



Miami-Dade County Sister Cities Program

40 years and still going strong!



Sister Cities International was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Sister Cities International is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit which serves as the national membership organization for individual sister cities, counties, and states across the U.S. The program promotes cooperation between communities through people-to-people exchanges. The network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers in nearly 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in more than 140 countries. Its mission is to promote peace, through mutual respect and cooperation – one individual, one community, at a time.

The Miami-Dade Sister Cities Program was founded in 1981 by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners and is managed by the Office of the International Trade Consortium (ITC). The program serves to promote international trade, and cultural and educational exchanges through sustained innovative initiatives that enhance citizen diplomacy, create international goodwill, and support the County’s global trade agenda.

Miami-Dade County has established Sister Cities relationships with over 31 cities in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Since its inception the program has created projects furthering international cooperation and understanding between the County and its respective Sister Cities.

2021 was a very active year for the County’s Sister Cities program. ITC worked on revitalizing several relationships that had gone dormant. Numerous virtual and in-person events were conducted to strengthen the Sister Cities relationships, ranging from emerging tech, tourism, healthcare, resilience, and others. The County added a new member to its list when Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz conducted a trade mission to Viareggio, Italy in 2021.

2022 saw Miami-Dade County sign a Sister Cities Agreement with Curitiba, Brazil. These new relationships focus on improving trade relations, sharing best practices on green mobility and urban development, and leveraging the commonalities. As these relationships thrive, the challenge will be to sustain the regular engagements with the Sister Cities. Supported by Chairman Diaz and the ITC Sister Cities Committee, Team ITC is working diligently with colleagues from these cities in planning continuous knowledge sharing through events, trade missions, webinars, etc., to expand these meaningful ties. Click on the following link to view [Miami-Dade County’s active Sister Cities relationships](#), or write to sistercities@miamidade.gov.

New Airport Protocol Officers Join Protocol & International Affairs Division



Airport Protocol Officer Veronique Louis has worked for the Miami Dade Aviation Department since January 2018. Before joining the Protocol Division, she worked as an Airport Public Service Assistant in the Airport Operations Control room and for the Paging and Information Center. She obtained a master’s degree in foreign languages (English & Germany - applied to law, business, international trade, and management studies). Prior to emigrating to the U.S. in August 2014, she served as an import-export manager for a French company, attending international trade shows. She is proficient in French, English, and German.



Airport Protocol Officer Qais Yafai joined the Protocol & International Affairs Division team on March 21, 2022. Mr. Yafai completed his Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama in Aviation Management in 2019. He completed more than 110 hours of private pilot flight training. He is proficient in English and Arabic.

APRIL 2022

Division Director’s Message



U. Desmond Alufohai
Director

Protocol & International Affairs Division
Miami-Dade Aviation Department

We celebrate 40 years of Miami-Dade County Sister Cities Program. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), citizen diplomacy refers to an array of actions and activities that individuals can participate in that contribute to deepening ties between individuals and communities and to advancing the goals of public diplomacy. Citizen diplomacy is thus an integral part of public diplomacy. Citizen-to-citizen diplomacy is often most impactful in its multiplier effects on institutions, communities, and societies.

We also celebrate Arab American and Scottish American Heritage Month. We extend a warm welcome to the Consul General of Brazil Ambassador André Odenbreit Carvalho, Trinidad & Tobago’s Consul General Joanne Books, Swedish Honorary Consul General Peter Hult, and Special Agent Jorge Torres.

We are pleased that Airport Protocol Officers Veronique Louis and Qais Yafai will be joining our team o the Protocol Division team.

We salute the nations celebrating their independence/national day in April. “Spring has sprung...” Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is.

Happy Springtime! As always, please be safe.

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DIPLOMATIC & CONSULAR RELATIONS

New Consul General of Brazil arrives in Miami



Ambassador André Odenbreit Carvalho took over the position of Brazilian Consul General in Miami on April 11, 2022. Born in Rio de Janeiro, he has a master's degree in History from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RJ). He is a career diplomat, having previously served Embassies in Buenos Aires, Moscow, and London, as well as the Brazilian Mission to the European Union in Brussels. In Brasilia, among other functions, he worked as Head of the Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development Division, Director of the Departments of Extra-regional Trade Negotiations and Multilateral Economic Organizations and Special Secretary for External Relations of the Civil Office of the Presidency of the Republic.

Married to Gilda Araújo de Souza, the Ambassador is the father of triplets: Helena, Rafael, and Carolina. He replaced Ambassador João Mendes Pereira, previous Consul General over the last three and a half years. "It is a personal honor to be the head of a mission as important as the Consulate General in Miami. Our large community and the strong cultural and commercial relations between Florida and Brazil offer many opportunities to be explored, with a priority focus on providing quality consular service and support for Brazilians."

New Consul General of Trinidad & Tobago arrives in Miami



The Honorable Joanne Brooks arrived in Miami on April 8, 2022. She is the new Consul General of Trinidad & Tobago in Miami. Ms. Brooks is a career Diplomat with 15 years experience in the Trinidad and Tobago Foreign Service. She served as the Head of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Unit, Caribbean Relations Division from 2020 – February 2022. From 2015-2019 she served as the Chargé d'Affaires and Head of Chancery at the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Brussels where she also represented Trinidad and Tobago on the Technical Negotiating Team for the ACP-EU Post Cotonou Agreement.

Prior to going on post Ms. Brooks was appointed Head of Secretariat for 4 regional, and international conferences hosted by Trinidad and Tobago (2011-2015). She also held the position of Trade Negotiations Coordinator for 11 Trade, Cultural and Tourism Cooperation Agreements with Central America during the period (2011 to 2015).

Ms. Brooks has two Masters Degrees from the London School of Economics (LSE) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) and graduated from the Diplomatic Academies of Malta and Clingendael in the Netherlands.

Ms. Brooks has extensive experience in the commercial private sector in the UK and worked for the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) prior to returning to Trinidad and Tobago in 2010. Ms. Brooks was a member of the Cabinet-appointed Fashion Industry Development Committee (FIDC) and the Board of Fashion Week Trinidad and Tobago (FWTT) from 2010-2012.

New Honorary Consul General of Sweden to Florida



Founder and CEO of VIKAND, Peter Hult's penchant is to provide thought leadership and to forge relationships for seafarer sustainability and global maritime health care. "Being named to such an honored role for the Swedish Consulate in Florida reflects the wonderful path our lives take," he stated. "Sweden is in my blood. To be able to help my fellows navigate coming to America and to assist those who wish to visit, study, and live in Sweden is a privilege. As a lifelong mariner, it is also notable as many Swedes are known throughout the world as skilled seafarers with vital positions at sea and ashore."

Mr. Hult's career is rooted in human resources management with Silversea Cruise Line and The World of ResidenSea. Moving to MHG Insurance, he parlayed his HR experience in an executive leadership role managing global maritime employee benefits solutions for commercial, cruise and yachting sectors. In 2009, Peter intuitively sensed the compelling need for a comprehensive approach to maritime medical operations and founded VIKAND Solutions, LLC.

Swedish by birth, Peter Hult lives in America. Further community engagement included co-founding the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce in Florida (SACC-Florida), serving as a Board Member with Kids in Distress, and co-founding the Marine Industry Cares Foundation. He is married with one son.

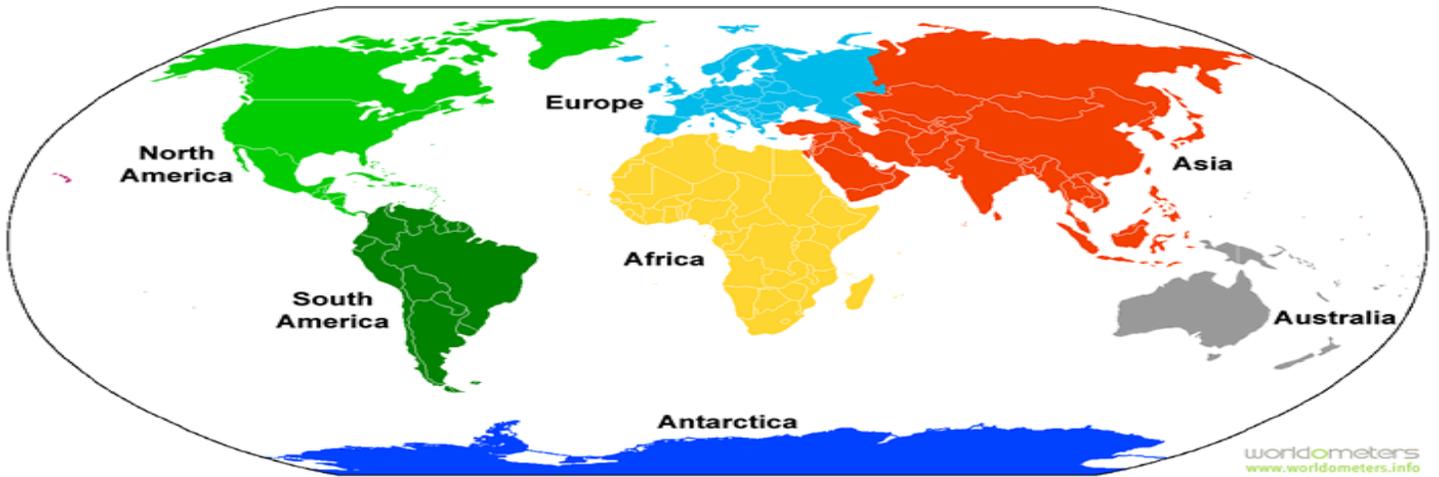
Meet Mr. Jorge Torres - New U.S. Secret Service Special Agent, Miami Field Office



On September 2021 **Special Agent (SA) Jorge Torres** arrived at the Miami Field Office, Protection/Airport Squad. SA Torres began working with the U.S. Secret Service, William J. Clinton Division in Chappaqua, NY in March 2002. In February 2009 SA Torres was reassigned to the Miami Field Office Protections Squad, and later to Credit Cards and Counterfeit Fraud Investigations squads. On September 2017 he returned to the William J. Clinton Detail in Chappaqua, NY where he worked until September 2021.

SA Torres was born in Philadelphia PA and grew up in Puerto Rico. SA Torres began his Law Enforcement career with the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington DC. He graduated from Interamerican University of Puerto Rico with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, English as a Second Language, and a master's degree in Criminal Justice.

THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT



List of the seven continents - Ranked by Current Position

#	Continent	Population (2020)	Area (Km ²)	Density (P/Km ²)	Percentage of World Population
1	Asia	4,641 billion	31,033,131	150	59.54%
2	Africa	1,341 billion	29,648,481	45	17.20%
3	Europe	748 million	22,134,900	34	9.59%
4	North America	592 million	21,330,000	28	7.60%
5	South America	431 million	17,461,112	25	5.53%
6	Australia/Oceania	43 million	8,486,460	5	0.55%
7	Antarctica	0	13,720,000	0	0.00%

Europe is the second smallest continent in size but the third largest in population. The European continent is located completely in the northern hemisphere and mainly in the eastern hemisphere. Europe borders onto the Arctic Ocean in the North, the Atlantic Ocean in the west and the Mediterranean Sea in the South. There are 50 countries in Europe with a total of more than 748 million people living on the continent in 2021.

Largest country: The European part of Russia covers more area than any other country. The three largest countries are: Russia, the Ukraine and France.

Largest capital city: Moscow. The Russian capital city houses more than 13 million inhabitants within the city limits. Saint Petersburg is Russia's second largest city with 5.3 million inhabitants. Moscow is the largest city that is entirely on the European continent

Smallest country: Vatican City is the smallest country not only in Europe, but also in the world. The city state, an enclave within Italy, is the smallest country both by population and by size.

Biggest island: The biggest island on the European continent is Great Britain/UK. Greenland is the largest island which belongs to Europe as the island belongs to Denmark. Greenland is commonly referred to as the largest island in the world. Greenland, however, is located on the North American continent.

Smallest town: Hum in Croatia is the smallest town not only in Europe but in the world. The town has only 30 inhabitants.

Most populous city: Istanbul, the biggest city in Turkey is commonly referred to as Europe's largest city. However, Istanbul is located on two continents: the western part belongs to Europe while the eastern parts belongs to the Asian continent. Istanbul houses about 17 million people. However, the most populous city that is located entirely in Europe is Moscow.

Most densely populated country: Monaco. The principality bordering the Mediterranean is the most densely populated country in the world. Europe is the continent with the highest population density, which means on the European continent live the biggest number of people per square kilometre or square mile.

BRIEFS & NOTES

Friday, April 13, 1928: First Non-Stop Transatlantic Flight from Europe to North America



L-R: Hermann Köhl, James Fitzmaurice, and Günther von Hünefeld

In 1842, American balloonist [John Wise](#) (1808 – 1879?) made a significant discovery. His observations showed him that at high altitudes there were fast moving, west to east flowing winds. After a trail ascent, Wise was convinced that this air current, today we know it as the [Jet Stream](#), could be used to transport people across the country and even across the Atlantic Ocean.

Together with his partner John LaMountain, he made plans for a transatlantic flight in a large [aerostat](#) named *Atlantic*. Unfortunately, a crash landing ended their partnership and, after 1859, there was no further talk of a transatlantic balloon crossing. It would be another 60 years until the first successful crossing was made. In May 1919, a Navy-Curtiss flying boat, designated [NC-4](#), made the journey from the U.S. to the United Kingdom in 23 days.

Less than a month later, on June 14, British aviators Alcock and Brown made the [first non-stop flight](#) from the U.S. to Ireland in a modified Vickers Vimy IV twin-engine bomber in 16 hours. For their achievement, they were awarded the £10,000 prize that the Daily Mail had been offering since 1913 for the first successful transatlantic flight taking less than 72 hours. Eight years later, on May 20, 1927, [Charles Lindbergh](#) completed the first solo flight across the Atlantic when he landed at Le Bourguet Field near Paris, 33.5 hours after taking off from Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York.

Eleven months after Lindbergh's groundbreaking trip, [three men boarded the Bremen](#), a Junkers factory-made, all-metal airplane and became the first to fly across the Atlantic from Europe to the U.S. Due to the prevailing winds, most experts, including Lindbergh, considered that a flight in this direction would be impossible.

Also by late 1927, so many attempted crossings had ended in failure, that the U.S., Canada, and various European countries, including Germany, considered banning flights altogether. As a result, the men of the *Bremen* had to hide their intentions.

On March 26, von Hünefeld hid in the plane, while Köhl indicated that he was taking the plane for a test flight, but instead flew it from Berlin to Ireland's Baldonnel Aerodrome. Ireland had no restrictions and provided the perfect launching spot for their intrepid endeavor.

On April 12, 1928, crowds gathered to cheer pilot Hermann Köhl, Baron Ehrenfried Günther Freiherr von Hünefeld, and Irish copilot James Fitzmaurice as the *Bremen* took-off headed for New York. The first 20 hours passed without incident as the aircraft cruised at an altitude of 1,500 feet (460 meters) with an airspeed of 120 mph (200 kmph). When storm clouds began to gather, they were no longer able to navigate by the stars and had to rely on their magnetic compass. Unfortunately, the compass failed, and they had to fly blind until the clouds cleared enough for them to spot Polaris. This allowed them to resume a southwesterly course along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. With two hours of fuel remaining, they spotted the lighthouse on Canada's remote Greenly Island, and decided to land. The first successful Europe to North America flight landed on April 13, 1928, on Greenly Island.

While Lindbergh had been welcomed by more than 100,000 people in Le Bourguet, the men of the *Bremen* surprised the lighthouse keeper and his family. The *Bremen* never flew again. Today, the restored aircraft is on display at the Bremen Airport Museum. Köhl, von Hünefeld, and Fitzmaurice were celebrated as pioneering aviation heroes for their remarkable achievement.



During the month of April, [Scottish-American Heritage](#) is recognized. From the first patriots, presidents, and industrialists, Scottish Americans contributed significantly to the establishment and development of the United States. Scots and Scotch Irish were some of the first Europeans to settle in North America. They brought their culture, industriousness, and ability to overcome with them. An estimated 20-25 million Americans claim Scottish descent today.

Among the 46 presidents who have led the United States, 35 of them claim Scottish heritage. Scottish Americans trace their lineage back to the Scottish Highlands in the north, the Midland Valley of the Central Lowlands, and the Southern Uplands. Some of them also claim Scotch-Irish descent. These immigrants settled in Ireland at the behest of the British government during the 17th century. Many would later emigrate from Ireland to the United States.

BRIEFS & NOTES



The [Organization of American States \(OAS\)](#), the oldest regional international organization in the world, traces its origins to the 1826 [Panama Congress](#). Simon Bolivar, whose goal it was to promote unity among the newly independent nations, called for the Congress. Delegates from Central and South America signed the Treaty of Perpetual Union, League, and Confederation, but only Gran Colombia (present day Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela) ratified it. [Discussions of an inter-American system](#) continued during the 19th century.

In 1889, 18 Western Hemisphere nations, including the U.S., convened for the First International Conference of American States in Washington, DC. This led to the creation of the International Union of American Republics on April 14, 1890. The Union was charged with “the prompt collection and distribution of commercial information”.

Additionally, the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics, the Union’s secretariat, was established. In 1910, the Commercial Bureau became the Pan American Union. During the Ninth International Conference of American States in Bogota, Colombia, the [OAS Charter](#) was adopted on April 30, 1948. It reaffirmed the fundamental rights and duties of the member states and laid out the basic objectives of the Organization, including promoting cultural, economic, educational, scientific, and social development through cooperative action. Today, 35 independent States from the Americas and Caribbean are members of OAS and continue to be dedicated to advancing democracy, peace and prosperity in the Western Hemisphere.

Pan American Day was celebrated in the U.S. for the first time on April 14, 1931. In 2022, this celebration falls on April 14 and Pan American Week falls during the week beginning April 10 through the 16th. President Biden’s message emphasized the close ties between the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere: “*During this Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we celebrate our close ties and shared values with the region, and we come together in the spirit of unity and optimism for a resilient, sustainable, and equitable future for all people of the Americas.*” ([2022 Presidential Proclamation](#)). In June 2022, the U.S. will host the [IX Summit of the Americas](#) in Los Angeles, California. The focus of the Summit will be on “Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future” for the Western Hemisphere.



An estimated [3.7 million Americans have Arab roots](#), according to the Arab American Institute, with ancestries traced to 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Morocco, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and others.

[Arab Immigration to the United States](#)

Estebanico Azemmouri, a Moroccan man, landed in the United States of America in 1527, and Antonio Bishallany who immigrated from Lebanon became the first member of a community today known as “Arab Americans.” This is the story of Arab Americans’ beginning in America – and the origins of their quest for fair representation.

Arab immigrants came to the United States in four waves from Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, but also from Morocco, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, many Gulf countries, and Libya. The first wave was made up of mostly Lebanese and Syrians, who worked largely as grocers and peddlers throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Arab immigration really took off at the start of the twentieth century, as Detroit’s exploding auto industry drew immigrants from all over the world. The Third Wave, which lasted until 1990, witnessed escape from the war in Lebanon and poverty in Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen. The current Fourth Wave comprises refugees from Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, and Syria.

The initiative for official national designation of the month was launched in 2017 by the nonprofit media and education organization [Arab American Foundation](#) and its sister organization Arab America. It began with support from a few states but gained momentum each year. In 2019, U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Michigan.) and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan), [introduced a resolution](#) to Congress to proclaim April as National Arab American Heritage Month. “It is my hope as a strong and proud Arab American in Congress that our nation can uplift our contributions in the United States by supporting Arab American Heritage Month,” Tlaib, a first-generation American, said about the resolution. National Arab American Heritage Month was recognized in April 2021 by President [Joe Biden](#), with the U.S. Department of State, some members of Congress and 37 governors issuing proclamations supporting the month, according to Arab America.

[6 Groundbreaking Innovations by Arab Americans](#)

While Americans born in or with ancestral ties to Arab countries have made countless significant scientific, medical and engineering contributions, most have never made it into record books. From cryptography to the artificial heart, to the iPod, [click here](#) to view the six groundbreaking and major advancements by Arab Americans.

INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (APRIL)

Countries celebrating Independence / National Days in April

April 1, 1979 – Iran: The Islamic Republic of Iran was proclaimed.

April 4, 1960 – Senegal: On this date, Senegal gained independence from France. Complete independence was achieved once the federation with Mali was dissolved on 20 August 1960.

April 9, 1991 – Georgia: On 26 May 1918, Georgia achieved independence from Soviet Russia, and on 9 April 1991, it achieved independence from the Soviet Union.

April 16, (1940) – Denmark: Queen Margrethe II's birthday is celebrated throughout the country.

April 17, 1946 – Syria: France administered Syria through a League of Nations mandate until 17 April 1946, when Syria declared full independence, and the last French troops withdrew from its territory.

April 18, 1980 – Zimbabwe: On this date, Zimbabwe gained independence from the United Kingdom.

April 26, 1964 – Tanzania: Union Day: On 26 April 1964 Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which was renamed the United Republic of Tanzania on 29 October 1964.

April 27, 1960 – Togo: On 27 April, Togo gained independence from the French-administered UN trusteeship.

April 27, 1961 – Sierra Leone: On this date, Sierra Leone gained independence from the United Kingdom.

April 27, (1967) – The Netherlands: King's Day celebrates King Willem-Alexander's birthday.

April 27, 1994 – South Africa: Freedom Day, South Africa's National Day, is an annual celebration of the country's first non-racial democratic elections held in 1994.

Ramadan, Passover, and Easter

Across the world people celebrate these three holidays of the main Abrahamic religions. Each celebration carries its own history, traditions, and cuisine.

Passover is a major Jewish holiday that celebrates the ancient Hebrews' exodus from slavery in Egypt. The holiday specifically commemorates the saving of Hebrew firstborn sons during the 10th plague sent by God to the Egyptians to convince the pharaoh to free the Hebrews from slavery. While the Angel of Death killed the firstborn Egyptian sons, Hebrew doors were marked with lamb's blood and passed over. The holiday lasts seven days in Israel and eight days elsewhere. It begins with a ritual meal, the Passover Seder, meaning the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Occurring on the first or second night of Passover, the meal gathers family and members of the Jewish community for remembrance and reflection. Matzo, a flatbread, is eaten during Passover to abide by the command to not eat leavened bread.

Ramadan is one of the five main pillars of the Islam faith. It commemorates the first revelation of Islam's founder and main prophet, Muhammad, and is meant as a time of reflection and prayer. Muslims fast between sunrise and sundown for 30 days, or from one crescent moon sighting to the next. Typically, each day of fasting begins with a predawn meal, suhur, and ends after sunset with a date and glass of water. Then, the post-sunset meal, iftar, is eaten together with family or the broader Muslim community.

Easter was celebrated by most Christians on Sunday, April 17, 2022. On this day, followers remember the resurrection, or return from the dead, of God's son, Jesus, after he was killed by crucifixion the prior Friday. This celebration culminates the 40 days of Lent, and often includes a church service followed by a family meal. Traditional Easter meals center on ham, in stark contrast to Islamic and Jewish menus that exclude pork. Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter, called Pascha, on April 24. Popular traditions in the U.S. include an Easter bunny, basket, and eggs. The folkloric figure of the Easter bunny is depicted as bringing eggs to children in a basket. The eggs are often chocolate or candy. In another tradition, colorful plastic eggs are hidden around a field or room for children to find. A small treat may be hidden inside the egg.

ABOUT US

The core mission of MDAD's Protocol and International Affairs Division is -

To facilitate the movement of official guests, delegations, dignitaries and VIPs through MIA and support the airport's international programs and initiatives.

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For comments, suggestions, event announcements or to opt-out, please send us an email.