

I'm not a robot



When dining in an English-speaking country, it's important to be aware of the differences in customs and table manners. For example, you should never start eating until everyone at the dinner table has been served, use your utensils properly, and stay polite at all times. In this article, we'll explore the basics of English cuisine and dining etiquette in greater detail so that you can avoid any embarrassing faux pas while enjoying a meal in a foreign country! Furthermore, we'll share some of the most beloved examples of traditional British food across the country so that you know what to expect when sitting down for a meal. After all, there's nothing worse than being famished and not knowing what to order! In our article on interesting tidbits about English culture, food was mentioned only briefly; however, it undoubtedly deserves a dedicated post. So, whether you're traveling in England for business or pleasure, here's everything you need to know about English cuisine and dining etiquette. Learn English with Readle The Basics of English Cuisine Most people assume that British food culture has nothing to offer except for greasy fish and chips, overcooked veggies, cornish pasties, and stodgy pies. While it's true that these dishes do exist (and are actually incredibly delicious), there's so much more to English cuisine than that! Over the years, English cuisine just like the English language has been influenced by a number of factors, including the country's climate, geography, and history. For instance, England's cold and wet climate is perfect for growing root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, and turnips, which are often then used in stews and pies. The island's location also makes it easy to import seafood from nearby markets. France is also a major influence on the history of English cuisine. The Normans introduced dairy products and other things like Anglo-Saxons introduced bread and other things like the country, while the Normans introduced dairy products and other things like cream. In general, British cuisine is hearty, filling, and often quite simple. The main common meats are chicken, beef, pork, and lamb, which are usually cooked in stews, roasts, and casseroles. Common vegetables include potatoes, carrots, peas, beans, and cabbage. And, of course, no English meal would be complete without a delicious pudding or pie for dessert. Traditional British Food Across the Country While there are some common staples of English cuisine, the food varies quite a bit from region to region. In fact, each area of Great Britain has its own specialties and traditional dishes that are beloved by locals. For instance, Yorkshire pudding, which is a type of savory meat pie, gives away its origin quite explicitly. Meanwhile, the city of Liverpool is famous for its scouse a thick stew made with beef or lamb, potatoes, and carrots. And, in London, you can find all sorts of international cuisine as well as traditional English dishes like bangers and mash (sausages and mashed potato), kidney pie, a full English breakfast (eggs, bacon, sausage, baked beans, toast, hash browns, and more), and the Sunday roast (a roasted joint of meat with roast potatoes, veggies, and bread pudding). As for traditional Scottish dishes, they include haggis (a type of savory pudding made with sheep's stomach that's often served with mashed potatoes and turnips), shepherd's pie (a type of meat pie made with lamb or mutton, sometimes also referred to as cottage pie), shortbread, and, of course, the pearl of Scottish cuisine whisky. In Welsh cuisine, you'll find delicious dishes like cawl (a type of soup with lamb) and bara brith (a type of fruitcake). And in Northern Ireland, the most popular dishes are Ulster fry (a type of fried full breakfast) and soda bread (a type of quick bread made with baking soda). Of course, no matter where you are in the country, you'll always be able to find fish and chips along an inseparable part of British culture. This classic dish is usually made with cod or haddock that's been fried in batter and served with french fries. It's the perfect meal to enjoy by the seaside on a sunny day! If you're looking for something a bit more grown up, a classic English dessert like a steamed suet pudding containing mince, treacle tart (a past made with moist suet or molasses), or a delicious fruit crumble topped with milk and custard are very popular. For setting the mood, a hot beverage of English tea, such as these are just a few examples, there are too many delicious British dishes to list them all! So, if you're feeling adventurous, be sure to ask the locals for their recommendations. They'll be more than happy to share their favorite restaurants and the best dishes to order, making sure you'll find a traditional dish that will satisfy your taste buds! Table Manners and Dining Etiquette Now that you have a better understanding of what English food is all about, it's time to learn about the proper etiquette for dining in an English-speaking country. After all, there's nothing worse than committing a major faux pas in front of your hosts! Here are a few things to keep in mind: Always wait for everyone to be served before you start eating.Say "please" and "thank you" when ordering food or drinks and when they're brought to you. You dont have to apologize for every move you make, but dont neglect those basic manners.Make sure your phone is turned off or on silent before sitting down at the table.Use your utensils properly fork in the left hand and knife in the right. The fork should be used to eat most of your food, while the knife is primarily used to cut meat or support food. Soup spoons are usually placed to the right of your forks.Cut only one bite of food at a time, and eat it before cutting the next piece. When you're finished eating, place your utensils side by side on your plate in the resting position.Don't place your elbows on the table.Never chew with an open mouth or talk with food in your mouth.Or when it's time for dessert, wait for everyone to finish their main course before ordering. Remember to use your utensils properly dessert fork for cake, dessert spoon for pudding.Food stuck in your teeth? Use your tongue to remove it discreetly or visit the restroom to get rid of it.If you need to leave the table, excuse yourself first.Remember to say "cheers" before taking a sip of your drink! Proper etiquette dictates that you start with a soup or salad, followed by the main course. When dining out, be sure to order off the menu and not from the specials board. If you get confused about, for instance, when to use a butter knife and when to use a regular one, don't worry just follow the lead of your hosts, and you'll be fine. British people can be picky when it comes to table manners at dinner parties, but they'll be happy to help you out! Follow these simple tips, diners in an English-speaking country will be breeze. Just relax and enjoy the delicious food after all, that's what mealtime is all about. The Bottom Line Now that you know a little bit more about English cuisine, it's time to put your knowledge into practice! Be sure to brush up on your table manners and dining etiquette so you can enjoy a meal in an English-speaking country without making any embarrassing mistakes. So there you have it a brief overview of English cuisine and dining etiquette! Whether you already have your next trip to England planned or just wanted to learn more about the country's food, we hope this article has been helpful. Consider downloading our Langster app to learn related vocabulary, and youre ready for fine dining. Bon appetit! With dictionary look up - Double click on any word for its definition. This section is in advanced English and is only intended to be a guide, not to be taken too seriously! R.S.V.P. The greatest single modern business (and social) etiquette failing is not responding to an invitation to let the host know whether or not you will attend. Respond in writing before the date given on the invitation, if circumstances stop you from attending always let your host/ess know as soon as possible. Eating Manners/Etiquette In Britain, even today, people are judged by their table manners, especially when eating out or attending formal functions. There are certain ways you should behave and certain niceties to observe. These are just a few, from basic manners to some more advanced niceties for formal occasions. A popular saying in the UK is "Manners maketh man." Basic Manners Eating Things you should do- If you are at a dinner party wait until your host(ess) starts eating or indicates you should do so. Chew and swallow all the food in your mouth before taking more or taking a drink. Soup should be spooned away from you. Tilt the bowl away from you. Break bread and rolls with your fingers not with your knife. Break off a small piece of bread (or roll and butter it. Do not butter the whole slice or half a roll at one time. You may use a piece of bread on a fork to soak up sauce or gravy. Never hold the bread in your fingers to eat. Only clear consume should be drunk directly from the soup bowl, and then only if it has handles. You may eat chicken and pizza with your fingers if you are at a barbecue, finger buffet or very informal setting. Otherwise always use a knife and fork. Things you should not do- Never chew with your mouth open. Never talk with food in your mouth. Never mash or mix food on your plate. Do not blow on hot food or drink. Do not sip from a coffee spoon or teaspoon. Never use your fingers to push food onto your spoon or fork. Serviettes, crockery, and cutlery. Things you should do- Your serviette should always be placed on your lap. If it is small you may open it out fully. If it is large it should be kept folded in half with the fold toward you. (In some of the more exclusive restaurants the waiter will place your napkin on your lap for you.) The fork is held in the left hand, the knife in the right to cut food and to help carry food to the fork. The fork is held, times down, and the knife used to move food onto the fork or support food so the fork can pick it up. There is no shifting of cutlery. 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Finger bowls are presented after the main course and before dessert. If the bowl is placed on a plate directly in front of you, lift the bowl with both hands and place it to the left of your place setting. If there is a doily under it, move it as well. Often the finger bowl will be placed to the left. Dip the fingers of one hand into the bowl, dry on your napkin which remains on you lap. Follow with the other hand. There may be a flower or a lemon slice in the bowl. Leave it be. (Some restaurants use hot towels in a similar manner as finger bowl. Seating at a formal dinner The male guest of honor sits on the hostess' right. The next most important man sits on the host's left. The female guest of honor sits on the host's left. Men and women should be alternately seated. Couples should be separated. Use of round tables puts everyone on an equal basis. There may be place cards at a formal dinner or your host/hostess may indicate where you should be seated. Social manners are expected: males should seat females and rise when they leave and return to the table. Accidents will Happen If you spill anything on the table or yourself discreetly use your napkin or ask the waiter for sparkling water. Do not dip your napkin into your water glass. If you spill anything on someone else do not try to mop up the spill, offer them a napkin and let them do it for themselves. Offer to cover any laundering or cleaning costs. If you burp cover your mouth with your napkin. After it happens, say a quiet "pardon me" to no one in particular, do not make a big deal about it. If you break anything, call it to the waiter's attention. In a private home, speak quietly to the host and offer to replace the item. If you get some food stuck between your teeth do not use toothpicks, fingernails, or napkins to dislodge the food at the table. If necessary go to the bathroom and take care of it. We may receive a commission on purchases made from links. Just the mention of English dining etiquette might evoke the notion of dramatically extended pinkies, clicking tea service spoons, and softly muttered "pardon's" while nibbling jammy crumpets and clotted cream. But while Brits seem to be born with effortless good manners, these simple tips and tricks are also built for the rest of us feasting in the modern dining era.We're all at least a little familiar with not putting our elbows on the table, using the tinier forks for salad, and something about not slurping soup directly from the bowl. But even though we've gone all in on cell phones at the table, schedules packed beyond the hours of the day, and casual Fridays every day of the week, this is your cordial invitation to share the timeless gift of social grace with your friends.While there's always room for sweatpants andpizza at home in front of the T.V., there's nothing wrong with treating others with some British grace and respect.From the RSVP to the most courteous conversation, please and thank you for accepting the hot kettle of tea we are about to dish at your pleasure. Technically RSVP means "rpondez s'il vous plait," the true meaning of which politely suggests that you, y'know, respond if you like. That might sound like an easy breezy request that no one really cares about (yep, that email invite just got archived to a mailbox we'll never find), but in reality, your RSVP needs to be returned as soon as possible.For the record, it's totally okay if you can't make the birthday anniversary or premiere/graduation occasion. Everyone understands that all of their guests have lives as well as a zillion other things to schedule. But no party planner wants to be left hanging wondering how many canapés to put out for all the guests who didn't reply (are we doing thepunch bowl cocktail? Will anyone show up in time for cake?). If it's a formal occasion say, a wedding, or other well-orchestrated event respond before the given deadlineand don't change your mind. Unless you are befallen with the world's most consequential reason for not showing up to something you said you'd attend, it'sn't be there, or be (rudely) square. We've graduated from club rules restricting baseball caps, team jerseys, and flip flops. Take a cue from their inv- or your fellow dining guest to dress the part like an affable pro (or someone who at least read beyond "You're invited to").If there's a theme? Lean into it with all the gusto and same-day Amazon Prime-ing the moment might require. See a note about a formal dress code? Shine up those shoes and powder your nose. While it's no longer commonplace for men to wear suit jackets to dinner on the town, if you notice your date gussied up with a nice outfit, style yourself accordingly. Of course, just because you're dressing up doesn't mean it's open season on dinner and a show. The custom, in British culture, is for moremodest dressing to respectfully signal a sense of occasion. That might mean different things to different people, but whether you go long on the sleeves, a little less contoured along your curves, or you fasten just a button higher, the key is to make the food and the company the stars of the show and leave everyone wanting more. While there are surely cultural trends toward "flexible punctuality," not everyone celebrates the art of fashionable lateness for dinner. And that goes double for your host who's just trying to get the food on the table while it's hot never mind the rest of the party left waiting at the restaurant until everyone has arrived/traffic, right?When it comes to the perfect dinner party, timing is everything.As with the host, you're not really assumed you'd be drinking until you're still full. Still, if you're set on fresh flowers, you have options. Bring a bouquet that comes in a vase of water, or have an arrangement delivered a day ahead of the party (or even the day after as a thank you) so your host has plenty of time to literally let the roses according to British law (only kidding, it's just a strong suggestion that could involve refreshing negroni cocktail), it's good manners to give the party's host to offer guests a drink of their very minute they step into your home. Any later than that would be uncivilized.While there's no way to know if a party-goer missed the train and was then forced to shlep the 40 blocks to your apartment, thirsting for sustenance, this isn't about that. It's merely the appropriate way to show your guests that you've considered their every need, start to finish. This is also a thing in the U.S., but in England, it happens immediately and never because the guest was so parched they were forced to ask. Luckily, you don't have to show up to the door with bottle service and sparklers. Simply asking if your guest would like a glass of water or tea, a beer, coffee, or a soda does wonders for making everyone feel at home. Ever since the advent of the original iPhone in 2007, we've engaged in a battle that can only be described as reality versus scrolling. But while we'd probably never leave the house without our phones, when we're with company at least according to English etiquette the smart move is keeping your smartphone out of sight.Yes, all of your Instagram followers will be left in the dark about what you had for dinner because you didn't document each course. But you'll gain peace of mind knowing that you didn't miss out on spending time with the person right in front of you. On the occasion that an important call or message may truly need attention for real keep notifications on silent or vibrate, and just make sure you leave the table to answer it. Don't just pop down next to your partner or your best friend at a dinner party and settle in for a night of inside jokes. While more formal events like weddings or galas often feature place cards that show you where to take your seat, even casual dinner parties can benefit from the English custom of designated seating.Traditionally, the host sits at the end of the table, while that person's partner sits at the other end. Of course, with the advent of the iPhone, there's no longer a need for place cards. A popular way to designate seating is "Manners makeeth man." Basic Manners Eating Things you should do- If you are at a dinner party wait until your host(ess) starts eating or indicates you should do so. Chew and swallow all the food in your mouth before taking more or taking a drink. Soup should be spooned away from you. Tilt the bowl away from you. Break bread and rolls with your fingers not with your knife. Break off a small piece of bread (or roll and butter it. 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Never rock back in your chair. Never smoke during a meal. Smoking should not take place until dessert is finished. Follow the lead of the host or ask if you may smoke. Use ashtrays only. Never apply makeup or comb your hair at the table. The Formal Table Setting/Seating At first glance, a formal table setting can be intimidating because there are so many forks, spoons, and knives, all for different courses. However, do not be dismayed, there is a simple system behind it all. Placement and procedure Start with the utensils on the outside and work your way inward with each subsequent course. In other words, the outermost fork is your salad fork if salad is served first. Forks will be on your left. Knives and spoons on your right. One exception to this is the oyster or seafood fork, which will be on the right next to the soup spoon. If you are in a restaurant and did not order fish, soup, or salad, the waiter will remove those utensils. 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