

Etiquette & Manners: A Quick Guide

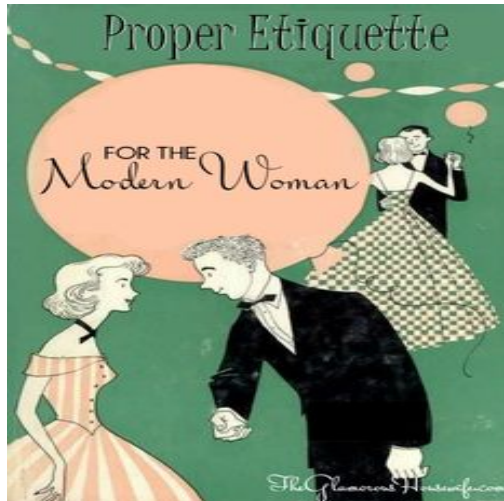


et·i·quette

'edəkət, 'edə ,ket/

noun

The customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.



*being well dressed
is a beautiful form
of politeness*



Good manners are not about doing everything perfectly right; they are about being thoughtful and using common sense, about choosing civility over rudeness.

Do's:

The Do's and Don'ts of Table Manners

Take your cues from your host/hostess.

Place your napkin on your lap at the beginning of the meal.

Take small bites so you can easily take part in the conversation.

When using silverware, work from the outside in and leave the silverware used for each course on the plate when finished.

Place your bread roll on the small plate to your left and break it into small pieces before eating. Butter, jam and other condiments are spread on each piece just before it is eaten.

When asked to pass the salt, it is most appropriate to pass BOTH the salt and pepper, placing them on the

table close to the person who requested them. Do not pass hand-to-hand.

When you are finished with your meal, place your utensils at the 10:20 position with the tips of your utensils at 10 and the handles at 4. This indicates to the server you are ready for your plate to be removed.

When using a soup spoon, dip the spoon away from you and avoid scraping it on the bottom of the bowl. When you are finished, place the spoon on the right hand side of the soup plate.

Pass food from left to right (counter-clockwise), except bread which should be passed from right to left (clockwise.)

Keep your arms and elbows off the table.

Place your napkin on your seat, not the table, if you must briefly excuse yourself.



Don'ts:

If you drop a utensil or your napkin during your meal (at the Ball or a restaurant), do not pick it up. Quietly signal the wait staff to bring a replacement.

Do not push your plate away from you when you have finished eating.

Do not dunk food into your beverage or soup. Do not mop or clean your plate with your bread.

Do not gesture with your utensils.

Do not talk with food in your mouth.

Do not eat your neighbor's bread or salad!

The bread and butter plate is placed slightly above the salad plate to the **LEFT** of your dinner plate.

Do not check your phone, talk on it, or text from it at the table. If you are expecting an important call or text, say so upfront and excuse yourself when you need to respond.

Do not groom yourself at the table, i.e., apply make-up or lipstick, pick your teeth, etc.

Personal items like purses, glasses, keys and cell phones do not belong on the table.

Do not take a sip from your glass after the host proposes a toast in your honor. Instead, reciprocate the toast, then drink.



For a basic table setting, here are two great tips to help you remember the order of plates and utensils:

Picture the word "FORKS." The order, left to right, is: F for Fork, O for the Plate (the shape!), K for Knives and S for Spoons. (Okay, you have to forget the R, but you get the idea!)

Holding your hands in front of you, touch the tips of your thumbs to the tips of your forefingers to make a lowercase 'b' with your left hand and a lowercase 'd' with your right hand. This reminds you that "bread and butter" go to the left of the place setting and "drinks" go on the right.



Invitations

Invitations should be sent out two to three weeks in advance. If you are entertaining during a busy holiday season, three to five weeks in advance might be necessary. Or, consider sending a save the date card.

Invitations should include:

- ❖ *Who – Host (and, on envelope, who is invited)*
- ❖ *What – type of event*
- ❖ *When – date and time*
- ❖ *Where – location*
- ❖ *Why – Reason for event*
- ❖ *How – Attire and RSVP instructions*
- ❖ *Special Instructions – Unique to the eve*

Invitations can be extended in person, by phone, handwritten note, informal card, commercially printed invitation, or by email/e-invitation.

Only those named on the invitation should attend. No children or houseguests should attend unless specifically invited.

When addressing a note to a dual active military couple, the spouse being invited in their official capacity should be listed first. If both are invited in their official capacity, the senior spouse is listed first.

RSVPs

It is always a compliment to be invited to a function so you should treat each invitation with the respect it deserves. RSVP is an abbreviation for the French phrase, "Repondez s'il vous plait," which means respond if you please.

Respond to an invitation within 48 hours if possible but definitely by the deadline whether or not you are attending. No explanation is necessary if you need to decline the invitation.

Respond to the point of contact given on the invitation and by the method (i.e., email or phone) requested. Do not tell the host/hostess in person when you happen to see them.

Inform your host of any dietary restrictions or special needs when you RSVP.

DO NOT attend the event if you failed to RSVP.

Appropriate hostess gifts are flowers, candy, wine or gifts from the needle, oven or garden. Hostess gifts are not mandatory but do consider the local customs. Include a note or calling card with your gift.

Occasions that warrant a hostess gift are when you are invited to a meal at someone's home or are a houseguest.

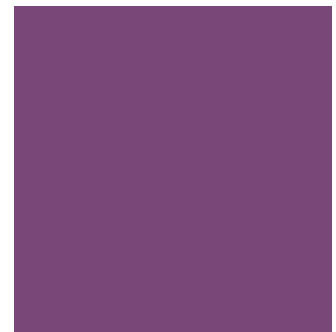
If you receive an invitation from your Commanding Officer, attendance is considered mandatory. A married service member is still expected to attend an official function, even if the spouse cannot.

Be on time. **DO NOT** arrive early unless specifically asked ...the host/hostess may still be preparing for their event. Do not arrive late if you have been invited for a meal. If, however, you are unavoidably running late call the hostess and let her know.

Always shake hands with the host and hostess when you arrive at the event and thank them upon leaving.

Be a gracious guest. Do not monopolize the hosts' time. Move from group to group introducing yourself and conversing with as many guests as possible.

Don't forget "Repondez s'il vous plait,"



Thank You Notes

Hand written thank you notes are **ALWAYS** appropriate and express your appreciation for a thoughtful action, expression or gift.

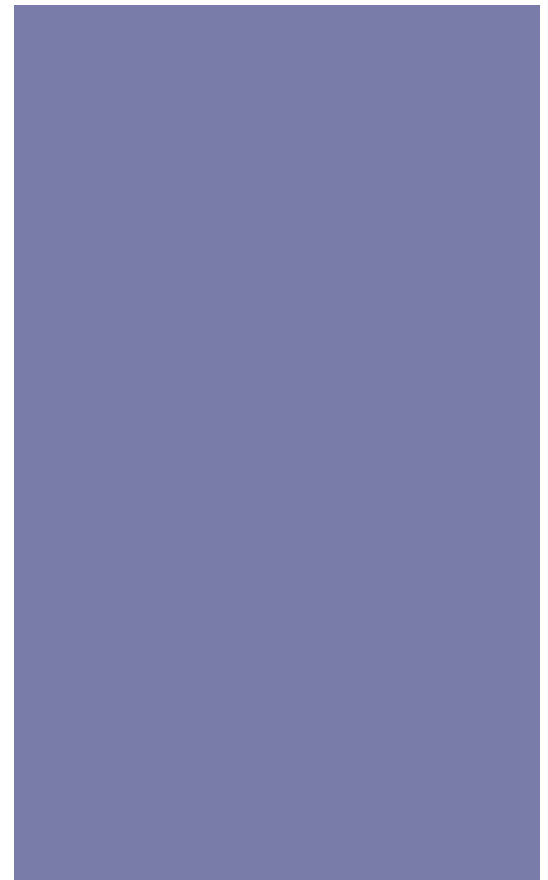
The thank you note should match the dignity of the occasion.

An email thank you note may be appropriate if the invitation was extended by email. Formal receptions do not require a thank you note or call.

The thank you note should include a greeting, should show gratitude and acknowledge the gift, should mention how you will use the gift, and acknowledge a future meeting.

Traditionally, the thank you note is sent to the hostess with the host mentioned in the body of the note. The note should be addressed to the hostess using her full, married name (Mrs. John Smith.)

Thank you notes should be sent within two to three days. Try to get into the habit of writing a thank you note immediately so your experience is fresh in your mind. If more than a couple of days has passed **STILL** send a thank you note. Better late than never.



Introductions

Knowing how to introduce other people, greet honored guests and acknowledge your host and hostess is a basic part of appropriate manners. It is important to be familiar and comfortable with the correct way to introduce and meet people. Always remember that a warm and friendly smile is your greatest asset.

Always use full rank or title for military introductions. Spouses should address the senior person by their rank until invited to be less formal. When you meet their spouse, refer to him/her as Mr. or Mrs. until invited to be less formal.

Example: *"Mrs. Senior, this is my husband, Staff Sergeant Junior."*

(She may then offer her first name.)

"Nice to meet you, please call me Sally."

A man is presented to a woman.

"Ms. Lady, I would like you to meet Mr. Man."

The younger is presented to the older.

Example: *"General Senior, may I present my daughter, Sarah who attends the University of Texas. Sarah, General Senior is the Commandant of the Marine Corps."*

When introducing a senior Marine to a junior ranking Marine.

Example: *"Colonel Senior, may I introduce Captain Junior."*

When introducing a Marine whose rank you do not know.

Example: *"Colonel Jones, may I introduce you to Tom."*

The Marine should take his cue and present himself as Major Brown.

At an event that includes everyone in the unit or command, make an effort to introduce yourself. Also, junior personnel should seek out the Commanding Officer and his/her spouse and introduce themselves.

Example: *"Mrs. Senior, my name is Sally Smith, my husband is the Base Commander."*

Nametags are worn high on your right shoulder. This allows those you are greeting with a handshake to visually follow your right arm up to the nametag.

Use good eye contact and a firm handshake.

When you are presented to someone you previously have met but who has apparently forgotten that introduction you may say, *"I believe we met at last year's Marine Corps Birthday Ball."* If the person to whom you are being introduced does not remember a previous introduction, don't make them feel embarrassed by your greeting.

While spouses have no rank, respect is often accorded to a more experienced spouse or in respect to his or her spouse's position.

Resources:

Service Etiquette by Oretha D. Swartz

[Emilypost.com](http://emilypost.com)

[Coutureallure.blogspot.com](http://coutureallure.blogspot.com) Friday Charm School Series