

# Analysis of Guest-Welcoming Traditions in Uzbekistan and Tatarstan: A Comparative Sociocultural Study

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**Abstract:** *This research aims to analyze ethical traditions in the cultures of Uzbekistan and Tatarstan, focusing on the similarities and differences in welcoming guests. Hospitality is a universal cultural value, yet the practice of welcoming guests in each society has distinct characteristics based on historical background, social values, and prevailing beliefs. Welcoming traditions serve not only as a form of social courtesy but also reflect moral norms, respect for elders, and the cultural identity of the local community. This study employs a descriptive-comparative approach through an examination of historical data, religious principles, and cross-generational observations. The results indicate that both Uzbek and Tatar communities prioritize warmth, respect, and hospitality as key elements in receiving guests. However, differences exist in ritual forms, meal-serving practices, communication patterns, and treatment of guests, influenced by regional, religious, and social structural factors. This study confirms that the tradition of welcoming guests is an important part of cultural heritage that reflects the social values of a community while strengthening interpersonal relationships. It is hoped that this study will contribute to cross-cultural understanding and the preservation of traditional values of hospitality amid the development of modern society.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Traditions, Social Norms, Uzbekistan, Tatarstan.*

## Introduction

Nowadays, the concept of “hospitality” has high social significance and plays an important role in intercultural communication (Weinmester.A.B). Hospitality itself, begins with greetings and concludes with farewells. Thus, greetings and farewells represent significant components of discourse etiquette. Establishing a professional and sincere relationship with an interlocutor starts with a courteous greeting in both cultures. The choice of greeting often determines the nature of the conversation. Additionally, it serves to capture the communicators attention. When greeting, the speaker conveys their relationship with the other — whether it be friendship, a formal relationship, mutual respect, deference, and other different forms of interaction (Sigbayeva.F.R, Toirova G.I.).

In Uzbekistan the concept of the guest holds deep roots in the language and culture, playing a significant role in the social life, values, and traditions of our people. For Uzbeks, welcoming a guest and showing them respect is not only a social duty but also an important expression of national identity, politeness, and diligence. This concept has evolved over centuries, encompassing unique cultural and religious aspects. The traditions of Uzbek hospitality are tied to historical and cultural roots and play a crucial role in regulating social

relations within each family, community, and nation, contributing to the stable development of society. (Mahmudov.1989)

The Tatar people have long been famous for their hospitality, and this hospitality was not just about being kind and loving towards others. There were a number of traditions associated with welcoming guests. If the guests were invited, meaning that their arrival was known in advance, then the house was always cleaned, and preparations were made in the kitchen. Goose was a popular dish, along with baked goods and dairy products. And an integral attribute of hospitality in Tatar villages was, of course, a flooded bathhouse. Even if guests stayed for a long time, a bathhouse was flooded for each day of their stay. (Congress of Tatars the Tyumen Region 2016).

According to (Mahmudov.1988) Uzbek family tradition, even an uninvited guest is treated politely by the host. The fact that Uzbek nation is a hospitable people in any situation can be understood from the following proverb, which is reflected in the Uzbek linguistic culture. When entering a private house or office where the "owners" are located, whether a man or a woman, it is customary to first give a friendly knock, ring, or polite cough. This serves as a polite way of announcing the visit, allowing the individuals inside to prepare and respond appropriately. (ugd.uz 2016) So, for the Uzbek nation, welcoming a guest is not only an obligation, but also a sacred duty. The Uzbek nation compares the arrival of a guest with the arrival of food and blessings, and therefore appreciates the guest. The light of the guest house comes on brightly. When an uninvited guest arrives, it has become an Uzbek family tradition to share and enjoy the food prepared for him without hesitation, because in his mind the guest enters with his own food and it is not polite to leave without food. The guest with his own food is coming. The guest's food comes before him. Even if the ash is small, let the feeling be a word. According to (Isa Jabbor 1994; 218-220), no matter who the guest is, he will be offered at least some tea and bread.

The order of seating guests at the table, whether it is a round or square table, is very simple in all regions of the country and among all social classes: the further away from the exit, the more honorable the seat at the table. These seats are reserved for the oldest and most esteemed guests with high social status (men or women). Other guests are seated according to their status. The host indicates the seats and sits either closer to the exit to pass dishes to the guests or to monitor their seating order. Sometimes he sits next to the guest of honor so that he doesn't feel left out. In this case, one of the family members or a young Uzbek colleague takes the place at the exit, acting as an intermediary between the guests and the kitchen. In the past, unfamiliar men and women sat in separate rooms at two separate tables. Today, this tradition is often disregarded. (ugd.uz 2016)

In Uzbekistan, it is considered an unforgivable breach of etiquette to blow your nose (whether quietly or loudly) while sitting at the table. If necessary, you should get up from the table and leave the room so that the guests present do not hear a single sound. Other inappropriate behaviors include wiping your nose while eating, sneezing and coughing at the table, picking your teeth with a toothpick, staring at your neighbor for too long, slurping your food loudly, slapping your lips, talking continuously, yawning, and playing with your cutlery. *Isyanmesez* is a traditional Tatar greeting in the Tatar language. However, the literal translation of this phrase into Russian is not "Hello," but rather "Are you alive?" This

greeting has a deep and tragic history. This phrase dates back to the time of the Tatar genocide after the capture of Kazan and the destruction of the Kazan Khanate by the troops of Ivan IV, when the Tatars were persecuted, survived in difficult conditions, lived in dugouts, died of hunger, cold, and disease, were disenfranchised and defenseless, and were forcibly baptized and killed at the slightest provocation. Then the Tatars, coming to visit their relatives and friends, looked into the dwelling and asked: "Isyanme sez?" – Are you alive? (tatarlar.info)

Ancient Tatar traditions include sitting positions, when there were no tables and people sat on carpets on the floor. Men sat with both legs tucked under them, while women tucked one leg under them and held the other close to their chest. Today, everyone has tables and chairs. Men sit at the table first, followed by women. In modern times, it is common for husbands and wives to sit side by side, although this was not the custom in the past. Before eating, a prayer is always said. The eldest ones take the food first, and then the younger ones. The Tatars have a very remarkable tradition of tea drinking. Tatar guests should not have an empty cup of tea and the guest should not feel deprived of the attention of the hosts – therefore, it is customary to pour tea and offer treats until the guest leaves the table. Moreover, you need to pour a full cup without overfilling or overfilling – this is considered disrespectful to the guest. (tatarlar.info)

In Tatarstan another integral tradition, both when receiving guests and when visiting them called "Kuchtanach" (Küştäñäş). Kuchtanach can be translated as "gifts." It is customary to bring gifts with you when visiting someone. It is also customary to give gifts to departing guests as you see them off. The gifts brought by the guests are usually placed on the festive table, if they are edible (which is usually the case). But the important point is to divide it so that at least a small piece remains, and everyone at the table can taste it. People say it's good to eat the goodies you brought. The dishes in which the kuchtanach is usually brought are not returned empty. It is also filled with goodies from hospitable hosts and returned when the guests are escorted. And another important point, you need to remember where whose dishes are. In order to return it to its rightful owners, well, that's when there are a lot of visitors. In Tatar families, the head of the family is the oldest man, Babai, and after him, the oldest woman, usually his wife, Abystai. (Congress of Tatars)

It is impolite to visit someone empty-handed. It is not customary for Tatars to leave immediately; instead, they take their time saying goodbye, thanking the hosts for their hospitality, expressing their well-wishes, and inviting the hosts to return the visit. (tatarlar.info)

## Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research method, because the goal is to describe and explain hospitality traditions in Uzbekistan and Tatarstan. Instead of numbers or statistics, the focus is on cultural meanings, values, and practices. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to look deeper into how people greet guests, what social and ethical rules are connected with this tradition, and how these customs reflect respect, kindness, and community values.

The research is based on secondary data analysis, meaning that information was collected from online resources, Google websites, and Google Scholar. These sources

include cultural studies, academic articles, and reliable materials that describe the role of hospitality in both regions. Using these materials makes it possible to identify important themes, such as the role of religion, family traditions, and symbolic actions during guest greeting. This design helps to build a clear picture of hospitality traditions without direct fieldwork or interviews, but still provides detailed knowledge by analyzing trustworthy online and academic sources.

## Result and Discussion

With an emphasis on the custom of welcoming guests, this study aimed to investigate the moral traditions of hospitality in Tatarstan and Uzbekistan. The examination of scholarly research and internet sources revealed that hospitality is a deeply ingrained cultural value associated with compassion, generosity, and respect in both areas, rather than just being a basic social habit. One of the primary conclusions is that greeting a guest is regarded as a sign of respect and honor. Offering bread and tea, which represent kindness and charity, are common ways for Uzbek people to greet visitors. Greetings in Tatar customs are also strongly linked to reverence for elders and the impact of Islamic principles, which dictate that guests should be treated with affection.

Tatar speech etiquette is characterized by respect for the interlocutor, tact, politeness, positivity, and emotionality, which is achieved through the use of numerous interjections in speech. Tatar people usually greet each other with the word "Isenmesez" ("Are you alive?"). They can also say "Haerle irte" (Good morning), "Haerle ken" (Good afternoon), or "Haerle kich" (Good evening), but these words are typically used as formal greetings. There are simpler, informal ways to say hello: "Salam!" (Peace!), "Salam aleikum!" (Peace be with you), "Saumy?" (Are you well?), "Nikhayl" (How are you?), "Hallyar nychik?" (How are you?). It is interesting that in the past, it was customary for Tatars to shake both hands when greeting each other. Greeting with one hand, especially when addressing older people, was considered disrespectful. Today, this custom is mostly observed in Tatar villages. When Tatars want to show respect, they use the words "apa" (respectful) or "aby" (honored) after a person's name. A distinctive feature of the Tatar language is the use of kinship terms to address relatives: apa (sister), aby (elder brother), enem (younger brother), apam (my sister), senelem (little sister), zhizni, abzi (uncle), and baldyz (sister-in-law). In the past, affectionate expressions such as "chibyar apa" (beautiful sister), "alma apa" (apple-sister), "shikyar apa" (sugar-sister), "byalyakay aby" (little brother), or "erak ebi" (distant grandmother) were more common. Children still address their grandparents as babai, ebi, dewati, dewani (or zur ati, zur ani, kart ati, kart ani). The Tatars have developed a whole system of addressing their loved ones and relatives, characterized by benevolence and emotionality: kaderlem (my dear), soeklem (my sweet), altynym (my gold), kugyarchyem (my dove), bilbylym (my nightingale), akkoshym (my swan), akylym (my clever one), zhanym (my soul), zhankysyagem (a part of my soul), byagirem (my dear), and byagyrykam (my dear). When saying goodbye, Tatars use "Sau bul" (be healthy), "Sau bulygiz" (be healthy), "Khush" (goodbye), or "Khushygiz" (goodbye). (tatarlar.info)



This image shows a family gathered around a table for tea drinking, an essential part of Tatar hospitality. The scene reflects warmth, respect for elders, and the importance of shared moments. Tea is served continuously so that the guest's cup is never empty — a symbol of care, respect, and generosity in Tatar culture. (Tatar hospitality | Amazing Tatarstan)

Etiquette forms in Uzbekistan are learned from childhood, during the process of socialization of speech. However, in different languages, etiquette develops through different constructions, which means that many expressions do not have direct equivalents. For example, the Uzbek greeting “Assalamu aleikum!” and the response “Waaleikum assalamu!” mean “Peace be with you!” and “And peace be with you!” respectively. Immediately after greeting, if they are close acquaintances, Uzbeks ask each other about their business, health, family, and children: “Yaxshimiziz?” (Is everything going well?), “Ishlar yaxshimi?” (Are things going well?), “Salomatingiz yaxshimi (qandai, qalai)?” (How is your health?), “Oilangiz tuzukmi?” (Is everything normal in your family?), “Bolalar katta bulyaptimi?” (Are your children growing up?), “Kenoyim (kelin) yaxshilarmi (qanday)?” (How is the daughter-in-law (son-in-law)?). The maximum that can be asked of non-close people is “How are you?” and “How's your health?” — as excessive curiosity may be seen as an invasion of privacy. Uzbeks tend to greet everyone they meet, and the youngest greets first. Common responses include “Rahmat!” (Thank you), “Khudoga shukur!” (Thank God), “Tuzuk” (It's fine), “Yaxshi” (It's good), “Bo'ladi” (It's okay), “Konikarli” (It's so-so), “Yuribmiz” (We're going), and “Sekin-sekin” (Little by little). The farewell expressions are “Khair” (Farewell), “Ko'rishguncha” (See you later), and “Hammalarga salom!” (Peace to everyone!).

The etiquette forms of address in Uzbek are divided into two categories:

1. Addressing close relatives.
2. Addressing strangers.

The first category includes: Ota, dada, dadajon (father, papa, daddy), Ona, onajon (mother, mama, mommy), Zhigarim (my heart), Toga, amaki (uncle), Khola, amma (aunt), Aka (brother), and Opa (sister). Grandparents are called Buvi, Buvizhon (grandmother) and Bobo, Bovizhon, Dodo (grandfather). Younger people address elders by their first names with the suffixes -aka and -opa.

The second category includes: metonymic forms that extend family terms to outsiders: Ota, otahon, otazhon (father), Ona, onazhon (mother), Amaki, toga, togazhon (uncle), Buvi, buvizhon (grandmother), Bobo, bobojon (grandfather), Aka, akazhon (big brother), Uka, ukajon (little brother), Kizim (daughter), Kelin, kelinjon (daughter-in-law), Onazhon, opokizhon (white sister – a high degree of respect), Taksir (dear), Birodar (brother), Hajaka (a man who performed pilgrimage), and Oksakol (elder, literally “white-bearded”). (Khamdam-Zade, 2016)



The image shows a traditional Uzbek man serving plov (pilaf), a signature dish of Uzbekistan that symbolizes hospitality, generosity, and unity. The man’s welcoming gesture reflects the deep-rooted cultural value of honoring guests through food, which plays a central role in Uzbek social traditions. (Hospitality – Tours to Uzbekistan & Central Asia & Caucasus)

The results also support what earlier studies on Central Asian and Tatar cultures have suggested – that hospitality is linked to family reputation and community solidarity. However, this research adds nuance by showing that while the values of generosity and respect are shared, the symbolic rituals differ between the two regions. For example, the

specific foods served or the religious phrases used in greetings may vary, but the meaning behind them remains similar.

## Conclusion

We examined the ethical traditions of hospitality in Uzbekistan and Tatarstan, with special attention to the ways in which guests are greeted. The analysis showed that hospitality in both regions is deeply connected to respect, kindness, and generosity. Although the specific rituals may vary—such as the food offered or the words of greeting—the meaning behind these actions remains the same: to honor the guest and strengthen community ties.

These traditions highlight the importance of hospitality as both a cultural value and an ethical responsibility. They continue to preserve the identity of each region and reflect the influence of religion, family customs, and moral principles. While this research was limited to secondary sources, it still provides useful insights into how hospitality functions as a bridge between culture and ethics. Future studies could include fieldwork and interviews to explore personal experiences and everyday practices in greater depth.

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