Swedish b) Icelandic c) Spanish d) Dutch e) French

Answer: d

