

A - Z OF RESTAURANT ETIQUETTE



Julia Esteve Boyd

The Etiquette Consultant

Welcome!

Having good social graces means that you can present yourself in any social or business situation with a degree of confidence and ease. When it comes to dining etiquette it's really simple. It's about being respectful of the people that are around you. That's it! Modern manners are not about being ostentatious, modern manners are discrete and quiet. If you make a mistake here and there it doesn't matter, but having a good awareness of expectations will be a step in the right direction. Having a deeper knowledge will set you apart from others.

The following tips are bound typically by British and most European cultures so when traveling elsewhere there will of course be many variations.

I hope you enjoy reading!

Julia Esteve Boyd

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Always answer an invitation to a meal in a restaurant quickly, preferably within twenty-four hours. Your host will need time to confirm with others, select the restaurant and make reservations.

Be polite to restaurant staff and don't ever make a scene at the dining table if you have bad service or any other problem. A good host will deal with any problems discreetly away from the table so guests don't feel uncomfortable. Don't click your fingers to get the attention of the service staff, that's rude!

Consideration to others means paying attention to the small things such as waiting until everyone has been served their food before starting your own. A host will show consideration to their guest(s) by being attentive, a guest will show consideration to their host by being appreciative.

Do let the host pay the bill. You were invited as their guest so it is their intention to pay the bill. This is obviously different when dining with friends where you would normally split the bill.

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Eat to your left, drink to your right. In other words, any food dishes to your left (such as bread) are yours and any glasses to your right are yours. Easy! No more thinking to yourself 'Is that my plate or yours?'

Food should always be tasted before seasoning. If you want to season your food after a mouthful then of course you should go ahead, after all, everyone's taste buds are different. However it's quite bad manners to presume the food won't be seasoned to your liking, you're silently insulting the chef.

Grabbing your wine glass by the bowl is a real no-no. It warms up the liquid inside and the outside of the glass becomes mirky with dull finger marks. Any glass with a stem should be held by stem. Simple.

Handbags should not be placed on the table or hang over the back of the chair (this disturbs the servers). Place them under the table or beneath your chair if the restaurant doesn't have a hanging clip. Some restaurants offer ladies a small stool to use, a dream for every handbag lover!

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Introduce yourself to everyone at the table. A good host will try to do the introductions but if he or she is unable to do so then you should go ahead and introduce yourself. This is a respectful way of showing common courtesy to the other guests (and also helps with conversation starters!). If you're seated be sure to stand up for any introductions.

Join in the conversation. Make sure you're polite and talk to everyone seated around you who is within listening distance. Be a good dining companion and avoid controversial subjects, dining out is not only about the food!

Kee your elbows off the table. In many European countries you keep your hands on the table but never elbows. In Britain, even one's hands should never be on the table.

Lipstick should be blotted unobtrusively with a tissue (not the napkin) before the meal. It's not always possible but this avoids unsightly lipstick rings around the glass or cup. Ladies... freshen up your lipstick after the meal away from the table!

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Make sure that you keep your phone off the table, it's too tempting to pick it up and have a look. If you're looking at your phone you're not focused on the person/people you are with, and that's rude. Of course if you're waiting on an important call it's fine to check it occasionally, or if you're with friends and want to share something with them that's fine too. Just keep it off the table!

Napkins should stay on your lap throughout the entire meal. As soon as you are seated in a restaurant (not a private home) unfold it and place it on your lap. At a very formal restaurant, the waiter may do this for you. When you're finished with your meal place your napkin on the table to the left of your plate, not on top of it.

Oder foods that you know how to eat, don't order something from the menu if you haven't eaten it before, such as shellfish or lobster. However you can always follow the lead of your host if you don't know how to eat something. Also avoid messy foods such as spaghetti unless you're a pro! This might draw attention to you for the wrong reason!

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Pace yourself throughout the meal. Eat too quickly and others may think you're famished or greedy, eat too slowly and others may think you don't like the food and they will have to wait while you finish.

Question your host discreetly to determine things you need to know as a guest. Asking the host for recommendations from the menu will give you an indication of their price range. If the host suggests one of the more higher priced items then you don't need to worry about choosing something too expensive. The same goes for alcoholic drinks, ask what the host is drinking.

Refrain from making loud eating noises such as slurping and avoid talking or drinking with your mouth full. It's really not nice for those seated around you. These are real dining crimes!

Salt and pepper should always be kept together. If you are asked to pass the salt, send the pepper along for the journey too!

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

Thank your host in writing for the meal the following day, even if it's only a brief text. It's better than nothing! The more formal the restaurant or occasion, the thank you note should be hand written. So chic!

Utensils should be used starting with the farthest from the plate first and working inwards with each course. They should not be placed on the table again after they have been used. Rest them on the plate when not in use instead.

Verify the small details with the restaurant before your guests arrive if you are the host. You may want to check the table, advise staff of a seating plan, pre order champagne or pay in advance.

Wait for your host or Maitre'd to indicate your seat before sitting down. Don't just sit wherever you want as your host may have a seating plan, especially if it's a business luncheon or dinner.

eXpect the unexpected! After all anyone can make a mistake. So if you spill your wine or drop food on the tablecloth just deal with it discreetly without drawing too

A-Z of Restaurant Etiquette

much attention to it. Politely ask your server to help, keep smiling and carry on!

You should always break bread into small pieces with your hands instead of cutting with a knife. If there is a knife on the bread plate it's a butter spreader not a butter knife.

Zero complaints when you are the guest. If you have been invited to dinner and someone else is paying - show good manners and refrain from being critical about the food or service. Let the host deal with any problems in their own way.

About Julia

Julia consults on matters of International Etiquette and VIP Protocol. A double graduate of The Protocol School of Washington as a Protocol Officer and International Etiquette Consultant, she is also a graduate of New York University in Special Events Management & The Fashion Institute of Technology NYC in Image Consulting. Julia is a former teacher of the prestigious Institut Villa Pierrefeu, Switzerland and now offers bespoke services and training in VIP Protocol and Etiquette.

Julia's approach to etiquette is that while a good degree of kindness and common sense can go a long way in day to day life, her bespoke coaching is essential for navigating a variety of lifestyle situations – from entertaining foreign clients, visiting foreign countries, attending an upscale dinner or hosting VIP events. The ultimate goal is being able to present oneself, one's business and one's household in the best possible way.



Questions on table manners? The Etiquette Consultant

www.theetiquetteconsultant.com

Contact Julia

Call: +41 (0)79 648 9032

Website: <https://theetiquetteconsultant.com>

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliaesteveboyd/>

Twitter: @_juliaesteve

Instagram: @the_etiquetteconsultant

Julia