



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences



Table Manner Trivia

Eating Customs Around the World

1. In Asian cultures, it is acceptable to slurp noodles. **True** (This is done as a compliment to the cook or hostess.)
2. Burping after a meal is a compliment to the hostess in Asian cultures. **True**
3. In Germany, it's acceptable to tuck your napkin into your shirt collar. **False** (This is not true in Germany. It is polite to place the napkin on the lap.)
4. Table manners were emphasized to pages and squires who were training to become knights in medieval times. **True**
5. In Australia, it's okay to eat certain foods off the knife. **False** (Australians use the European style of eating, which uses the knife to push food onto the fork. It is not polite to eat off the knife.)
6. The European style of eating is to hold the fork in the left hand and push food onto it with the knife, which is held in the right hand. **True** (The American custom is to eat with the fork in the dominant hand, usually the right. The knife is picked up when food needs to be cut.)
7. In Great Britain, small foods like peas and corn are eaten by squashing them onto the tines of a fork. **True** (In the U.S. it is impolite to use the tines of a fork to squash food.)
8. At a formal dinner in the United States, youth are served before adults. **False** (Women are served first, then men, then children.)
9. When eating picnic style in the United States, it is acceptable to lick ones fingers. **False** (Always use a napkin to clean your fingers.)
10. In Chile, it is considered bad manners to eat food, except ice cream, on the street. **False** (In the U.S. it is more common to see people walking down a sidewalk or in a park with popcorn, a hot dog, etc.)
11. In Samoa, the fingers are used to eat with instead of utensils, licking the fingers is acceptable. **False** (It is not polite to lick the fingers; they pass a bowl and towel for hand washing.)
12. Eastern cultures wrap both hands around a teacup while drinking from it. **True** (In the U.S., it is customary to use only one hand and to hold the cup with a finger through the ring on the cup.)

13. When a guest in someone's home in Columbia, it is not polite to overeat. **True**
14. In Bolivia it is considered polite to eat a small portion of each type of food offered. **True** (This is not the case in the U.S. If something you don't care for is served, it is polite to say "No thank you." Be careful not to take more food than you can eat.)
15. Traditional Indonesian families use silverware to eat their food. **False** (Traditional families use their fingers. We eat only certain foods with our fingers, such as pizza, crispy bacon, and fried chicken, if the setting is not formal.)
16. In El Salvador, it is polite to leave a little food on the plate. **True**
17. In Denmark, it is okay to ask to be excused from the table during a meal. **False** (Actually, guests should never leave the table or ask to be excused until the hostess rises. Our custom is to ask to "Please be excused" if necessary.)
18. In France, it is impolite to have your hands under the table during a meal. **True** (The hands should be visible, with the arms, not the elbows resting on the table. We do not put elbows on the table either.)
19. In Germany, it's okay to let the hostess know what food and drinks you do not like. **True** (We only offer this information if the hostess asks us. We simply say "No thank you" to food that we don't care for. An explanation is unnecessary.)
20. In the Chinese culture it is impolite to taste every type of food prepared. **False** (In the Chinese culture you are expected to taste the food when it is offered to you. It is good to be open-minded and try new foods when in other countries, but not considered impolite in our country to refuse a food that's offered by saying, "No thank you.")
21. There is lots of conversation during a meal in Korea. **False** (Koreans usually eat quietly and wait to talk until after a meal. In the U.S. meal time conversations are an important part of the meal, as long as people do not talk with their mouth full.)
22. Eating heartily is the way to compliment the lady of the house in the Philippines. **True** (It is considered good manners in the U.S. to eat slowly. We watch the others at the table for cues on speed of eating.)
23. When a guest in Switzerland, the best way to compliment the host is to take second helpings and eat everything on the plate. **True** (We compliment the hostess by telling them we enjoyed the meal.)
24. In Japan, it is considered rude to pick up a bowl of soup and bring it to your mouth. **False** (It is an accepted practice in Japan. In the American culture, it is rude to pick up a bowl of food. The bowl should be left on the table and a soup spoon used to bring food to the mouth.)