

# Do's and don'ts about french culture

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\* When you are invited somewhere, DO give a gift that shows that you are intellectual, such a gift of books or music. \* DO bring a gift for the hostess if invited to a French person's house. Good host gift ideas include flowers and wine or dessert (if you are invited for a dinner). However, keep in mind that France is known for its wine, so it is better to do some research before and bring a nice bottle of wine! As a tourist from another country, a gift from your native country is also really appreciated.

\* DO expect a glass of wine with dinner. Wine glasses are filled only three-quarters of the way. DO be careful when picking out flowers as a gift. Indeed, white flowers are typically only used during weddings, white lilies and chrysanthemums are flowers for funerals, and red carnations stand for bad will. \* DO maintain eye contact: it shows that you are interested in the conversation and your full attention is to them. \* DO shake hands when you meet someone you don't know for both male and female. \* DO address people with the titles " Monsieur" (Mister) and " Madame" (Mrs. ) when meeting someone for the first time, or in a business meeting.

Use " Mademoiselle" when greeting a young, unmarried woman or girl and " Madame" for older and married women. \* DO wear what you normally wear, but keep in mind that attire such as baseball caps, flip-flops, and white sneakers are not traditionally worn by French people. It is fine to wear it, but you will probably be labeled as a tourist. \* DO be polite. French people all the time say " Bonjour" (Hello), " Aurevoir" (Goodbye), " excusez moi, pardon"(excuse me, sorry) if you touch someone in the street or even if you just brush past the person! \* DO apologize for your lack of knowledge if you do not speak French.

Don'ts \* DON'T eat with your fingers. You should always use your place setting; however you can use your fingers at a fast food restaurant. \* DON'T eat on the street because it can be seen as unsophisticated. \* DON'T start eating immediately after being served, you have to wait for everyone to have their meal and only after you say “ Bon appetit” and you can start. It seems as really impolite to start without waiting for others. \* DON'T put your arms on your lap during dinner but don't put them above the table either. \* DON'T give an even number of flowers as a gift.

Flowers should always be given in odd numbers, except for thirteen, as that is an unlucky number. \* DON'T expect the people you are meeting with to be on time. People in France are not often punctual: “ le quart d'heure francais” (the french quarter). However, be careful if it is a business meeting you have to be on time! Without any good reason people will not be happy at all. \* DON'T show any impatience or a confrontational attitude in a business meeting, it can be seen as a sign of being unprofessional. \* DON'T take a bite from a whole piece of bread. Instead, tear your bread into a bite-sized piece and then eat it.