



# Do Americans Appreciate Other Cultures?

By Michael Bloomberg

“Come to New York City and celebrate diversity.”

**A**s mayor of New York, I’m proud to serve the world’s most international city, where more than 200 languages are spoken, and people from every imaginable background live side by side. Nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers were born in another country, and the immigrant experience remains central to our city’s identity. Generations of immigrants have been drawn to New York because of the economic opportunity the city has always offered, but also because of its cultural and religious freedom. They have come because they know that this is a place where diversity is not just tolerated — it is celebrated.

One of America’s most famous symbols is the Statue of Liberty, and it is fitting that it stands in the New York Harbor. Lady Liberty’s torch has lit the dreams of millions of immigrants, who have settled in every neighborhood. In New York, one can travel the world and sample cultures from every continent without ever leaving the city. Take a trip to Manhattan’s Chinatown or Koreatown, Little Pakistan



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg celebrates during a Latin Grammy Awards presentation by dancing with performer Milly Quezada. ©AP Images

in Jackson Heights, Little Italy in the Bronx, or Little Odessa in Brooklyn, and you'll quickly see how true this is. Our incredible diversity makes this city one of the most energetic and exciting places to live, work, and visit. If you've never experienced it firsthand, I hope you will soon — it's just one of the reasons we welcomed more than 47 million visitors last year alone.

Appreciation for other cultures comes naturally for people who grow up in this environment. Our children go to schools that resemble miniature United Nations, and they play sports with kids whose parents grew up on the opposite ends of the earth from their own. Many school children go home and speak languages other than English with their families, learning the traditions of their ancestors even as they contribute to a stronger future for America.

Michael Bloomberg was elected New York City's 108th mayor in November 2001. He turned to public life after building a successful career in the city first on Wall Street and then as head of Bloomberg LP, a financial information publishing company. ©AP Images



The Empire State Golden Arm (Wrestling) Tournament of Champions draws many ethnicities to join in serious but friendly competition. ©AP Images

The principles of acceptance and appreciation are central not just to New York City, but to the whole nation. They're implied in the motto on our nation's seal: *E pluribus unum* — from many, one. The United States of America has for centuries served as the world's second home, a living symbol of what can be achieved when tolerance, liberty, and equality are a nation's guiding principles. We're proud that, in the first years of the 21st century, this is more true than ever before. And as New

Yorkers, we're proud that our city remains a place where all the people of the world are welcomed with open arms.

Got a question about the U.S.?



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