

Paragon
For the Horde

in **china**

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Table Manners for Inviting Guests

There are common rules for inviting guests over. When the guest of honor enters into the room, the hosts stand until the guest of honor is seated. The host then orders the dishes brought, and the guest should be silent. When the dishes arrive, the meal begins with a toast from the host, and the guests then make a toast in turn in the honor of the host.

The guest of honor should be the first one to start the meal. The best food in a dish should be left for the guest of honor. When the hostess says her food is not good enough, the guest must be courteous and tell her it is the best food he has ever tasted.

Guests should never “split the bill” with the host. A guest who “split(s) the bill” is very ungracious and embarrassing to the host.

However, it is expected for the guest to offer to pay for the meal multiple times, but ultimately allow the host to pay.

Sitting order

The host will usually sit with his/her back exposed to the front door, or he/she will sit on the left of the guest of honor. However, the guest of honor will always sit with his/her back facing the wall.

At the beginning of the banquet, people will pretend to avoid sitting at the guest of honor seat. Once the host pushes the guest of honor to his/her seat, everyone else will take a random seat.

If you know you are the guest of honor and

a foreigner, then when the host shows you the seat don't hesitate to sit down. The host will not expect you to act like the other people at the party. Also, both you and I know that you are very special.

The people will eat food family style, meaning food is placed in the middle of the table on a plate that spins (a Lazy Susan).

Everybody can reach for the food they want.

Next to all the empty bowls and plates will always be a pair of chopsticks and only rarely a spoon, so xeno would advise everyone to at least try chopsticks out in advance.

Chopsticks

Do not pass a plate around; instead reach for it with your chopsticks. It is very acceptable to reach in front of another.

Do not try to dig up the item that you want or like in the dish, but pick what is closest to you.

Unless you're eating finger food, please do not eat with or lick your fingers. Only children eat like that.

It does not matter whether you grab the chopsticks in the middle or at the end, but you should make sure that the ends are even.

Chopsticks are not used to move bowls or plates, they are not used to toy with one's food or with dishes in common. When not in use, chopsticks must always be placed neatly on the table with two sticks lying tidily next to each other at both ends.

Treat chopsticks as extension of your fingers, and do not point at other people or wave chopsticks around.

Do not suck the tips of chopsticks * Do not impale food with chopsticks * Do not point the chopsticks at another person - this amounts to insulting that person * Do not bang your chopsticks like drums. It implies you are a child, or a beggar * Do not stick chopsticks vertically in a bowl of rice; it implies the food is for the dead.

While eating

The host will pick up the chopsticks and point to the food, which is signal for everyone to start eating. Even if you don't like something on table, please do take a sample of it. If you don't, the host will feel very awkward and will not pick it up until you do.

After finishing the top part of the fish, simply remove the bone or skeleton and then eat the bottom part. However, please do not flip the fish over after you have finished the top part. Flipping the fish over is considered to be a sign of bad luck.

If you do not want to eat something, say that you have some health restrictions or allergies to some food. To put it more simply, just blame your doctor.

There is also another way to dodge eating something politely. Let say the host puts the head of a duck into your plate; the first thing you can do is to try to pretend to eat it. Use your chopsticks to eat the stuff around the head, but you really never touch the head on your plate.

Alcohol

Ganbei and Gam

Chinese love to drink and they love to 'bottoms up'. You will hear Ganbei very commonly during a banquet or dinner. If someone toast you ganbei, it means bottoms-up and it would be an offence if you decline to finish the glass after toasting to a ganbei!

There will be quite a few toasts during the party. So, it is good just to say cheer gam, instead of bottom up gambei. When you

said gambei, the host is forced to finish the drink to save face.

Maotai

A Chinese wheat and sorghum-based liquor that is very high in alcohol content and very, very popular during banquets and drinking sessions. Maotai will probably be your first and very fiery introduction to Chinese liquor. Avoid it at all cost if you are not a drinker.

When meeting people

When giving out namecards or brochures (everyone has one in Asia), make sure you start with the most senior person before moving down the line. When giving out a namecard or receiving one, ensure that you are stretching out with both hands with the card. Remember to face the card you are giving out in a manner such that the receiving party gets it facing him correctly.

When somebody hands you his or her card, please do take a look at it. And by saying to look at it, I meant do try to read it. If you don't, you may be considered disrespectful and showing a lack of interest toward that person.

Do try to greet everyone in the group. For example, if you shake the first person's hand, you should shake the hand of everyone present in that meeting.

Address the person with their last name. Instead of addressing the other party as Mr or Mrs so and so, it is always appropriate to address the other party by his designation ie Chairman So and So, Director So and So or Manager So and So.

In big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, Chinese people will expect to shake your hand. However, in the smaller cities not everyone will use this gesture in greeting. Instead, wait for the Chinese to extend their hand first, then you can reach out and shake it. During some situations, they do not offer their hand. In this case, you may clap your hands to greet and they will do the same in return.

After entering a meeting or any setting, the highest ranking or senior person will always step in first and the others follow.



Body language and social habits

The social culture of China does permit people to stand close to each other while talking. The reason for doing this is to show politeness, trust, and willing to fit in.

The natives show more affection to their same gender, for example, to their best friend. Males will put their arms over another male's shoulder, and females will hold each other's hand. This gesture shows

that they are the best of friends. If you feel that you being treated overly friendly by a Chinese person, then don't hesitate to yell "Boo" meaning "No" directly to that person.

Even though people stand close to each other, it does not mean that you can touch the opposite sex. Couples do not show public affection to each other, but this tradition may change over time.

Questions

Chinese people tend to not give a negative response when you ask a question. If it is your first time travelling to the country, this custom is very good to know beforehand. For example, if you ask "Is this way goes

to the school?" even it's wrong, they may still say "Yes." Solution? Ask the people more specific questions such as "Where is the school?" The key is to avoid yes or no question.



Other things to remember

You must not mention that Taiwan is an independent state or a country.

You must NEVER praise the Japanese or be seen to be good buddies with them.

You can condemn Mao Tse Tung but avoid criticising Deng Hsiao Ping.

You must not praise Shanghai in front of natives of Beijing and similarly vice versa.

Don't ever touch a person's head (including children's) on any occasion. This is the most disrespectful gesture that you can do to an Asian person.

A proper way to ask a person to come over is to have your palm face down and moving your fingers with scratching motions.

Please, do not point your finger and do a curling motion with your index finger because it is an insult.

Do not use too much hand gestures when talking.

Traditionally, raising a pinky is an obscene gesture in China. Meaning, you have a very small penis.

Chinese people love Karaoke. If you are invited to Karaoke you should sing a couple of songs. Singing on your own language is encouraged. The best way to thank the host is to show that you are having fun.

Don't show emotion when you are angry or mad. In Chinese tradition, only lower class people cannot control their emotion.