

Fascinating Facts About The Amish

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You've probably heard about the Amish, and if you live in Pennsylvania or the midwest, you may have even seen them now and again. But the truth is that few people really know a whole lot about this mysterious group of people who happily live throughout the United States. Within their own communities, they have shunned technology and, although friendly people, generally shut themselves from the rest of the world. This has caused them to create a whole new set of norms and traditions which are as interesting as they are mysterious and strange. From their wedding traditions to their thoughts on modern medicine, we are taking you on a deep dive into the Amish lifestyle.

What Is It With Amish People And Electricity?

Many people often think that Amish people use zero electricity, but that is not always the case. While they do shun technology, there are occasions when electricity is used, including in times of emergency. There is a particular reason why they don't allow technology, and it goes back to their strong belief in God.



unionsoldest.ml

The reason they follow this practice is because of "Gelassenheit," which is a German word meaning the community should use the earth as God intended. Some Amish communities allow people to have landline phones in their barns because it is a necessity, but it cannot be used in their homes. Amish Men Shun Mustaches, But Grow Long Beards For An Interesting Reason

If you look at all the pictures of Amish men, you will probably notice that they typically have a long beard, but a clean-shaven face. This tradition dates back to the 1800s when mustaches were seen as a symbol of wealth or for people who were in the armed forces, but that goes against the Amish beliefs.



uploby.site

The Amish believe that they should look how God intended, so they don't cut their beards. They decided to shave their mustaches because they didn't like what it symbolized and how it was a fashion trend at the time. Sometimes you can see men with shorter beards, but they usually allow them to grow long.

Those Who Are Not Amish, Are Considered Something Else

There is a tradition among Amish people that dates back to when they first settled in the United States. They call all non-Amish people English regardless of race or ethnicity. They started this because they had no word to refer to outsiders since they considered themselves Americans just like everyone else.



hood-catsup.gq

They started calling outsiders English because that was the language their "outsider" neighbors spoke, and it stuck throughout time. Things don't typically change in Amish society when it comes to tradition, so to this day, they still call outsiders "English people."

Teens Are Not Considered Amish Until They Are Baptised

After teens have returned from their Rumspringa, they can officially be baptized and accepted as a member of the Amish community. There is no cutoff age for baptisms because the Rumspringa can last many years, or until they realize the outside world is not for them. People are always welcome to return to the community.



firstrunfeatures.com

For many teenagers, leaving the community and experiencing the "English world" is a huge shock. They have never been around that much technology, and they are not used to the norms of our world. This makes them crave the simplicity of their communities, and they end up returning rather quickly. In other cases, these teens never return because they enjoy the outside world more.

They Do Not Take Pictures Unless It Is Someone From Outside The Community

You will not find anyone in the Amish community with an Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter account. They do not use electricity or technology, so they don't even take pictures of each other. In fact, they don't even allow paintings of people, which involves zero electricity, so why is it banned?



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In the Amish world, it is strictly forbidden for someone to own images of people, whether it is of their family or themselves. When a member of the Amish community dies, there are no images to remember them by, so people only have their memories. Pictures of people are seen as graven images.

Women Have A Very Specific Role In Their Society

After women leave school, they start to learn how to sew, cook, keep a house, and tend to their families. This is because Amish women are meant to be housewives; that is their role in the Amish society. They are made to take care of the children like glorified babysitters.



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Amish women have no right to become leaders in their communities, and they cannot make decisions for themselves. While this may be sad to most people, for them, it is all they know. Once they are married, their husbands have total control, and they are there to serve and oversee the daily house chores.

You Must Learn All Of Their Rules

As you could have guessed, the Amish are known for their many, many rules. There is an entire book dedicated to all these rules, and everyone must learn them. This neatly fashioned book is called the Ordnung and each member of the community carries a copy with them at all times.



If any rules are broken, there can be serious consequences depending on which rule it was. Some of the regulations in the Ordnung include the particular dress code, rules about children and technology, and the way buggies should look. They have a specific way of life, and they want everyone in the community to stick to certain guidelines.

What Happens When You Don't Follow The Rules?

You might be wondering what kind of consequences there are if you break the rules, and it varies from time to time. The rules in the Ordnung are taken seriously, so breaking them can lead to harsh punishment. One form of punishment is called a Meidung or time out. This is when someone is shunned from the community for some time but still lives with the confines.



Facebook

Another form of punishment is ex-communication. This means that you are shunned from the community entirely and can no longer live within its boundaries. This punishment can last for months on end. The Amish use this punishment to help people learn from their mistakes and hopefully return apologetically so that they won't commit a crime again.

The Amish Believe In God Over Science

In the Amish community, there is a strong belief in God, and they have a strong commitment to their faith. In their communities, things like DNA testing are illegal. Many people want to know where they are from or a little bit more about their ancestors. Since this testing is not allowed, many people end up marrying close relatives.



indulgy.com

Since their communities are small and there are not many options, inbreeding does accidentally occur. They do not marry their cousins on purpose, but they do take the risk of having genetic complications. The Amish believe that if you marry your third cousin, God simply intended it to be that way.

There Is A Ceremonial Right Of Passage That Can Last From A Week To A Few Years

When teens want to leave the community, it is part of a right of passage called "Rumspringa," which is derived from German meaning "running around." This period of time can last for a week, or even a few years. However, the time frame is not that important to the Amish people.



culturemap.com

By allowing teens to explore the outside world, they hope it will encourage them to return once they have had enough. This willingness to return and accept the Amish way of life is what allows them to be entirely accepted into the community as an adult. This period enables teens to realize that the "English" way of life is not for them.

Who Said Amish Teens Couldn't Have Fun?

While many people assume Amish teens don't get to have fun like regular teenagers, that is false. The elders in the Amish community understand that teens will rebel, so they allow them to experience the outside world before adulthood. They cannot be punished for anything they do or experience outside the Amish world during this time.



imgur.com

Between the ages of 14 and 18, Amish teens have the right to leave the community and experience the outside world. You might have seen this on the TLC show, *Breaking Amish*. The show followed five Amish teens who left the Amish world to see what big cities and technology were like before they became adults.

Amish Couples Share A Bed Before Marriage For One Night Only

There are many traditions within the Amish community, especially when it comes to courtship and marriage. Before a couple gets married, they are allowed to spend one night in the same bed, but intimacy is still forbidden on this night. The Amish are very religious, so pre-marital encounters are strictly not allowed.



actively.com

The couple is allowed this one night together before marriage because the Amish believe it brings the couple closer. They can talk and get to know each other on a deeper level before fully committing to one another. They say that this night can strengthen their bond or determine whether the couple is truly meant to be.

They Cannot Use Cars, But They Allow Them To Drive By

If you live near an Amish community, you may have seen them riding in their horse and buggy along a busy road. While they are not allowed to drive, they can be around other cars. It may not be the safest mode of transportation, but cars aren't necessarily that much better.



pinsdaddy.com

The Amish believe that owning a car will cause you to abandon your faith because it is a symbol of wealth and modern society. It is illegal to own a car because it also gives you access to the outside world. If they do need to go to a business meeting, someone outside the Amish community can drive them.

They Believe Your Partner Has To Share The Same Faith

When you decide to date someone, the Amish believe that your partner must have the same faith. They think that this leads to a successful marriage. Before you can even start dating, you must be baptized into the Amish church along with your partner.



In Amish society, a couple must have all their dates in a public space so that nothing can happen intimately before marriage. Also, these are not arranged marriages. They believe you can marry whomever you like as long as they are also in the Amish community and share the same beliefs.

Amish Toys Are Made Without Faces For A Very Strange Reason

You may be wondering why any child would want to play with these creepy faceless toys. The Amish make all their toys without faces, and they have a perfectly rational explanation. The toys are always handmade, and they look like something that is from the Amish way of life.



Whether it is a little girl in Amish attire, a horse, or a vegetable, they are all plush and generally look the same. These toys do not have faces because they want to teach children that it doesn't matter what you look like since everyone is important and loved. That is an important lesson for children to learn while they are young.

The Amish Don't Believe In Formal Government

There is only one authority in the Amish society, and that is the word of God. While they do have their own rule book, it is not considered a form of government, and rather allows them to keep their lives in line with God. The government does not affect their way of life, and they dismiss all forms of it.



afamily.vn

Since they do not believe in the government, the church decides how crimes are judged and punished. If there is a severe crime within their society though, they will hand it over to the police because they understand the church cannot handle some things.

If You Are An Outsider, You Can Join The Community

Although Amish people try to isolate themselves from the outside world, that does not mean they will turn away an outsider who wants to join them. There are specific steps a person has to take to join the Amish community entirely, and that starts with an internship within an Amish family.



uproxx.com

When you want to join the community, you have to go on a journey to see if the Amish life is really for you. It is not something you can halfway commit to; you are either all in or not at all. You have to leave all of the things from the outside world behind, including your phone with all the social media apps. Once you have completed the steps, it is up to the church to decide if they accept you.

It Is Rare For An Amish Person To Have Cancer

This one might be a long shot, but within the Amish community, it is extremely rare for someone to have cancer. There are a few hypotheses as to how this could correlate to their way of life. The first is that they grow all their own fruits and vegetables, so there are no harmful chemicals in anything they eat, which could cause cancer.



Another reason could be that the Amish do not use any kind of electricity or modern technology, so they are not exposed to harmful waves. This could be why they have low rates of cancer and serious illness.

You'll Never Guess Where They Spend Their Wedding Night

After you get approval from the church and you have your lengthy ceremony, you can finally celebrate being a married couple in Amish society. To begin the honeymoon, the newlywed couple will spend their first night at the bride's parents' home. It may seem odd, but this is their tradition.



The morning after, the couple traditionally cleans the house as a sign of gratitude. The couple will then move onto other relatives and bounce around between houses. After this process, the newlyweds are allowed to spend their first night entirely alone.

There Are A Few Different Languages

There are three different languages used by the Amish people, and they are fluent in all three. The most prominent one is German because back in the 1700s, when they were settling, they carried over many German traditions, including the language. All religious services are performed in German.



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The other two languages are English and Pennsylvania Dutch. The settlers first learned English so they could communicate with the already established European immigrants when they reached North America. Pennsylvania Dutch is a form of German that the Amish adopted, and they typically use this in everyday discussions.

Babies Are Not Baptised

In many religious communities, it is customary for babies to be baptized, but the Amish have different traditions. The Amish don't baptize babies because they believe that people should be able to decide to be brought into the Amish faith.



burstdaily.com

Since babies cannot make their own decisions, their baptisms usually happen between the ages of 16 and 24. This is because they believe that people are now responsible enough to make the decision to be part of the Amish community or not.

There Needs To Be A Blessing For The Marriage To Be Accepted

Before a couple can get married it is not their parents who need to give them a blessing; it is the church. This longstanding Amish tradition happens not long after the couple begins dating. Usually, the man proposes and it can only be accepted if the church approves.



In the case that the church does not approve of the couple, they are not allowed to be married. When the church does approve a couple's engagement, the news is posted in the town's paper, and they get married shortly after.

What Does Amish Mean?

There are many misconceptions about the Amish people because they do not interact with people outside of their communities. The word "Amish" was derived from a Swiss Anabaptist named Jakob Ammann. He is the head figure of the Amish people and the person who built the foundation of their beliefs.



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Ammann broke off from the Mennonites to create his own church for people who wanted a more straightforward way of life. This group settled in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other parts of the midwest starting around 1720. They have since established thriving communities, and people find their very simple way of life fascinating.

The Amish Have Very Specific Wedding Traditions

When an Amish couple gets married the process is very lengthy. The ceremony is simple, and the couple does not have lavish dresses or tuxedos. The bride wears a simple blue dress with a bonnet, but she cannot wear makeup or jewelry, not even a diamond ring to symbolize their marriage.



suzdaltsevaphoto.com

Also, in Amish tradition, the man does not give his fiancée a diamond ring when he proposes. Jewelry is a symbol of vanity, so a woman never wears it even when she gets married. Amish people don't get married for money or material objects because they shun those things; it is purely for love.

No House, No Problem

As the Amish honeymoon continues, couples bounce around from each of their relatives' houses because this period involves many parts. It is a tradition for them to spread their honeymoon period out in various places. After the first night at the bride's parents, they visit more people as husband and wife.



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Once the honeymoon is over, the couple might not have a house of their own yet. In this case, the newlyweds will live with their parents until they can have their own place. For most people, this seems like a horrible idea, but for them, it is a normal occurrence.

They Have A Communal Way Of Life

Sharing is caring when it comes to Amish communities. They build barns for each other and even have large potlucks for everyone to enjoy. Each member of the community has to bring something to this meal, and it gives people time to socialize. This idea of hosting many people for a meal is a fundamental principle among the Amish.



burstdaily.com

Not only do they share meals, but whenever someone is in need, they offer to help. Medical bills are expensive, especially if you don't have insurance. The Amish will band together to help whoever needs help regardless of the cost.

The Community Builds Barns For Specific People

Amish people have a very strong sense of community; they help each other out and always stick together. There is a longstanding tradition where members of the community will build a barn for a selected person. Everyone gets involved when it comes to building the barns and it is a popular activity.



therising.us

The Amish know how to build strong and stable barns that usually last for centuries. They build these without any use of electricity, so there are no power tools or cranes to help; it is all done by hand. This act of service is to show selflessness by helping those in need.

There Is A Big Difference Between Amish And Mennonites

One of the biggest mistakes by people from the "English world" is getting Mennonites and Amish confused. If you called a member of the Amish community a Mennonite or vice versa, it would be highly offensive to each group. While the Amish are derived from the Mennonites, they have big differences in their way of living.



Pinterest

Mennonites are strictly Christian, and they are incredibly modern in comparison to the Amish. On the other hand, the Amish follow their own version of faith, and they keep their lives as simple as possible without the use of modern technology. They might dress in similar ways, but do not confuse them.

They Have A Specific Way Of Dressing

As you can see from all the photos, there are dress codes that Amish people have to follow according to the rules in the Ordnung. According to the rules, the Amish cannot wear form-fitting clothes or bright colors. The clothes have to be made of plain material. They cannot wear hoods or sweatshirts as well.



BBC

For women specifically, the sleeves cannot be too short, and they can't be transparent. There can't be ruffles or low necklines, and they have to wear an apron or bib. Men only have rules about their facial hair, and they have to wear a specific hat. The rule book states that it cannot be a "western cowboy-style hat."

When Children Reach 8th Grade, They Stop Going To School

It may seem odd in today's times, but the Amish stop going to school in eighth grade. After they have completed school, girls become housekeepers and start learning skills to be homemakers. They learn to sew, cook, and crochet so that they can be wonderful wives and mothers someday.



educateinspirechange.org

Unlike the girls, when the boys finish eighth grade, they have to know already what their fixed profession is going to be. For the Amish, they do not need to continue school because they learn everything by working since their society is based on hands-on activities.

After 8th Grade, They Learn Skills To Be Functioning Members Of The Community

When the Amish children finish formal schooling in the eighth grade, they start something similar to a vocational school. The children learn different skills to be helpful members of the Amish society. The kids have the freedom to learn whatever they want.



corbisimages.com

Some children decided to become homemakers, carpenters, or tradesmen. There are so many options for them to choose from because everybody eventually becomes a working member of the community.

There Are No Churches

This might come as a shock but there is no specific building for the church. Many churches have stained glass windows with cathedral ceilings, but the Amish see no need for something extravagant like that. They like to keep things simple and plain and believe that a building for a church would be too much.



burstdaily.com

Instead, the Amish hold services anytime and anywhere. It could be outside as the sun sets or inside someone's barn; it really doesn't matter to them, as long as they can practice their faith. The Amish also believe that their religion is what works for them, but they won't force you to have the same beliefs, and they never pass judgment on other religions.

Romans 8:12 Is A Passage They Live By

The Amish live an isolated life away from the rest of society, and there is an explanation behind it. The most important passage to the Amish people is Romans 8:12. This passage basically says that they should not conform to the world. Therefore, they do everything against the norm of the outside world.



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The Amish community has been extremely successful in isolating themselves from the outside world. This passage is the foundation for everything they believe in, and it has guided them for hundreds of years to be a thriving group.

They Do Believe In Modern Medicine

Despite the fact that they shun electricity and almost all forms of technology, the Amish do believe in modern medicine. If someone needs a doctor, they will leave to go to a modern office or hospital. There is nowhere in the bible that states people should not receive medical treatment, so the Amish allow it.



finsfeed.com

Although the Amish prefer holistic and homemade remedies, if it is an emergency or something that cannot be fixed with a natural treatment, they will go to the doctor. The only thing that is not allowed by modern medicine is birth control. Like many other religious communities, they believe that people should have large families with five to seven children because pregnancy is a blessing.

They Are A Peaceful Group Of People

You definitely won't be seeing any Amish people enlisting in the army anytime soon. They won't be suffering through boot camp or wearing a uniform because they do not believe in forms of violence. They are pacifist by nature, and it has been that way since they settled in America.



wedding-ringss.us

The Amish want to keep the peace between each other and the outside world, and they will not use force on another human being. They will do everything in their power to avoid the military and war because it goes against everything they are taught throughout their lives.

The Amish Population Is Rather Large In America

Although they are hidden away from the rest of the world, and people don't hear about the Amish that much, they have a surprisingly high population in the United States. With over 325,000 people across 31 states, the Amish population is going strong and continues to rise. They are starting to move more towards the west as well.



BusinessInsider

Among those 325,000 are two types of Amish; the new and the old. The modern Amish believe in welcoming innovations into their society while the old continue to shun new changes and advances in technology. Those who have continued not to use technology are called "Old Order Amish Mennonite Church."

The Youngest Family Member Is The Most Important

In many cultures and religions, the oldest son is the one who receives the inheritance from their family, and they are the most praised. However, in the Amish tradition, the youngest son is the one who receives everything when their parents pass away.



time.com

They leave everything to the youngest because the Amish believe that by the time they die, their oldest children should have everything sorted out in their lives. It actually makes the most sense when you think about it logically.

Only One Type Of Music Is Allowed

This might sadden many people, but the Amish way of life believes that there should be no form of self-expression. Therefore, the Amish are not allowed to play any musical or listen to music. This rule is in place so that people do not commit a crime of pride.



Although there is one form of music they can listen to, and those songs come from the German songbook called Ausbunch. It is one of the oldest songbooks used today. These hymns have no musical notes, but the tunes are passed down from each generation. No one really knows what the original songs sounded like because they have been passed down so many generations.

There Is A Strict Rule About Wedding Dresses

One of the many traditions of an Amish wedding is the dress that the bride wears. The bride herself must sew the dress, and it has to be blue. They must follow the rule of "something old, something borrowed, something blue." They do not get anything new, however.



welt.de

Unlike traditional weddings outside of the Amish community, the dress a bride wears for her wedding is what she will wear to church every Sunday after the wedding. This is also the dress she will be buried in. They really know how to get the most wear out of one garment.

They Only Have One Store That They Can Shop In

Most things within the Amish community can be found within their society from farming or making things by hand. They want to keep everything in their little bubble so that they can remain separate from the rest of the world.



pakngoshome.com

However, there is one store the Amish are allowed to shop in where they can buy stationery, candles, and other things that they cannot grow themselves.

WRITTEN BY
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Ashley's favorite pastimes include such thrilling and extreme activities as sleeping, lounging about, relaxing, and generally not doing too much of anything. It's safe to say that she's pretty much mastered the art of unwinding, and that definitely shows in her chill, calming writing style.

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My paternal grandmother was said to be Pennsylvania Dutch. As there are Amish in southern Ontario—these “Bearances” are thought to have come from Orange Irish Kingston, but the name pops up on both sides of the border over centuries. If Grandma left on Rumspringa and never came back, perhaps she should have, rather than marry a cranky, crazy old Orangeman. (But she was a “Cowan” so she was at least second-generation away from the Amish.)



I dare say I “understand” these people. (Amish would reply “Really? You wouldn’t last for a week.”) I respect a sincere attempt to hold firm to the divine in this world. And what does it say that cancer is scarcely a concern for them?

I have a fondness for the Amish, and it is not because of “Rachel” (Kelly McGillis) in *Witness*. I can say, though, that if I was “John Book” (Harrison Ford) I would never have left that widow and child at the end of the movie. The scene in the barn, dancing to Sam Cook’s “Wonderful World” on the car radio, is priceless.

This article has some questionable “facts”—e.g. the bride not in blue but instead white, with no head covering, and the strange photo of the girl with Santa—with an occasional naïve judgment (Amish women “are made to take care of the children like glorified babysitters” betrays that Ms. Lez “sleeping, lounging about, relaxing, and generally not doing too much of anything” has no clue how hard women have to work—and had to work like my farm wife mother before “modern conveniences”—and the many skills to be mastered. TJB