## Contents

**Introduction** vii

1. **First Impressions** 1
   
   A. America’s Size and Its People 2
   
   B. A Brief History of the USA 8
   
   C. The Melting Pot of America: Statistics on Where People Come From and Their Languages 11
   
   D. Puzzles of American Culture: Basic Values and Unpleasant Realities 14

2. **Body Language** 17
   
   A. Translation of American Body Language 18
   
   B. Personal Space 20
   
   C. Touching 22
   
   D. Gestures 25

3. **Social Customs and Manners** 31
   
   A. Smiling Faces 32
   
   B. “How Are You?” 34
   
   C. Eating in Restaurants 36
   
   D. Being Invited or Inviting Americans to the Home 43
   
   E. American Parties 45
   
   F. What to Wear 50
   
   G. Things We Don’t Talk About 55

4. **Relationships** 59
   
   A. Dating 60
   
   B. Marriage and In-Laws 64
   
   C. Children, Parents, and Pets 68
D. Senior Citizens 73
E. Homosexuality 77
F. Domestic Violence 79

5. Celebrations and Gifts 83
   A. Weddings 84
   B. Birthdays and Anniversaries 87
   C. Baby and Wedding Showers 90
   D. Funerals 93

6. Surviving in the City 95
   A. Public Transportation 96
   B. Walking in the City 101
   C. Driving in the City 104
   D. The Police 106
   E. City Services 109
   F. Tenant/Landlord Rights 111
   G. Strange Laws 115
   H. Garage Sales 117

7. The Workplace 121
   A. Job Interviews 122
   B. Unwanted Attention 125

8. Schools 127
   A. Taking Tests and Cheating 128
   B. Teacher Expectations and Student Responsibilities 132

9. Health and Personal Matters 135
   A. Staying Clean and Healthy 136
   B. Talking to a Doctor 138
   C. Using Bathrooms 142