

The customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group.” – Etiquette

Every culture across the ages has been defined by the concept of etiquette and accepted social interaction. However, it is the British – and the English in particular – who have historically been known to place a great deal of importance in good manners. Whether it be in relation to speech, timeliness, body language or dining, politeness is the key.

## TABLE MANNERS

Good manners at the dining table are very important in Britain. Here are some pointers to help you:

Unless your host instructs you to start eating immediately, wait until everyone has been served their food until you start eating.

If you are dining in a group and food is shared, put others' needs before your own. Offer to serve food to your neighbours first, and do not take too much; leave enough for others, and do not take more than you can eat.

If you are right handed, your knife should be held in your right hand and your fork should be held in your left hand. If you are left handed, it is becoming more acceptable to hold your knife and fork the other way around.

Cutlery should be rested on the sides of the plate between mouthfuls and together in the centre when you are finished.

Never talk whilst there is food in your mouth.

Do not eat noisily. It will seem very strange if you make a lot of noise whilst you eat. Take small mouthfuls, keep your mouth closed when you chew, and swallow delicately. When drinking soup do not slurp.

Eat slowly. Eating quickly and/or overeating makes you appear greedy.

If you are staying with a homestay, you should wait until everyone has finished or you are told to leave the table. If you really need to leave, you can ask to leave the table.