# 10 Bizarre Fears and Phobias Specific to One Culture

# Everyone is afraid of something, and many fears and phobias are common among pretty much all human beings. In fact, if you aren’t at least a little freaked out by things like heights, spiders, snakes, or public speaking, people may actually think that you are rather strange. However, sometimes, due to cultural differences, phobias develop among specific peoples or regions that are just plain bizarre.

## 10 South Korea: Death by Electric Fan

 They are known for their music, anime, and physically intimate culture, but they also have a rather strange fear that many of us would find very curious. Many South Koreans believe that if you sleep in a closed room with an electric fan, you could be risking death from hypothermia.

Now, no matter how many people believe something, it can only be true if it is supported by science, and despite being normally logical people who are good at electronics, they have this one completely wrong. Fans only move air currents, and any feeling that they are actually cooling you off is an illusion. Even in the winter, you cannot get hypothermia due to an electric fan. While fewer people are said to believe it today due to increased scientific understanding, it is still a widespread belief

## 9 Japan: Fear of Offending Others

The Japanese are a culture that is well known for caring about the concept of the face and how it relates to not only their reputation but that of their friends and families as well. Due to these cultural traits, many Japanese people develop a psychological disorder that is a subset of anxiety disorder. This disorder is characterized by such an extreme fear of offending others with their inappropriate social behavior and social skills that it makes it hard for them to live their life and go about their day.

This disorder is called Taijin Kyofusho and is unique mostly to Japan; however, it is occasionally found in South Korea as well. Along with all the other listed symptoms, it also brings along another Japanese trait, which is the fear of shaming your family and friends if they find out about your bad social behavior. You can then imagine what a really bad case of this disorder could be like, as someone would find it hard to go out in public and interact at all, for fear not only of embarrassing themselves but also of shaming their family.[[2]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3563044/%22%20%5Cl%20%22%3A~%3Atext%3DBackground%3A%20Taijin%20Kyofusho%20Scale%20%28TKS%2Coccurs%20in%20Japan%20and%20Korea.)

## 8 Russia: Embodying Poshlost

Russia is a culture that many do not understand at all. It is located in Asia, but the most populated part of it has long been influenced by Western culture, with it often being called “European Russia.” They are Slavic people who have lived for a long time on the continent of Asia and have roots in the European continent. This makes them look like many Europeans but think differently than most European cultures. Many wonder, in fact, why the Russian people have put up with having so little for so long, and the answer is due to how they think and, even more, what they fear.

What many Russians fear most is being seen as an example of poshlost. For those who have never heard of that before, it is because it is a Russian word that doesn’t really have a direct translation into other languages. Essentially, it means someone who is rich and puts on airs as if they are important but is mostly nihilistic, unimportant, and a drain on resources while living a life of pure ennui. This all fits into the way Russians think, as they are a people defined by living through struggle. They are proud to get by without a lot of extra to do and have little respect for over-preening, lazy people who do.

## 7 America: Severe Anxiety and Stress Over Potential Ambulance Costs

Americans are known for being big, bold, and often brave, but no braver at the end of the day than anyone else—they’re just more showy about it. However, while Americans may have the same fears as everybody else, many would imagine that America would be too big of a country with too many states to really have one big cultural fear that really terrifies them. The thing is, though, despite its size, America does have one thing that pretty much everyone is afraid of, and it isn’t monsters that go bump in the night. If you really want to scare an American, tell them horror stories about ambulances and how much it costs to pay for them afterward. That should get you at least a collective shudder and some goosebumps, even from the toughest person.

In fact, not long ago, a story circulated of an injured woman who begged people not to call an ambulance for her because she didn’t have good enough insurance and couldn’t afford to pay for it. Many in other countries were shocked by this, but it is a common fear in America. The problem is many people don’t have insurance that will cover all of it or even most of it. An average ambulance ride costs about $1,000, leaving many people terrified of the very idea.

## 6 Mexico: Fear of Being Seen as Rude for Saying “NO”

While some people may not think about this as much as they should—due to the bad reputation cartels have given to Mexico—the truth is that Mexicans are really known for being an open, friendly, and family-and-community-loving culture. They have the expression “mi casa es su casa,” or “my home is your home,” and put family above everything. Due to this kind nature, they actually have a cultural fear that many of us don’t tend to think about. They really, really hate being put in a position where they feel the need to say no.

They will go out of their way to avoid situations like this. If put in a situation where they have to answer yes or no to something they want to respond no to, they will often give an insincere yes to be polite at the moment and then try to find a polite way to get out of it later. This is because it is seen as rude to say no directly to someone, and it is especially seen as rude to say no if someone is offering you something nice. This does not mean someone from Mexico will never say no. Still, to avoid putting them in an uncomfortable situation, it is best to phrase things in a way that gives them a polite way out.

## 5 China: Frigophobia

China is a huge country, so they will, of course, have some cultural superstitions, and just like all cultures, they will share some of the basic human fears that everyone has. Apart from your standard everyday fears and phobias, China is not particularly known for being a fearful people. However, there is one condition almost unique to China that is a bit out of the ordinary. Seen in China in the mainland, as well as in Sri Lanka, which has Chinese cultural ties, is something known as frigophobia. It’s the fear of being too cold.

It is characterized by a fear of being cold that is strong enough to cause you to disrupt your daily life or do things that are not so good for your health out of your excessive fear of not being warm enough. People who suffer from this disorder will wear layers, sometimes in the summer or in a nicely heated enclosed house during the winter. This can cause people to overheat because they are so sure they might get too cold if they don’t. It is hard to say why, as China is not known for being particularly cold compared to other countries. Still, it is not found in such high numbers anywhere else.

## 4 Asian Culture: Instead of 13, They Avoid the Number 4

In most of the Western world, there is a really silly superstition we all know well about the number 13. Many don’t actually take it seriously, but enough people do that many will limit their activities on Friday the 13th. Even hotels don’t have 13 in their hotel room numbers or include a 13th floor. As silly as this is, Southeast Asian cultures have their own senseless number superstition; it just isn’t the same number. In many Southeast Asian cultures, including China, it is considered unlucky to use the number 4, which is called tetraphobia.

Now, in Western culture, the fear over 13 is well known for being due to Judas being the 13th dinner guest and betraying Jesus, or Loki being the 13th dinner guest and causing the murder of a god. However, in Asian culture, the reason for their hangup about the number four is a bit different. You see, in many Southeast Asian languages, including Chinese, the word for four sounds a lot like the word for “death.” As you might imagine then, most people prefer to use the number as little as possible.

## 3 Middle East: Blood Injury and Injection Phobia

Many people are afraid of needles, but there is a difference between being a little squeamish about something and actually having a real phobia or disorder. Most people who dislike needles just go ahead and wince a bit and get it done, as there is hardly anyone who really likes having pointy things shoved into their skin. However, some people hate needles so much that it can reach a point where they avoid necessary medical procedures due to their excessive fear. Strangely, it seems that this particular fear pops up more in the Middle East than in any other cultural region in the world.

It should be noted, though, that this particular phobia goes far deeper than just fear of needles. It does include an avoidance of needles so bad that people will make almost any excuse to avoid the doctor. However, it also includes a general fear of getting blood injuries or other diseases that afflict the blood. This is partly because such injuries often involve going to a hospital and being stuck full of needles. Still, people with this phobia often have a fear of the medical system or distrust of it in general.

**2 India: Fear of Stray Dogs**

Some people have met Indian people visiting or living in America and seen them get extremely freaked out by a very small and friendly dog. Some have seen them have what appears to be an excessive fear of, and even loathing, of dogs. This may seem strange to many Westerners as we are known for being dog lovers, but the truth is they have their reasons for being afraid. In the United States and many Western countries, stray dogs are relatively rare and quickly picked up by animal control—and most are either skittish or unfriendly, to begin with.

However, in India, dog attacks are common, as there are a ton of stray dogs, and the problem is completely out of control. While some argue it is wrong to go around killing stray dogs, a bill passed several years back that banned people from killing them outright just to cull them has led to a rise in dog attacks. To make matters worse, there are even some people in India who are superstitious and think that dogs are unlucky. However, this doesn’t mean that Indian people hate and fear all dogs. A survey of students at an Indian university in Bangalore found that many students either had a pet dog or at least fantasized about the idea.

## 1 Sweden: Social Phobia

Now, some of you may already be thinking that it is hardly unique to Sweden to have social phobia. Having a phobia of being around others and interacting with them on a social level to the point that it makes it hard to go about your daily life as a normal, well-adjusted person is something that can be found in every culture on Earth. And personality sometimes plays a role. However, what makes Sweden unique is that they have such a high number of people with a severe social phobia that could truly be considered a disorder compared to the rest of the world.

Swedes have been studied and surveyed in order to determine how many people actually have social phobia, and the number is above 15% of the adult population. While it is a bit harder to find exact numbers on children, surveys show that it is an even bigger problem in children, suggesting that at least some grow out of it. It also seems to affect girls more than boys, although there is no known reason for this. It is possible as a highly isolated country, they are struggling to adjust to an increasingly connected world.