

## British Chefs and German Lovers

By Dónal Thompson



This morning I had to renew my 'Tarjeta de Residencia' or 'Guiri Card' as my friends call it. I had to take three photocopies of every piece of paper in my house and some horrible photos. Then we (me and about 25 other foreigners) stood in the rain and waited outside the Police Station. Then we waited some more. And after that we waited.

A policeman (is it my imagination or are policemen REALLY getting younger?)... anyway... a policeman came up and asked us all our nationality. Europeans to the right, Rest of the World to the left. I thought he was organising a spontaneous football game or something. We, the Europeans, entered first. And after all the paperwork the civil servant (funcionario) told me it would be about a year before I get my new card.

Talking of Europe, do you know what European paradise is? I'll tell you.

French chefs.  
German organisation.  
British policemen.  
Italian lovers.

And European Hell?

French policemen  
German lovers  
British chefs  
Italian organisation.

In my country we don't have identity cards. Only criminals have to give their fingerprints. If a policeman stops you in my country and you don't have any identification he has to make a choice. Arrest you or let you go. To arrest you he must have some evidence that you have committed a crime. If not, you can take HIM to court (un juicio). He has no right to know your name or your address if you haven't done anything wrong. Here it seems a little strange to me.

Another thing that seems strange to me is Spanish Omellete--tortilla de patata. Don't you ever get BORED with it? Everywhere I go there are these big, yellow chunks of omellete.

Now I've started thinking about what I find strange in this country.

Pigs' legs hanging in bars.  
All films on TV are dubbed (doblado)  
Everyone talks at the same time.  
Traffic police have whistles. - WHY?  
**They're in the middle of the road!!!**  
**You can't miss them!!** Children are allowed to be noisy in public.  
Bank workers don't wear ties.  
TV adverts (publicidad) last an eternity.  
People live with their parents until they get married.  
People who don't go to church give their children a First Communion. (WHY???)  
Old women with umbrellas are not seen as dangerous weapons.  
Shopkeepers ask the customers 'HOLA¿que hay?'-- (Don't they know? It's THEIR shop!)  
Books are criminally expensive.  
Schoolchildren have so many extra-curricular activities.

You like 'The Benny Hill Show'  
Tell me. Why?