

Main navigation Hamburger menu Last updated on Aug 11, 2022

Where would we be without our little superstitions? Many call superstitions an irrational belief of the supernatural, actions that stem from ignorance or fear of the unknown. But these “irrational” acts are actually more normal than you may think. RELATED: What It Means When You Sneeze, According To Cultural Superstitions

Everyone has common superstitions or little rituals they do to feel safe or to take back a sense of control. Superstitions are the general belief in supernatural forces; these stem from a desire to influence unpredictable factors. While many superstitions stem from an individual’s own experience and beliefs, superstitions also find deep roots in culture and tradition. For example, psychologists have actually found that during periods of deep uncertainty, people turn towards superstitions to reduce stress and anxiety. In a study looking at Germany between the periods of 1918 and 1940, scientists found a potential link between economic threat and higher indexes of belief in the supernatural. Superstitions can also give their believers a sense of security: carrying charms, wearing certain clothes, visiting places associated with good fortune, preferring certain colors over others, and favoring a certain number are all examples of how superstitions make us feel safe. Superstitions are everywhere, whether we realize it or not. They help us feel secure in a risky decision, or they might even encourage you to make an impulsive choice. No matter what, these little habits we practice in our everyday lives are here to stay. To me, there’s nothing creepier than a mirror, or your own reflection for that matter. According to Joshua Partlow, "Washington Post" Mexico bureau chief, putting two in front of each other opens a threshold for the devil. In Moscow, if you kiss or shake hands with someone across a doorway, across two different rooms, then your lover or friend will become your mortal enemy. In Afghanistan, according to Tor Khan from Bethesda, MD, if you sweep the floor and your broom touches the feet of a loved one, one of your parents will die. In the Philippines, you usually make a pitstop after a wake to “shake off” the bad spirit, whether that be a fast food place or even just a coffee shop. The idea is that you need to keep the bad spirits away from your house and that you can’t let it come in. In China and Japan, poking your chopsticks straight down into your food is a huge taboo. Not only is it rude, but it makes the utensils look like incense sticks that are used at funerals. Sticking your chopsticks down into

your bowl invites death, so make sure to be mindful of how they are placed. In Lithuania, it is forbidden to whistle indoors, because the noise is believed to summon demons. Sometimes, when you're designated driver, it is necessary to cheers with a cup of free tap water. But in Germany, if you cheer with water, you are actually wishing death on the people you are drinking with. Not only is it gross, but in Britain it is considered bad luck because it symbolizes the death of a loved one. In Turkey, an itchy right-hand means you will come into some money, while an itchy left hand means you'll lose out big time. In some coastal regions of China, it is bad luck to flip over a cooked fish, as many believe this will lead to a ship capsizing. Instead, many families will use chopsticks to pick the meat from the bottom of the fish when they are finished with the top. In Italy, it is considered bad luck to put bread upside down, either on a table or a basket. The most popular explanation is that the bread represents the body of Christ, and so it needs to be treated with respect. More vulgar than superstitious, in Sweden people don't put their keys on the table. That's because, during the olden days, sex workers would put keys on the table in public areas to attract clients. In Spain and in other Spanish-speaking countries, it is Tuesday the 13th, not Friday the 13th, that gets people nervous. Martes, or Tuesday in Spanish, comes from the Roman god of war Mars, which ties the day to violence, death, and bloodshed. In Hungary and Russia, sitting at the corner of a table will mean bad things for your romantic life. The unlucky person who comes in late and has to squeeze into the side, according to superstition, will never get married. According to Argentinian legend, there's a superstition that the seventh son will turn into a werewolf... unless the president of the country adopts them, of course. RELATED: The Spiritual Meaning Of Upper & Lower Lip Twitching Irish brides wear bells on their wedding dresses to ward off evil spirits that try to ruin their special day. Better hope that slim a-line dress can fit over 50 discrete wedding bells! Singing in the Netherlands during dinner means that you are singing to the devil and praising him for your food. In Spain, walking into a room with your left foot will bring you bad luck. Instead, lead with your right foot. A fairly universal superstition, it is bad luck to open an umbrella before you head outside because bad luck will "rain" on you. This came from the British in the 18th century when waterproof umbrellas were told to cause injury if opened inside the home. In Japan, it's common

practice to tuck your thumbs in when passing by graveyards to protect your parents. This is because the Japanese word for thumb loosely translates to "parent-finger," so hiding it protects them from death. We usually say "knock on wood" to ward off bad luck, but this very popular saying is said to have originated in Europe. Many churches claimed to have pieces of Jesus' cross, so knocking on wood is said to bring good luck. When you chew gum at night, according to Turkish legend, it turns into the flesh of the dead. Spilling water behind someone, in Serbia, actually brings them a lot of good luck! People will often spill water behind a loved one who is about to go on a long trip or a job interview to wish them luck. Four, in China, sounds similar to the character used for death. Four is a popular omen; people will avoid having children, getting married, or having big trips on days ending in that number. Yellow flowers in Russia symbolize death, separation, and infidelity. So avoid these flowers like the plague if you want to make a good impression on someone for a first date. In South Korea, many will not sleep in a closed room with a fan on. It is commonly believed that prolonged exposure to a running fan will cause hypothermia and asphyxiation. Placing empty bottles on the ground is considered good luck in Russia, so don't be shy about leaving your empty beer bottles on the ground when you're done with them. If you have butterfingers, don't fret. While it may seem it would cause a bigger mess, throw the spilled salt over your shoulder to get some good fortune on your side. Don't give something sharp to someone you are trying to start a relationship with. But if you do receive a knife set or scissors as a present, give the gift-giver a coin as a present in return. According to Japanese superstition, sleeping with your head in this direction is bad luck because that's how the deceased are laid to rest. In Africa, the same superstition exists if you sleep with your head facing west. Don't idly play with scissors or it will bring bad luck, according to Egyptian folklore. It might seem gross or unlucky, but stepping in dog poop is actually considered good luck in France if you do it with your left foot. You might've heard this after an unfortunate picnic date, but a bird pooping on you actually will bring you good luck. There's a superstition in Egypt that if you see or hear an owl, terrible news is coming. They also bring death if you bring them into your home. If you're in Iceland, keep the knitting inside, unless you like the cold weather. There's a superstition that doing your needlework on your front

porch will keep the temperatures freezing. Syria banned yo-yos because they are believed to cause droughts. Getting a haircut on Tuesdays in India will cause bad luck. There's a Canadian superstition that expectant mothers who crave fish but don't eat it will end up having a baby with a fish head. So, make sure not to deny your body what it wants. RELATED: 10 Ways To Rid Yourself Of Bad Luck, Curses & Negative Energy This superstition dates back to medieval Europe: walking under the ladder symbolizes the gallows and death. Full Moons, other than their obvious associations with werewolves, bring bad luck, especially near hospitals. Whether it be a major surgery or a routine checkup, going to the hospital on a Wednesday means good luck and good health. In the Philippines, people believe that red attracts lightning. So if you don't want a nasty surprise on a rainy day, make sure to stay away from this bold shade. In many cultures, a horseshoe is an incredibly lucky symbol. If you find one with the open end pointing towards you, you will have an especially great day. In the Middle Ages, people believed that black cats were witches. Even worse, people thought that these cats could turn their owners into demons after seven years. In Latvia, it is bad luck to return home for something you forgot, so if you forgot your keys at home, tough luck! You can look into your mirror before you leave to neutralize the bad omens. In India, it is bad luck to sneeze only once – that's why you should force a second one. In the United States, some believe that if something terrible happens to you, the terrible thing will happen to you two more times. Make sure to keep an eye out. In Thailand, you shouldn't comment on a person's cute baby, as many families believe it will take the beauty away. Thirteen to a table is similar to the ratio in The Last Supper, and we all know how well that story went for all of its dinner guests. While we have to worry about cracks breaking our mother's backs, in Sweden, the thing to look out for is manholes. If you step on one with a letter A, this will bring you a broken heart, a much deeper pain as we all know. Many cultures believe that cutting your nails after sundown is a big taboo. One Japanese superstition believes that it causes premature death. You think jumping over your six-year-old nephew will make you a big hit at the family reunion, but all you will do, according to Turkish superstition, is curse the child to be short forever. If you do, you will curse your baby to a lifetime of drooling. Fishermen don't bring bananas on boats, as it brings bad luck out

on the open seas. Want to be young forever? Many women in Ancient Britain kept acorns in their pockets to ensure a forever youthful complexion. In Brazil, people believe that if you put your purse on the ground, you will become penniless. Better work out those arms, because you can't let that tote rest on the floor for even a second. In Cuba, if you declare that it's your last drink of the night, some believe that you are tempting fate and that it will truly be your last drink of the night, and forever. Don't tempt fate! A common way to mitigate this is to knock on wood after you say a particularly daring statement. Not only is it a lame gift (well, actually, depends on the clock), but according to Chinese culture, the phrase to describe giving a clock has a similar pronunciation to the phrase of attending someone's funeral. Want to start your morning off right? When making your cup of morning coffee, put your sugar in before your coffee to get your daily dose of good luck.

RELATED: 15 Spiritual & Psychic Signs Someone Is Thinking About You

Jessica Xing is a writer, former YourTango intern, and Enterprise Tech Reporter for INSIDER. She has had bylines featured in Business Insider, Vox, Washington Square News, Yahoo Finance, and others. Social Icons

© 2024 by Tango Publishing Corporation All Rights Reserved. About Get the best of YourTango delivered straight to your inbox – the biggest stories, actionable advice & horoscope predictions!