

Table Manners in India

By Students of
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Eevathu nanna jothe
oota maduvira?

Would you join me for
lunch today?



Traditionally, Indian food is served on a rug on the floor and people are supposed to sit in a circle.

This has changed in the recent times. With the slow seep in of the westernization, the use of dining tables has become prevalent. It has much more logic to it as well, as the architecture of houses has changed. It is much more modern in outlook and sitting on the floor for eating does not make any sense, any more. Although, there are still houses and regions in India that follow the same tradition.

In case you are using a table, let the eldest person sit first. This is the sign of respect in India. The eldest is generally the authoritative figure in the house. The host is supposed to sit in a direction from where he/she can see everyone around him. This is because of the convenience of the host, so that he/she can keep an eye on everyone and can cater to someone's need.



Sitting on the floor & eating

When everyone is seated, wait for the food to be served. You should not chatter unnecessarily, with the people around you. This is a basic table manner followed in all the different parts of the world. In India, eating together is an important part of the culture.

Wash hands properly before starting as much of the food is eaten with hands, even if you are using basic cutleries such as spoon and fork. It is more of the hygienic habit that has taken its place in the culture. It is a good practice to wash your hands before eating.

Wait for the eldest to start first. Even if you are starving don't attack the food or eat hastily. It is considered disrespectful and bad manners.

Indian tradition does not emphasize on the use of cutlery, which is considered to be a part of western culture, such as fork and knife. Indian food such as curries and gravies are enjoyed best when eaten with hands. It is an innate part of the culture to eat with hands.

You are not expected to use your left hand while eating. Even breads and rotis are broken into pieces using the right hand alone. But you are supposed to transfer food from the common plate using your clean left hand.

Playing with food or in any way distorting the food is unacceptable.

You don't have to taste each and every dish served. Finish your whole food before asking for more. Wasting food is considered disrespect to the host and the food.



Use right hand for eating

Eating at a medium pace is important as eating too slowly may imply that you dislike the food, whereas eating too quickly is rude.

Once you have finished your food, don't leave the table until the host asks you to. If you have to leave the table, ask for the permission from the people before leaving. This is a way to show your gratitude towards your host.

If a meal is served over banana leaves (in South India) then it is customary to fold the leaves over from the top (and not from the bottom as this might be considered disrespectful in some parts of India) at the end of the meal. This is to note the host that you have finished eating.

Don't wash your hands in your plate or on the bay leaf and you are not expected to close the bay leaf- if you are in south India. Use a finger bowl (lemon and water) to wash your greasy hands.



Close the banana leaf after you have finished your meal

You are expected to say polite terms like 'Please' and 'Thank you' as a courtesy towards your host. The host puts in a lot of trouble in preparing extensive meals. The least that we should do is thank them for their hospitality. Meals are an exclusive way to get together in India; people meet on meals and have a hearty time with each other. Especially during the important festivals in India, big meals are prepared. All of the extensive family members decide to get together at one person's house and the host looks after all the arrangements.

ASIAN DINING ETIQUETTE



INDIA



Always wash your hands
An open "washing area," / "basin,"
might have been placed near the dining
area for this specific purpose



Eat with your right hand.
The left hand is not used for
eating, this is considered
offensive and unclean.

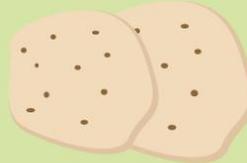


DO NOT share utensils.
Coming in contact with another
person's spit is called "Jootha,"
and is considered offensive
in many parts of India.



Random Trivia!

A roti must only be used to scoop up other food.
Proper scooping technique involves making a boat-like
shape with the roti, scooping up the curry without letting
too much of the curry touch your fingers, and inserting
the food into your mouth before anything spills out of the "boat".



Ask for whatever you want instead
of reaching out directly or pointing at dishes.



In Indian etiquette NEVER offer anyone food
from your thali (plate), even if it is in one
of the little bowls and you haven't touched it

Thumba
dhanyavadagalu

Thank you very much



References

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