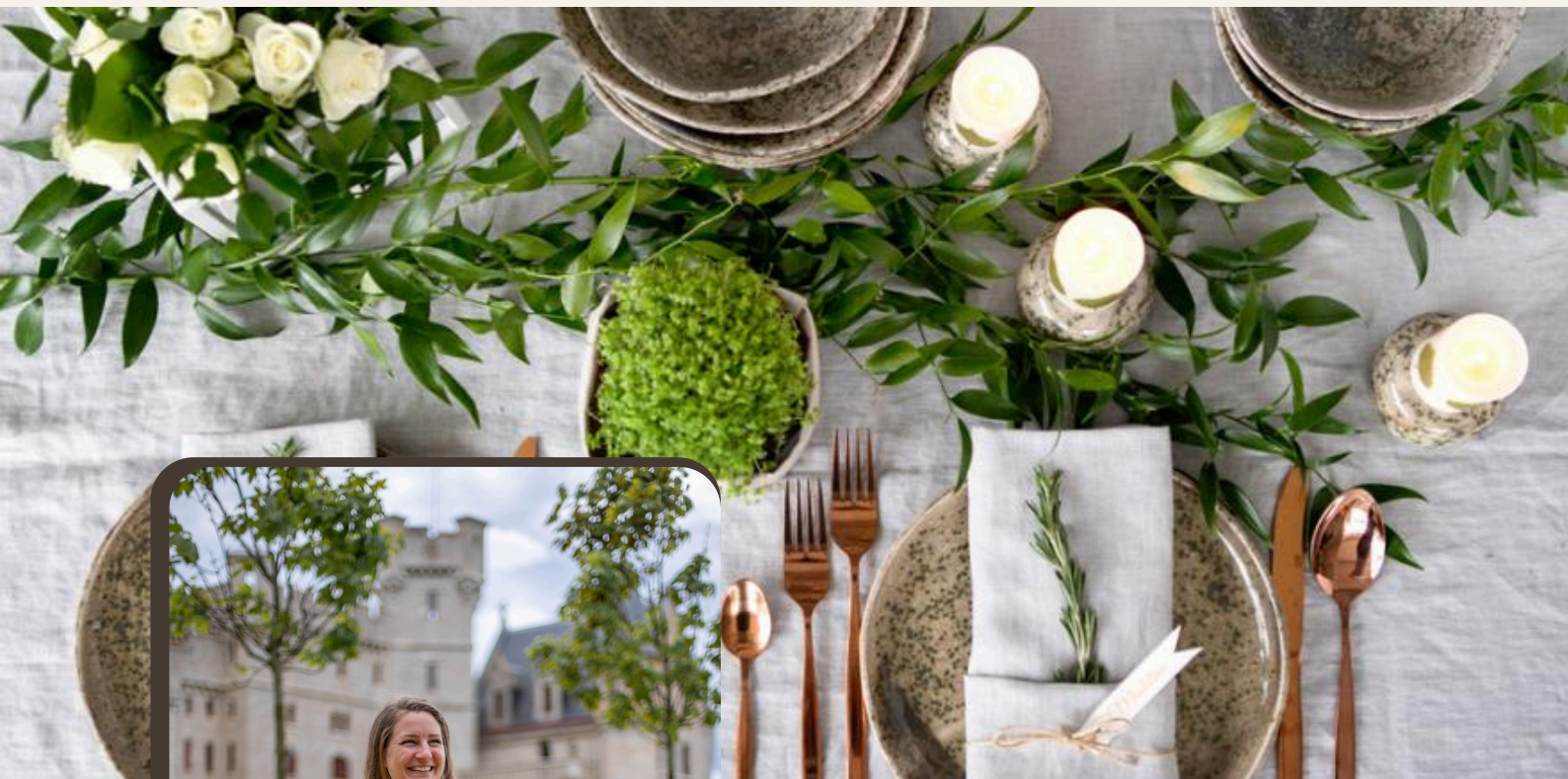


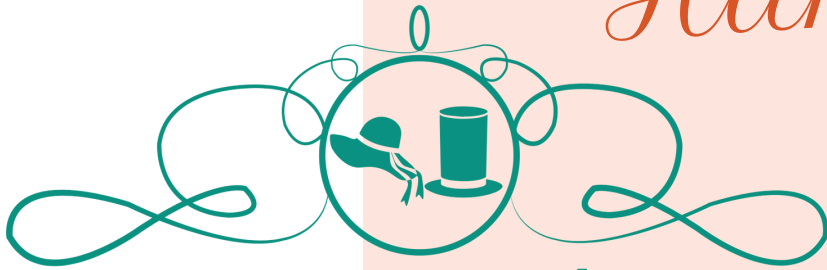
The Ultimate Guide to
FRENCH ETIQUETTE



38 essential rules
to honor your lineage

BY HANNA GAS

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Apprendre les bonnes manières



- Passionate about **Elegance** and Good Manners.
- Expert in **French Etiquette**.
- Since 2015, Hanna has been teaching etiquette through "**Apprendre les Bonnes Manières**." Tens of thousands have already benefited from these teachings.
- On the site, you will find hundreds of articles and videos for free.
- The goal is to transmit **the French Art of Living** to those of good will.



Introduction

How to behave at the table? This is a question many people ask before an important event: family dinner, charity gala, first Valentine's evening at a restaurant, Sunday lunch with in-laws... Yes, big question: how to behave at the table?



*Dining at Downton
Are you ready?*

This guide presents the 38 basic rules to follow when sharing a meal with one or more people: colleagues, friends, family...

Most of these rules will seem obvious to you. However, when I am seated at a restaurant and observe how people behave, I realize that many rules (which I consider basic civility rules) are not followed. It doesn't seem to be a matter of forgetfulness but rather ignorance of the rules.

Proper table manners are crucial in our society. Not only do they help create a pleasant atmosphere during meals, but they also reflect our respect for other diners and social norms.



*Diner is served,
Docteur Jones*

This practice dates back centuries and has always been a sign of civilization and respect.

A historical anecdote that illustrates this importance dates back to 17th century France. Louis XIV, the Sun King, was known for his refinement and courtesy. He established strict etiquette at the court, including at the table. He popularized the use of cutlery, ending the medieval custom of eating with fingers. This reform not only improved hygiene but also reinforced the idea that proper table manners were a sign of distinction and respect for others.



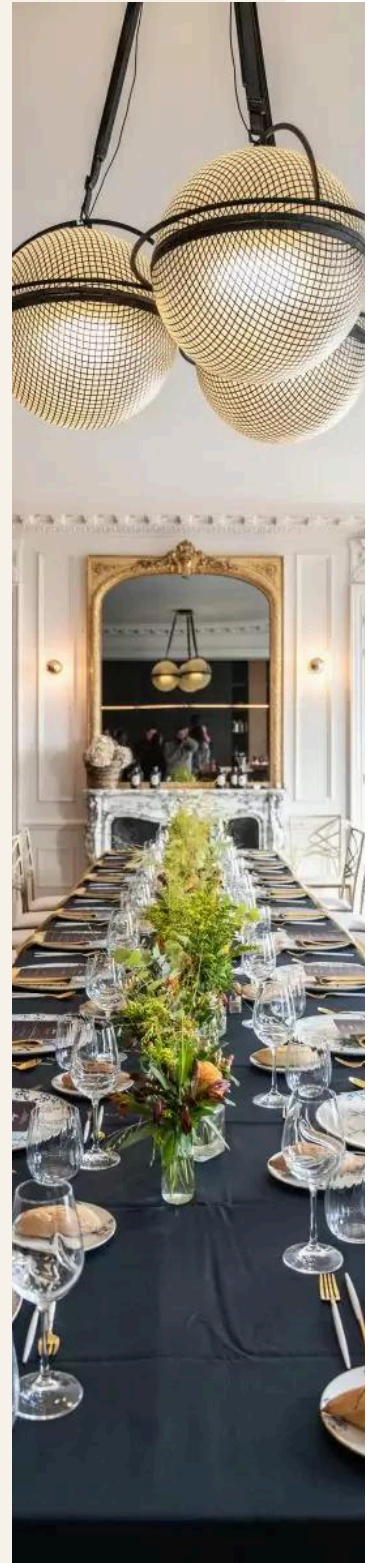
Respect at the Table

Today, proper table manners are essential in professional, social, and family situations. They help create a harmonious environment, facilitate communication, and show our consideration for other diners. Moreover, they help preserve the good manners and traditions that are the foundation of our culture.

In short, the importance of proper table manners goes beyond appearance. It is an act of respect for others and a way to preserve our cultural heritage. Following these simple rules can make our meals more enjoyable and strengthen our bonds with others.

37 Rules of Culinary Arts

1. **Women not first**
2. **Musical chairs**
3. **Cold?**
4. **Careful ! scarf**
5. **Gloves**
6. **Bags**
7. **Hygiene point**
8. **Slowly indolent**
9. **Elbows together**
10. **Without stains**
11. **I order !**
12. **3 2 1 go!**
13. **Hello, not listening !**
14. **Isn't it late ?**
15. **Tired or bored ?**
16. **It's urgent!**
17. **Smoke out smokers**
18. **Alcohol gluten free**
19. **Check bill and Divisions**
20. **Lisch'en, I Sch'peak !**
21. **Not ladled**
22. **Nothing to clean**
23. **60 decibels max**
24. **Ping Pong**
25. **Wait the waiter**
26. **Fast Food, Time is over !**
27. **Delicious**
28. **Smells like Shrek !?**
29. **Tips-Tock, It's time !**
30. **Use the napkins**
31. **It will cut**
32. **The pirate**
33. **It's my glass**
34. **Eye for an eye**
35. **Space, I dress !**
36. **Minding Manners: Anglo Style**
37. **Gentlemen, Jacket, please !**
38. **Ladies, first**





Women Not First

The man enters the restaurant first.

The social tradition where the man enters a restaurant first is mainly based on cultural conventions and behavioral norms that have evolved over time. However, it is important to note that these conventions can vary depending on culture, region, and even specific situations.

The man enters first to guide the woman to the table (or both follow the maître d'hôtel if there is one). It is more likely that the man made the reservation. (Why? Because etiquette stipulates that it is always the gentleman who reserves the restaurant). Dear Sir, by preceding the lady, you avoid her feeling awkward not knowing where to go. If you are in a group, the person who made the reservation should go first.



Musical Chairs

Gentlemen, please pull the chair for the eldest woman.

No, it's not outdated. You will notice that most women are touched by this rare gesture. Pull the chair for women only in the absence of their husband. Do not encroach on his territory. (However, in a very formal dinner, couples are separated, so it is impossible for the man to pull the chair for his wife.) If you are the new guy, and you don't know who is whose husband, or if you feel uncomfortable with this gallantry, just place your hand on the back of the chair of your neighbor. This "mimed" gesture is enough in many cases. In some cases, the chair will be placed against a wall, making it difficult to pull out. In that case, do not embarrass her by being clumsy and abandon this courtesy gesture.



Cold ?

Better leave the jacket in the cloakroom.

I know everyone likes to have their jacket on the back of their chair to have their wallet and phone at hand. But in winter, it becomes impractical. Jackets take up a lot of space. If you are already cramped, thick jackets will worsen the situation.

If there is no cloakroom, carefully place your jacket on the back of the chair before sitting down.

Similarly, to put it back on at the end of the dinner, you need to stand up. Trying to put on your jacket when you are already seated will force you to flail your arms inelegantly. You might also accidentally hit your neighbor.



Careful ! Scarf

Place your scarf under the jacket.

...to avoid your scarf falling to the ground 5 minutes after you sit down. Yes, the waltz of picking up fallen scarves is a common sight in restaurants. Moreover, waiters can trip over these scarves. Not easy!



Gloves

Store your gloves and hat in the pocket of your coat while you are still standing.

Rather intuitive advice. Searching for your pockets when you are seated can be very complicated if there is little space around you.



Bags

Ladies and gentlemen, leave your handbag at the foot of the chair.

To avoid blocking others and preventing your neighbors from leaving the table. If you can, place your handbag on a free chair, if that's impossible, hang it on the back of your chair. If that is also impossible, place it under the table. If you have a flat clutch (women), but very flat (which is very rare), you can leave it on the table to the left of the plate. However, dear ladies, this sends the following message: "If the dinner does not please me, I leave in a second, I am already ready to leave anyway!". Atmosphere.

On a coat rack or a bag holder: If the restaurant offers special equipment to hang handbags, use them. If you are not sure, do not hesitate to ask the restaurant staff if they have specific recommendations for bag storage.



Hygiene Point

Wash your hands before eating.

Washing hands before eating is an essential practice for several important reasons:

Germ elimination: Our hands are constantly in contact with various surfaces and objects, which can expose them to germs, bacteria, viruses, and contaminants. By washing your hands, you eliminate these germs and reduce the risk of transferring them to your food.

Personal hygiene respect: Washing hands before eating is also a matter of personal hygiene. It shows that you care about your own health and that of others. It is an important social norm to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

Thus, you avoid dirtying the glasses and cutlery. If you took public transportation to come, it's even a necessity.

How to behave at the table? Arriving clean is a good start.



Slowly Indolent

Do not lean your back against the backrest of the chair.

Keep your back straight. Nothing is more unpleasant than seeing your interlocutor slumped and nonchalant. Remember that the reason you are here is to exchange with others. In the aristocracy, the following refrain is repeated to children to teach them how to behave at the table: "a cat in front, a mouse behind".

You can lean on the backrest when everyone has finished eating.

It is commonly accepted to relax at the end of the meal to show that you enjoyed the meal. Wait for the coffee for that.

When the dessert is finished and devoured, wait until the hostess has finished hers. And only then can you lean your back against the backrest of the chair.



Elbows Together

Before the meal, you can put your elbows on the table.

But in this case, it is essential to have your hands joined. Attention, this rule is quite new. It is more a tolerance than a rule. As soon as the drinks arrive, put away your elbows.

During the meal, only place your forearms on the table.

And especially not the elbows! The cutlery should come to your mouth and not the other way around! It is very difficult because we all have the bad habit of leaning towards our plate. In 200 years, we have lost a lot of dexterity.

After the meal, you can (sometimes) put your elbows on the table if everyone has finished eating. During coffee, it has been allowed for women for already 20-30 years. Nowadays, men have also adopted this practice.



Without Stains

Place the napkin on your lap.

Do not try to arrange it perfectly. Fold the napkin in half, that's enough. Wrinkling it roughly is largely sufficient. No one will see it since it will be on your lap.

But above all, do not hang your napkin around your collar as in the movies where mafiosos enjoy lobster.

You are allowed to hang the napkin around your children's necks. But abstain, even if your shirt and tie are all clean.

Finally, do not fold the napkin when you finish eating. Just leave it wrinkled roughly in half on the table, to the right of the plate.



J Order !

Dear gentlemen, let women order first.

From the oldest to the youngest. Thus, you do not risk everyone talking at the same time. And in the context of a romantic date, it is the man who orders for the lady, who will have told him beforehand what she wants to eat.



3 2 1 Go !

Do not start eating until everyone has their dish.

It seems obvious, and yet no, it must be believed that not everyone knows this rule.



Hello, Not Listening !

Set your mobile phone to silent mode.

Nothing is more disturbing than hearing phone rings and SMS. I do not think I have attended a single dinner at a restaurant in the past year without hearing a phone ring during the meal. This situation is therefore not anecdotal. It must be repeated: put your mobile phone in silent mode when you are at the table. It is a sign of respect for the other diners.

Moreover, never, oh never, look at your mobile phone! If you want to make your interlocutor feel that they have no importance to you, do not hesitate to look at your phone while they are talking to you. There is nothing more effective. In the context of a romantic date, it is a deal-breaker.



Isn't it late ?

Do not look at your watch.

If you do, notify your interlocutor of the reason why you are looking at the watch. If you do not, they will feel that you are bored with them. Attention: a phone screen is not a watch, even if it indicates the time.



Tired or Bored ?

If you yawn, explain the reason.

The person might think you are bored with them. In case of yawning, always invoke fatigue. Always. Otherwise, one might quickly think that it is boredom.



It's Urgent !

If you need to go to the toilet, go right after ordering.

Avoid the situation where all the hungry people have received their dish and must wait for you to run your errands. Moreover, simply say "excuse me" or "please excuse me". There is no need to specify where you are going. Everyone can guess.



Smoke out smokers

For the cigarette break, do not make people wait unnecessarily.

Moreover, it is no longer as tolerated as it once was to get up to smoke during the meal. Avoid. How to behave at the table if you are a smoker? Make yourself as little noticeable as possible.



Alcohol Gluten-Free

Do not comment if someone does not drink alcohol or wine.

No one has to justify not drinking alcohol. Moreover, you risk touching a sensitive point and triggering an unpleasant conversation. Remember that the main goal of the meal is to have a good time together. And know well that the game "I point fingers and accuse all women who do not drink of being pregnant" is extremely rude.

Similarly, for a specific diet. We never know the precise reasons why a person has a particular diet. Avoid an embarrassing situation. And if you follow a specific diet, avoid talking about it. We do not talk about illness and do not need to make ourselves noticed as a troublesome guest.



Check bill and Divisions

If you consume wine or take a particularly expensive dish, pay the difference.

If, for example, your bill approaches €150 (while the other only spent €30), do not propose to split it half and half. This rule is one of the least respected today. The blindness of some is astounding.

Attention: money issues can create rifts in friendships.

Similarly, if you are in a group and someone does not drink wine, it is possible that the person did not order wine for financial reasons... Avoid embarrassing them.



*Lisch'en,
I Sch'peak !*

Do not talk with your mouth full.

Seeing food chewed in someone else's mouth is disgusting.

If someone asks you a question and you have a mouth full, make a gesture to wait with your index finger pointing up.



Not ladled

Take small bites.

By taking small bites, you can quickly intervene in the conversation without others waiting too long for you to swallow your bite. Moreover, the meal should last long, and not be dispatched in 15 minutes.



Nothing to Clean

Do not clean any orifice.

Thus, neither ears, nor nose, nor mouth. And never use a toothpick. Frankly, put yourself in the place of the person opposite you. If you have something in your mouth, go to the toilet to solve the problem.



60 Decibels Max

Do not raise your voice.

There is no need for the entire restaurant to hear what you want to say. If you are a large group, avoid talking to the person at the other end of the table.

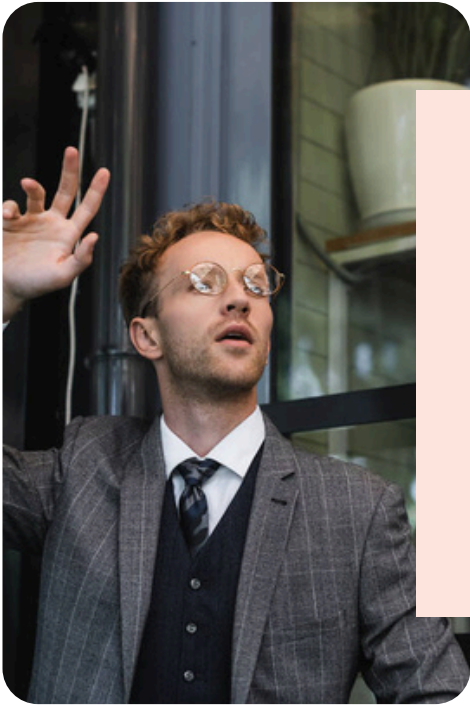


Ping Pong

Try to distribute your time equally between your neighbors on the left and right.

Nothing is worse than feeling neglected throughout the meal. Choose your seat wisely to avoid sitting next to someone you do not appreciate. But if that is the case, bear with it. Do not ignore or provoke them. Be gracious.

Moreover, do not interrupt. Wait until the other person has finished speaking before reacting. Yes, this rule is also one that is no longer respected. But it seems important to me to include it in this list on how to behave at the table.



Wait the waiter

To call the waiter, seek eye contact and make a discreet hand gesture.

So, you do not disturb the people around you. Do not shout "waiter". It is very demeaning for the waiter to be called like a dog. A "Sir, please" or an "excuse me" are good ways to start your request.



Fast Food Time is over !

Make sure everyone has finished eating before suggesting leaving.

Nothing worse than having to rush to eat your dessert because someone in a hurry wants to leave.



Delicious

If you are invited, compliment your host for their cooking even if you did not enjoy it.

There is always something appreciable in the meal. At worst, compliment the choice of wine or the originality of the dish. If you are invited to a restaurant, compliment the restaurant's cuisine. Nothing is more annoying than taking someone to your favorite restaurant for them to demolish it throughout the evening. This advice is even more demanding for women in a romantic context: Ladies, not a single negative word. Everything pleases you.

If it is really a disaster, say it in one sentence and call the waiter. Explain calmly and politely why you are not satisfied with your dish. It is possible to formulate the complaint as follows: "Is it normal for the meat to taste like charcoal?".

However, note that it is not very appropriate to complain about the quality of the food in a small restaurant. A starred restaurant, ok. But the little restaurant around the corner where the plate is €17... do not come back. This "punishment" is enough. Do not be too demanding. In this case, you can call the waiter. But remember that the waiter is not the cook. So, do not yell at them. It is embarrassing for your table neighbors and your guests.



Smells like Shrek !

Avoid eating dishes likely to give you horrible breath.

Know your weaknesses. Bad breath can make social interactions unpleasant. People can be embarrassed to talk to someone with bad breath, which can harm personal and professional relationships.



Tips - Tock It's time !

Put 5-10% of the total price in tips.

It is important to note that tipping practices can vary from country to country and even region to region. In some places, the tip is included in the bill, while in others, it is left to the customer's discretion.



Use the Napkins

Regularly pass the napkin over your mouth.

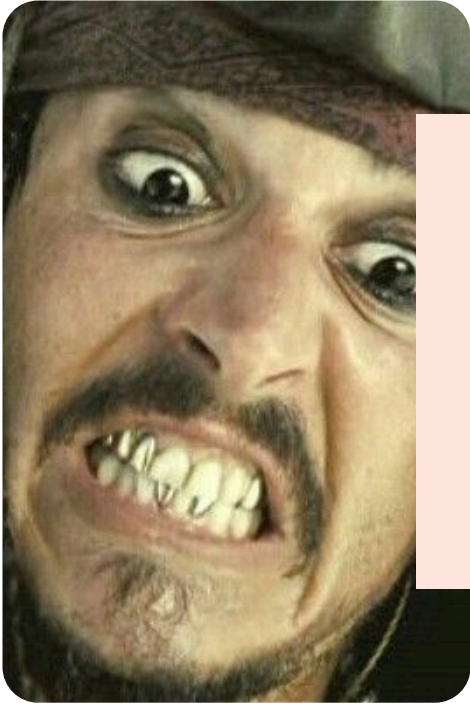
Thus, you avoid having dirt on your mouth. Pass the napkin over your mouth before drinking. To avoid leaving lip marks on the glass. This is also part of "how to behave at the table".



It Will Cut

If your knife does not cut well, notify the waiter, and stay polite.

Nothing more unpleasant than seeing your interlocutor struggle with their piece of meat while making the knife scrape against the ceramic.



The Pirate

Discreetly notify your interlocutor if they have something between their teeth.

The best way is to whisper it in their ear or tell them when you are alone. If you do not say anything, the person in question will resent you when they notice the piece.



It's My Glass !

Ladies, opt for a lipstick that does not stain.

Lipstick marks can be disturbing for some people. Similarly, avoid wearing a very strong perfume. Some smells can make your table companions sick.



Eye for an Eye

When leaving, seek eye contact with the waiter to say goodbye.

To show that they mean something to you. Everyone likes to feel noticed. How to behave at the table also means knowing how to leave with elegance.



Place, I Dress !

Put your jacket back on in a large space.

For example, do not put your jacket back on right behind your chair. You will disturb everyone. If the restaurant is particularly narrow, wait until you are out to put it on.



Minding Manners: Anglo Style

Mind the Manners: Navigating
Anglo-Saxon Etiquette with Grace
and Wit

Anglo-Saxon etiquette is characterized by a strong emphasis on politeness, punctuality, and understated behavior. Unlike in some other cultures, where exuberant expressions of hospitality are common, Anglo-Saxon manners tend to favor a more reserved and formal approach. For instance, in the UK and the US, it is customary to arrive on time or even a few minutes early for social engagements and business meetings, as lateness is considered disrespectful.

Additionally, personal space is highly valued, and maintaining a polite distance in conversation is important. Dining etiquette includes specific practices such as holding cutlery correctly, not starting to eat until everyone is served, and expressing appreciation to the host at the end of the meal. Moreover, tipping is a significant aspect of dining out in the US, whereas in the UK, it is more discretionary and often included in the bill. These nuances reflect a broader cultural preference for respect, discretion, and a certain formality in social interactions.



Gentlemen, Jacket, please !

Help women put on their jackets if they are not accompanied by their spouses.



Ladies, First

Hold the door to let women out first.

The basic rule of politeness. A door can be heavy or particularly cold. Avoid this discomfort for women.

Conclusion

Here are the 38 main table etiquette rules for a successful evening.

Here's the topic: how to behave at the table. I hope this has helped at least one person. And for others: a little reminder never hurts.

If you want to learn more about good manners, I invite you to discover the thousands of articles and videos on the blog "**Apprendre les Bonnes Manières.**" It's in French.

apprendre-les-bonnes-manières.com

If you want to make giant strides on the path to elegance, love France, and wish to improve your French, then these courses are for you:

- **Arts de la Table** : Comment recevoir comme des maîtres de maison accomplis ?

Culinary Arts: How to Entertain Like Accomplished Hosts?

- **Invité modèle** : règles d'étiquette française pour briller sans condescendance ni snobisme.

*Model Guest: French Etiquette Rules to Shine Without
Condescension or Snobbery*

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What pitfalls to avoid? What are the etiquette imperatives to know?



Direct access here:

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So, if you too firmly believe that good manners contribute to making this world a better place, go for it!

See you soon on the site "Apprendre les Bonnes Manières!"



Hanna Gas
France, 2024



Courtesy Makes Legacy.

www.lignesdefrance.com

www.apprendre-les-bonnes-manieres.com