

Success with Etiquette™

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'Tis the Season to Mind Your Manners

By Shawn E. Gilleylen

Chances are you will be invited to someone's home to celebrate the holiday season. As a guest, it is important to be respectful and exhibit good manners and proper etiquette in the home of your host. Part of the professional and social process is being able to understand how to be a proper guest and present oneself in a sophisticated and charismatic manner while enjoying a festive occasion.

Following these simple rules of holiday etiquette will ensure a smooth, enjoyable evening:

- Present your host with a nicely wrapped gift to express appreciation and gratitude.
- Limit the alcohol and avoid hard liquor. Opt for wine or sparkling cider.
- Don't hover around the buffet table, overload your plate, double-dip, talk with food in your mouth, or chew with your mouth open.
- Don't fuss over your food and taste all dishes served unless it violates your religious beliefs or health restrictions.
- Dress appropriately for the occasion. When in doubt opt to dress up rather than casual, or call the host in advance for guidelines on the dress code.
- Clean up behind yourself and respect your host's property and privacy. Use coasters or napkins when necessary and don't wander around the residence or tour areas that are restricted.
- Be considerate and don't overstay your welcome.
- Depart graciously by shaking hands and extending well wishes to the host and guests. Thank the host for his/her hospitality and an enjoyable evening.
- Send a handwritten thank-you note within two days to express gratitude for a lovely occasion and warm hospitality.

Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la!

Shawn E. Gilleylen is the founder of Administrative Support Associates, a firm offering business etiquette and customer service training. She works with businesses and individuals to help them gain a competitive edge by strengthening their professionalism, corporate image, and productivity. Shawn created the Success with Etiquette™ Training Program and facilitates seminars, workshops, keynotes, and one-on-one etiquette consultations. She is the author of "Success with Etiquette." Shawn can be reached at (202) 352-3166 or shawng@successwithetiquette.com. Visit www.successwithetiquette.com for more information and to subscribe to a free Etiquette Tips Newsletter.

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