

Which of the following social customs are similar or different to your country?

The English are said to be reserved in manners, dress and speech. We are famous for our politeness, self-discipline and especially for our sense of humour. Basic politeness (please, thank you, excuse me) is expected.

How to greet someone

English people are quite reserved when greeting one another. A greeting can be a bright 'Hello' 'Hi' or 'Good morning', when you arrive at work or at school

The Handshake

A handshake is the most common form of greeting among the English and British people and is customary when you are introduced to somebody new.

The Kiss

It is only when you meet friends, whom you haven't seen for a long time, that you would kiss the cheek of the opposite sex. In Britain one kiss is generally enough.

Formal greetings

The usual formal greeting is a 'How do you do?' and a firm handshake, but with a lighter touch between men and women.

'How do you do?' is a greeting not a question and the correct response is to repeat 'How do you do?' You say this when shaking hands with someone.

First person "How do you do?"

Second person "How do you do?"

'How are you?' is a question and the most common and polite response is "I am fine thank you and you?"

First person "How are you?"

Second person "I am fine thank you and you?"

Nice to meet you – Nice to meet you too. (Often said whilst shaking hands)

Delighted to meet you– Delighted to meet you too.

Pleased to meet you – Pleased to meet you too. .

Glad to meet you - Glad to meet you too

Good Morning / Good Afternoon / Good Evening

Informal greetings

Hi - Hi or hello

Morning / Afternoon / Evening (We drop the word 'Good' in informal situations).

How's you? - Fine thanks. You?

Thank you / thanks / cheers

We sometime say 'cheers' instead of thank you. You may hear 'cheers' said instead of 'good bye', what we are really saying is 'thanks and bye'.

Terms of Endearment - Names we may call you

You may be called by many different 'affectionate' names, according to which part of the England you are visiting. Do not be offended, this is quite normal. For example, you may be called dear, dearie, flower, love, chick, chuck, me duck, me duckie, mate, guv, son, ma'am, madam, miss, sir, or treacle, according to your sex, age and location.

Visiting people in their houses

When being entertained at someone's home it is nice to take a gift for the host and hostess. A bottle of wine, bunch of flowers or chocolates are all acceptable.

Sending a thank you note is also considered appropriate.

Time

British people place considerable value on punctuality. If you agree to meet friends at three o'clock, you can bet that they'll be there just after three. Since Britons are so time conscious, the pace of life may seem very rushed. In Britain, people make great effort to arrive on time. It is often considered impolite to arrive even a few minutes late. If you are unable to keep an appointment, it is expected that you call the person you are meeting. Some general tips follow.

You should arrive:

* At the exact time specified – for dinner, lunch, or appointments with professors, doctors, and other professionals.

* Any time during the hours specified for teas, receptions, and cocktail parties.

* A few minutes early: for public meetings, plays, concerts, movies, sporting events, classes, church services, and weddings.

If you are invited to someone's house for dinner at half past seven, they will expect you to be there on the dot. An invitation might state "7.30 for 8", in which case you should arrive no later than 7.50. However, if an invitation says "sharp", you must arrive in plenty of time.

Invitations

“Drop in anytime” and “come see me soon” are idioms often used in social settings but seldom meant to be taken literally. It is wise to telephone before visiting someone at home. If you receive a written invitation to an event that says “RSVP”, you should respond to let the person who sent the invitation know whether or not you plan to attend.

Never accept an invitation unless you really plan to go. You may refuse by saying, “Thank you for inviting me, but I will not be able to come.” If, after accepting, you are unable to attend, be sure to tell those expecting you as far in advance as possible that you will not be there.

Although it is not necessarily expected that you give a gift to your host, it is considered polite to do so, especially if you have been invited for a meal. Flowers, chocolate, or a small gift are all appropriate. A thank-you note or telephone call after the visit is also considered polite and is an appropriate means to express your appreciation for the invitation.

Dress

Everyday dress is appropriate for most visits to peoples' homes. You may want to dress more formally when attending a holiday dinner or cultural event, such as a concert or theatre performance.

Introduction and Greeting

It is proper to shake hands with everyone to whom you are introduced, both men and women. An appropriate response to an introduction is "Pleased to meet you". If you want to introduce yourself to someone, extend your hand for a handshake and say "Hello, I am....". Hugging is only for friends.

Dining

When you accept a dinner invitation, tell your host if you have any dietary restrictions. He or she will want to plan a meal that you can enjoy. The evening meal is the main meal of the day in most parts of Britain.

Food may be served in one of several ways: "family style," by passing the serving plates from one to another around the dining table; "buffet style," with guests serving themselves at the buffet; and "serving style," with the host filling each plate and passing it to each person. Guests usually wait until everyone at their table has been served before they begin to eat. Food is eaten with a knife and fork and dessert with a spoon and fork.

Eating

We eat continental style, with fork in the left hand and the knife in the right.

DOs and DON'TS (Taboos) in England

In England...

Do stand in line

In England we like to form orderly queues (standing in line) and wait patiently for our turn e.g. boarding a bus. It is usual to queue when required, and expected that you will take your correct turn and not push in front. 'Queue jumping' is frowned upon.

Do take your hat off when you go indoors (men only)

It is impolite for men to wear hats indoors especially in churches.

Nowadays, it is becoming more common to see men wearing hats indoors. However, this is still seen as being impolite, especially to the older generations. text taken from and

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Do say "Excuse Me": text taken from and copyright of projcetbritain.com

If someone is blocking your way and you would like them to move, say excuse me and they will move out of your way.

Do Pay as you Go:

Pay for drinks as you order them in pubs and other types of bars.

Do say "Please" and "Thank you":

It is very good manners to say "please" and "thank you". It is considered rude if you don't. You will notice in England that we say 'thank you' a lot. text taken from and copyright of projcetbritain.com

Do cover your Mouth:

When yawning or coughing always cover your mouth with your hand.

Do Shake Hands:

When you are first introduced to someone, shake their right hand with your own right hand.

Do say sorry:

If you accidentally bump into someone, say 'sorry'. They probably will too, even if it was your fault! This is a habit and can be seen as very amusing by an 'outsider'.

Do Smile: text taken from and copyright of projcetbritain.com

A smiling face is a welcoming face.

Do Drive on the left side of the road

Do open doors for other people

Men and women both hold open the door for each other. It depends on who goes through the door first.

In England...

Do not greet people with a kiss: We only kiss people who are close friends and relatives.

Avoid talking loudly in public

It is impolite to stare at anyone in public. Privacy is highly regarded. text taken from and copyright of projcetbritain.com

Do not ask a lady her age It is considered impolite to ask a lady her age

Do not pick your nose in public: We are disgusted by this. If your nostrils need de-bugging, use a handkerchief.

Avoid doing gestures such as backslapping and hugging This is only done among close friends.

Do not spit. Spitting in the street is considered to be very bad mannered.

Do not burp in public You may feel better by burping loudly after eating or drinking, but other people will not! If you can not stop a burp from bursting out, then cover your mouth with your hand and say 'excuse me' afterwards.

Do not pass wind in public Now how can we say this politely? Let's say that you want to pass wind. What do you do? Go somewhere private and let it out. If you accidentally pass wind in company say 'pardon me'.

It is impolite speak with your mouth full of food

Do not ask personal or intimate questions We like our privacy. Please do not ask questions such as "How much money do you earn?" "How much do you weigh?" or "Why aren't you married?". text taken from and copyright of projcetbritain.com

Never eat off a knife when having a meal. In all countries in Britain ...

Women in Britain are entitled to equal respect and status as men (and indeed vice versa) in all areas of life and tend to have more independence and responsibility than in some other cultures. Women are usually independent and accustomed to entering public places unaccompanied. It is usual for women to go out and about on their own as well as with friends. Men and women mix freely.

- It is ok for women to eat alone in a restaurant.

- It is ok for women to wander around on their own.
- It is ok for women to drink beer.