

Uncommon Knowledge

Extraordinary things that few people know

The Economist Explains

Tom Standage

**This is a compendium of explanations from
The Economist and what's common is that
they are uncommon.**

In the past few decades fewer than half of the terrorist attacks are claimed.

Terrorists do not claim responsibility where too few are killed or too many killed, a kind of inverted U.

If too few are killed then it is seen as an incompetent strike and if we too many are killed there is mass resentment.

Carrots originated in modern day Iran and Afghanistan. Carrots used to be white and then turned orange.

Global suicide rates have dropped 29 % since 2000. America is an exception where suicide rates have risen 18 % since 2000.

**In India and china suicide rates are higher
amongst young women**

Social change is partly responsible for falling suicide rates. Women have more freedom. Policy also plays a role, in USSR, Gorbachev put restrictions on alcohol and this reduced suicide rates.

**The global average of suicides is 10 per 100,000 people. India and Japan are at 15, South Korea at 21 and Russia at 25.
half of America suicide are firearms**

**Space is common space, i.e. no country can own the moon or the asteroids etc.
however, in this decade we will see a fight to legalize mining in outer space.**

Only 58 countries drive on the left side of the road and most are former commonwealth countries. The reason for driving on the right are many, most notably the horseman sat on the last horse on the left of the horse carriage. So he had to drive on the right to see what was coming ahead.

Nearly 25 % of school children forget what they learnt the previous year at the end of the summer holiday.

**The countries where people want to emigrate the most are
usa,Canada,Germany,France Australia and
Britain.**

**Finland is the happiest country in the world.
A number of social policies influence this.
Apart from this, 80 % of Finns take pride in
their police, education and healthcare
systems.**

The happiest countries are not the richest countries. Even in south America people derive happiness from their family connectedness.

There are more than 70,000 schools for the elderly in China. Most are government funded.

Smog affects spending in china. spends on health care and pharmacies go up while spend son essentials and supermarkets decrease.

Treason is the most commonly used work to quell dissent in Africa. It is so because people charged with treason cannot be put on bail and thus is the best way to quell opposition.

Australia has three prime ministers in 24 years before 2007. after 2007, they had 6 in 11 years. The Australia parliamentary system is just 3 years and if 50 % of a ruling party MPs vote for a leadership spill, then the PM can be changed

Vanilla is one of the most popular spices in the world and Madagascar supplies 80 % of the world vanilla. This country tried to create a cartel with neighbors which resulted in the development of synthetic vanilla.

Brent crude is the benchmark against which all 100 million barrels of crude oil traded every day are priced

The international oil trade is relatively new, started in 1861. the most widely used index is the Brent crude, oil extracted in the north sea, because it is easy to refine into petrol etc. Brent was used from 1985.

Today, the price of a barrel of Brent crude is taken from the most competitive of the five different types of crude, only one of which comes from the Brent field.

There are 1864 pandas in the world and most are in china. China uses them as diplomatic gifts with other countries. China actually charges the country for the panda. Malaysia used to pay \$50,000 per month per panda to China.

When china was unhappy with Obama's meeting with the Dalai lama, USA returned the two pandas which were gifted.

Moon cakes are the most divisive of treats in China. They are gifted to bureaucrats and ministers and are seen as a bell weather commodity to predict the china economy.

When Xi Jinping cracked down on Chinese corruption, moon cakes sales fell by 20 %

Westerners are eating more chicken because it is healthy compared to red meat, better growing methods have put more chicken for sale and the cost of chicken in relation to beef has dropped from half of beef to a third of beef.

It matters if Caspian is a lake or sea because a lakes bed is equally divided between the countries who are on the lake while if it is a sea, then the relevant length of the coastline comes into play. Iran has a short Caspian coast while Kazakhstan has a long Caspian coast.

People who spend more than \$500,000 on their weddings are prone to try and impress their guests while people who spend lesser are focused on mingling with their guests. The higher you spend, the higher the probability of ending in a divorce

A typical American birth of child costs more than the royal baby costs in the UK.

Internet dating has helped same sex couples more than anyone else. If you track from the 1940s, meeting in school, meeting in college, meeting at church, meeting at a bar, restaurant and through friends were the most cited reasons to meet a partner.

In 1987, 18 % of women earned more than their husband. In 2010, that number had jumped to 30 % in the USA.

Knowing English matters in the following industries – media, banking and finance, agriculture, IT, Pharmaceuticals, Travel, health care

In the last 117 years, only 20 % of women have got the Nobel peace prize, less than 10 % in literature and medicine, less than 5 % in physics and chemistry and very few in economics.

Star players like Neymar, Ronaldo and Messi account for about 8 to 10 points a season while star managers account for 0 to 4.

China has underwritten \$900 billions of loans in 71 countries through the belt and road initiative.

Fewer people are using public transport because public transport is slow and inefficient and the new age platform transportation makes access easy.

Do sin taxes really work? In the usa , a 1% increase in price leads to a similar drop in films, soft drinks. Tobacco drop is only 0.5 %.

Philadelphia has used the sin tax to build recreational facilities in schools etc.

**The maximum gun deaths occur in brazil,
USA and India.**

Interpol is an international police organization based out of Paris and represents 194 countries.

Turkey, china, Egypt and Saudi Arabia lock up the most journalists.

How much is the digital economy worth to you? Survey respondents say that they should be paid \$3600 to give up digital maps, \$8400 to give up e mail and \$17,500 to give up their search engine.