

# International Etiquette



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# 1. Preface



### **1.1. Significance of international etiquette**

International etiquette provides a set of rules for everyday life and social interactions in the international community. Although based on traditional Western manners, norms, and experiences that have gradually evolved over time, international etiquette does not exclude local traditions and protocols. When visiting another place, it is important to follow the customs of its people.

### **1.2. Importance of international etiquette**

With the ever-increasing ease of travel, the chance of needing to understand and use international etiquette will continue to grow. It can help avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and awkward situations that could make you look bad personally and, in the worst-case scenario, tarnish the reputation of your nation. The Chinese classic *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) says, “When entering a border, ask about matters forbidden; when entering a country, ask about its customs; before entering a home, ask about taboos to be avoided.” You should also keep in mind the famous Western proverb, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”

## 2. Dining



## 2.1. Hosting banquets

Banquets offer good opportunities for socializing and can help foster new friendships or enhance old ones. Improper arrangements may upset guests or even lead to friction between countries, so great care should be taken on such occasions.

- Guest list

To host a successful banquet, you should carefully plan the guest list in advance. In principle, you should try to achieve a balance in the numbers, genders, and statuses of guests. No one present should have a higher rank than the guest of honor.

- Timing

Invitations should be sent out two weeks in advance. Whenever possible, formal banquets should not be held on weekends, public holidays, or traditional festivals for family gatherings.

- Venue

Hosting a banquet at your residence shows sincerity and warmth. If another venue is chosen, you should take into consideration its facilities, suitability, and convenience.

- Invitations

Examples of invitations can be found on pages 5-8. The RSVP in the lower left corner of a Western-style invitation comes from the French expression *répondez s'il vous plaît*, which means “please reply” in English.

- Menu and guest list

Menu design and selection should keep in mind the guests' preferences and religious or dietary restrictions. For example, Buddhist guests might wish to avoid all meat products, while Muslim and Jewish guests will want to avoid pork, and Hindu guests beef. In the West, dessert should be served after the main course. For a more formal occasion, the menu and guest list may be provided to guests for their convenience.

- Important matters for hosts

Once invitations have been sent, a banquet should not be rescheduled or canceled unless there is a very good reason.

- The time, place, and dress code should be clearly written on the invitation.
- For an important banquet, the host should remind the guests beforehand who will be attending.

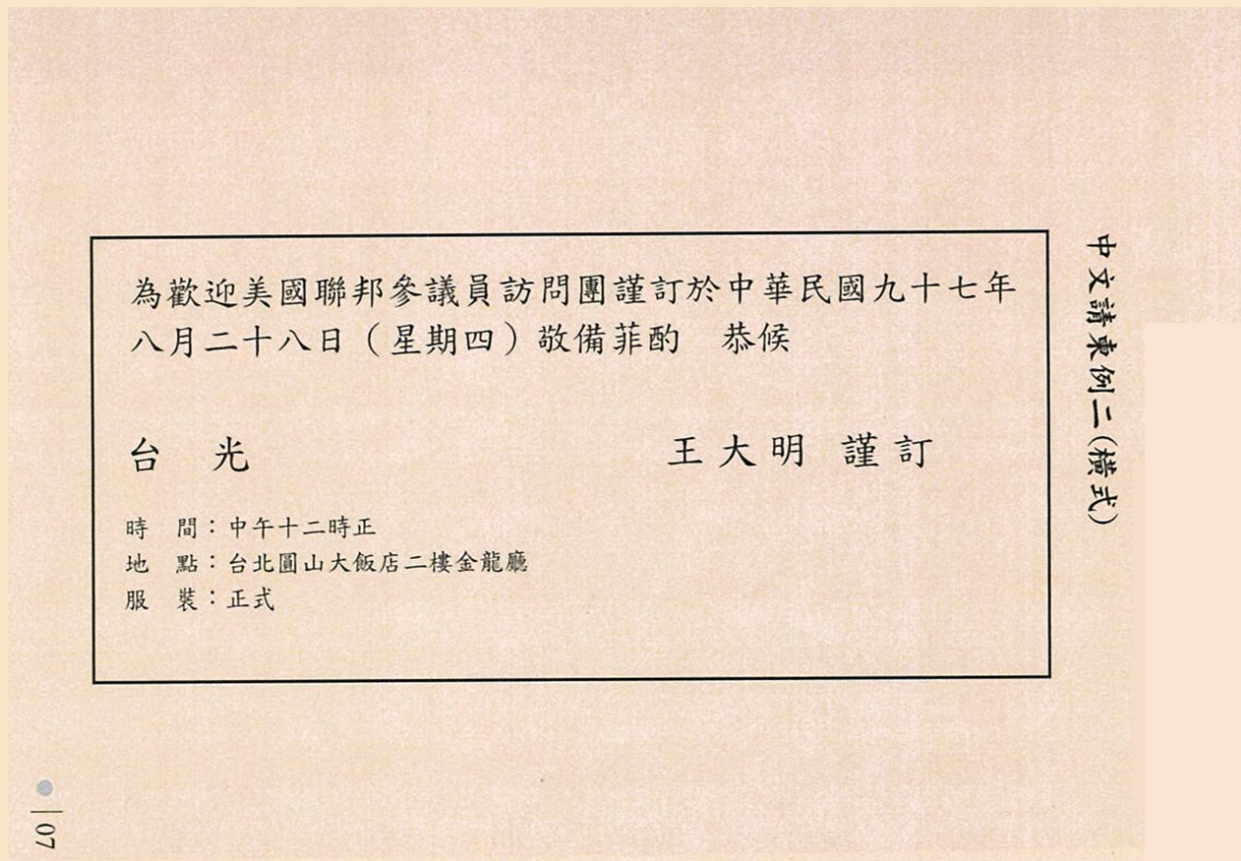
- Important matters for guests
  - Guests should arrive on time. (Please see figure 1 on page 13.)
  - When attending a banquet abroad held at the host's residence, guests may present the host with a token gift representative of their country to show appreciation.
  - Guests should not take uninvited guests to the banquet.
  - Guests should dress appropriately as stated on the invitation. When in doubt, ask the host for clarification.



中文請柬例一(直式)

<p style="text-align: center;">帖      回</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">□□ 謝 陪</p> <p>回 帖： 電 話： 聯 絡 人：</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(請列宴會主人地址)</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">台 光</p> <p style="text-align: center;">王大明 謹訂</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>謹訂於中華民國      年      月      日(星期 )</p> <p>敬備菲酌 恭候</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>時間： 午 時 分</p> <p>地點：</p> <p>服裝：</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>月      日      宴</p> <p>啟 月      日</p> </div>
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Invitation in Chinese (vertical).



Invitation in Chinese (horizontal).

Mr. & Mrs. John Smith  
 request the pleasure of your company at a luncheon  
 in honor of the U.S. Senators  
 on Thursday, August 28, 2008  
 at noon  
 Golden Dragon Restaurant of the Grand Hotel  
 No.1, Zhongshan N. Rd., Sec. 4, Taipei

RSVP

Return card enclosed

Dress code: Business attire

08 | ●

International Etiquette  
 國際禮儀

Mr. & Mrs. John Smith  
 request the pleasure of your company at a luncheon  
 in honor of the U.S. Senators  
 on Thursday, August 28, 2008  
 at 12:00 p.m.  
 Golden Dragon Restaurant of the Grand Hotel  
 No.1, Zhongshan N. Rd., Sec. 4, Taipei

R.S.V.P.  
 Return card enclosed

Dress code: Business attire

英文請柬範例

Invitation in English.

RETURN CARD

Luncheon hosted by Mr. & Mrs. John Smith on August 28, 2008

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ will attend      ☐ will not attend      Tel: (02)2348-2597  
Fax: (02)2375-2157

Please fax response or mail it to No. 2, Ketagalan Blvd., Taipei

RETURN CARD

Luncheon hosted by Mr. & Mrs. John Smith on August 28, 2008.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

☐ will attend      ☐ will not attend      Tel : (02)2348-2597  
Fax: (02)2375-2157

Please fax response or mail it to No. 2, Ketagalan Blvd., Taipei.

英文請柬回帖範例  
英文回帖可與請柬並列，或分開印製

戴·會的禮儀

| 09

Return card in English.

Return cards and invitations may be printed separately.



## 2.2. Seating arrangements

### 1. Western style

There are three principles regarding seating arrangements.

- **Place of honor to the right**

- When the host and guest of honor are seated across from each other, the second-most important guest is seated to the right of the host. The next-most important guest should be seated to the right of the guest of honor, and so on.
- When the host and their spouse are seated across from each other, the guest of honor is seated to right of the host's spouse, and the second-most important guest is seated to right of the host. The next-most important guest should be seated to the left of the host's spouse, and so on.

- **Special considerations**

- Rank and precedence

Seat order is determined by the official positions of the guests. The seating of a guest's spouse shall be determined by the guest's official position. However, if a guest's spouse's official position is higher than that of the guest, the guest's spouse is seated according to their rank.

- Political considerations

Political considerations may alter a guest's position in the order of precedence. For example, at a diplomatic event, a foreign minister takes precedence over other ministerial-level guests.

- Personal relationships

Friendships, hierarchical relationships among guests, and language abilities should also be taken into account when making seating arrangements.

- **Alternating seating**

It is recommended that men and women and nationals and foreigners should be seated alternately around the table.

### 2. Taiwan context

The first two principles mentioned above are also applied in seating arrangements when the host or guest of honor is from Taiwan. But if this is the case, spouses or partners may be seated next to each other. The practice to alternate the seating of men and women and nationals and foreigners around the table still applies.

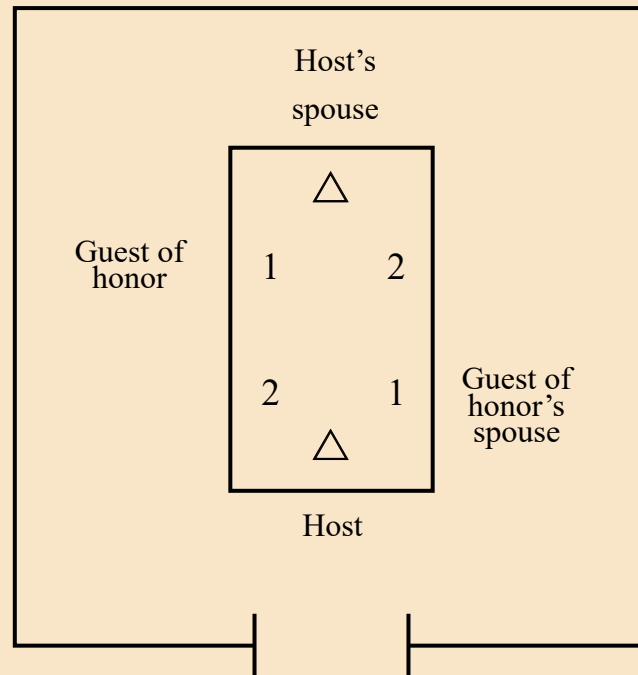
### 3. Other important considerations

- On Western-style occasions, the host and guest of honor are treated as focal points, and guests of higher rank are seated closer to them. It is recommended that the last seat not be occupied by a female guest and that the host be seated with their back to the door.
- Ideally, there should be 6, 10, or 14 people, with an equal number of men and women so that the female and male guests can be seated alternately.
- You should avoid having 13 people total (including guests and host) seated at a table.
- Should there be neither clear differences in rank nor special political considerations, seating arrangements can be planned based on the guests' professional and personal backgrounds, and convenience for conversation.

### 4. Seating arrangements illustrated: See pages 14 to 27

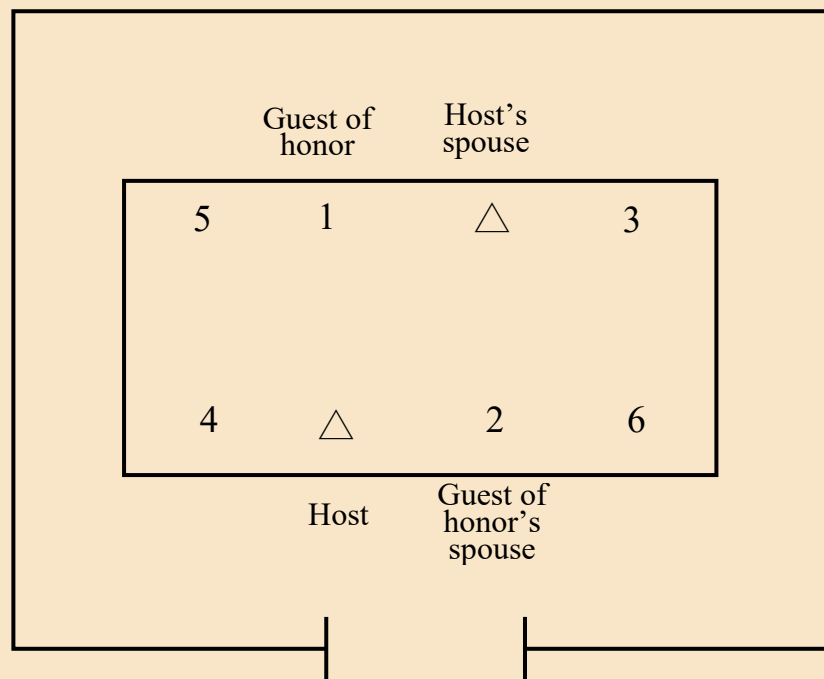


Figure 1: Guests should arrive on time.



Long table seating (1).

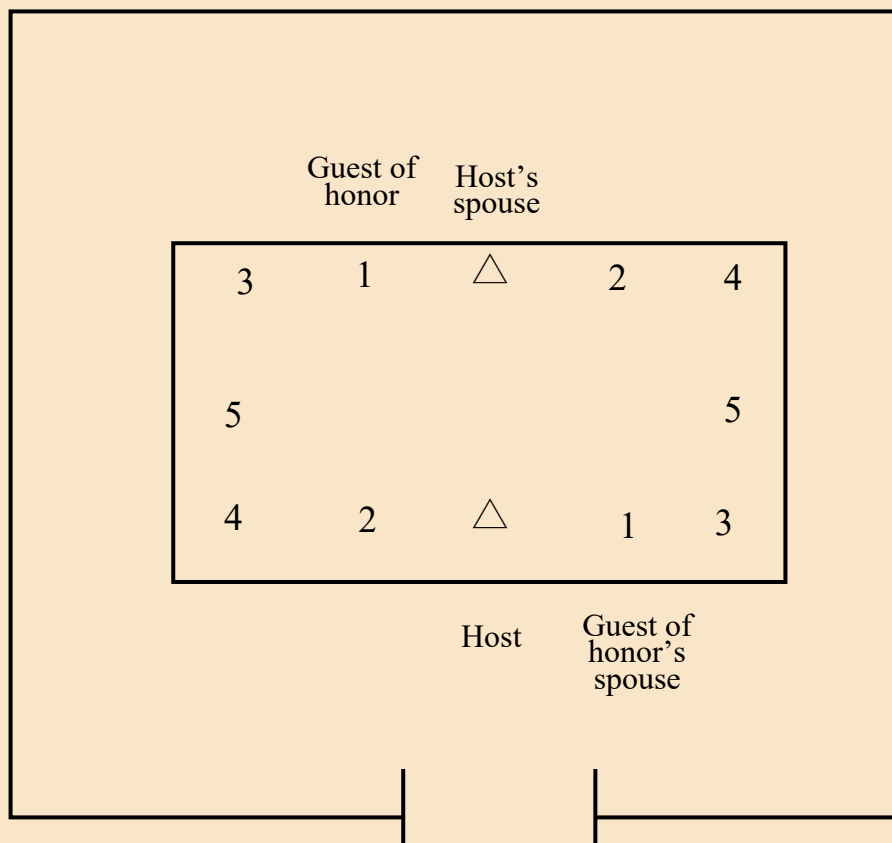
1. When there are six people total, the host and their spouse are seated at opposite sides of the table.
2. The numbers indicate the ranking of the guests.



Long table seating (2).

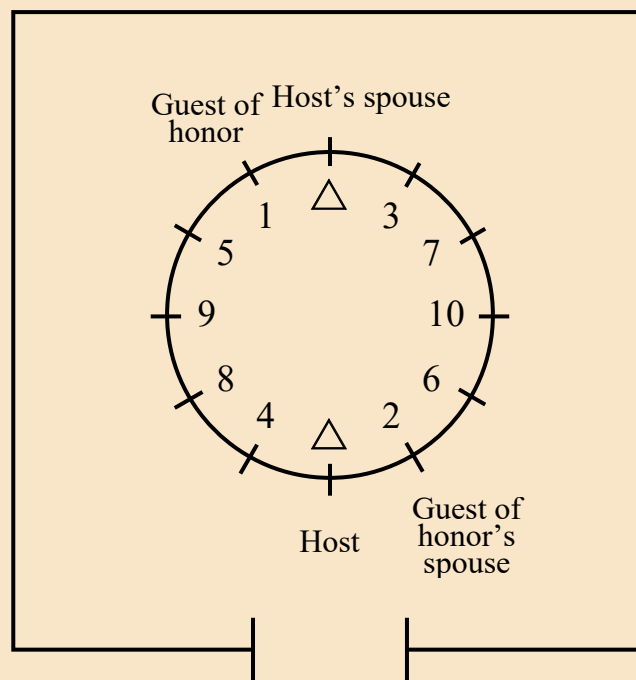
When there are eight people in total, the host and guest of honor sit on opposite sides of the table and male and female guests are seated alternately. Seats next to the host and their spouse are reserved for guests with the highest precedence.





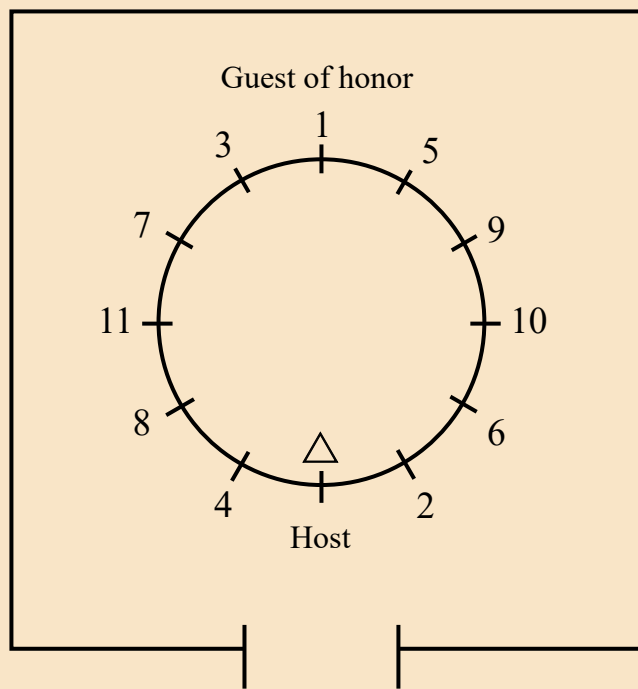
Long-table seating (3).

When there are 12 people total, the host and their spouse are seated at the middle of the longer sides of the table, with the lowest-ranking guests and their spouses seated at the ends.



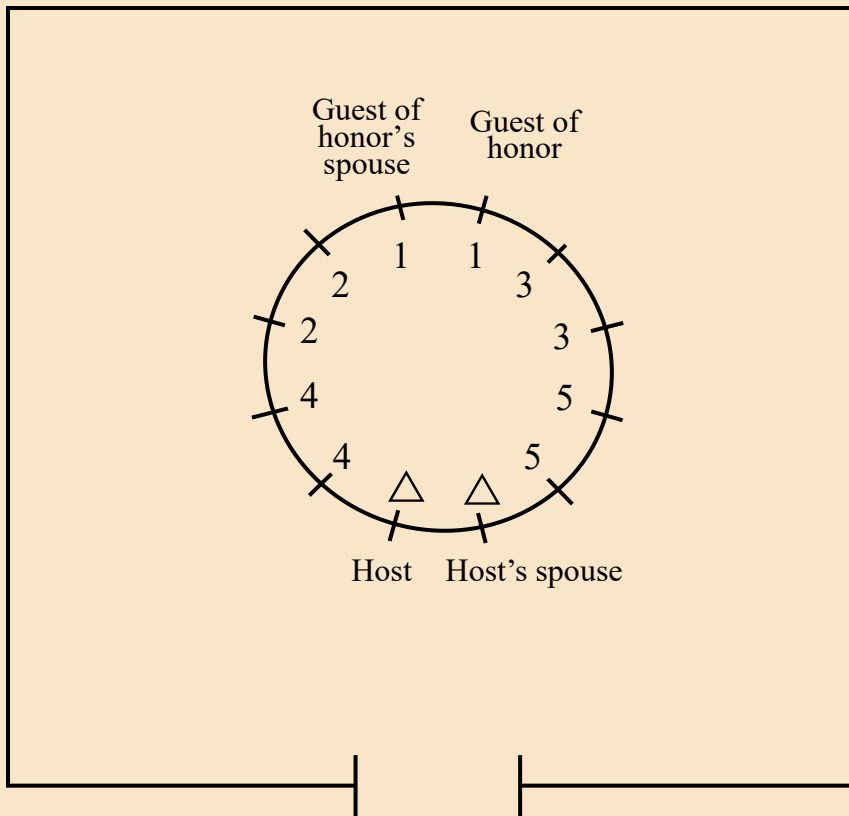
Western-style round table seating (1).

The host and their spouse are seated facing each other, guests and their spouses sit apart, and the guest of honor is seated to the right of the host's spouse.



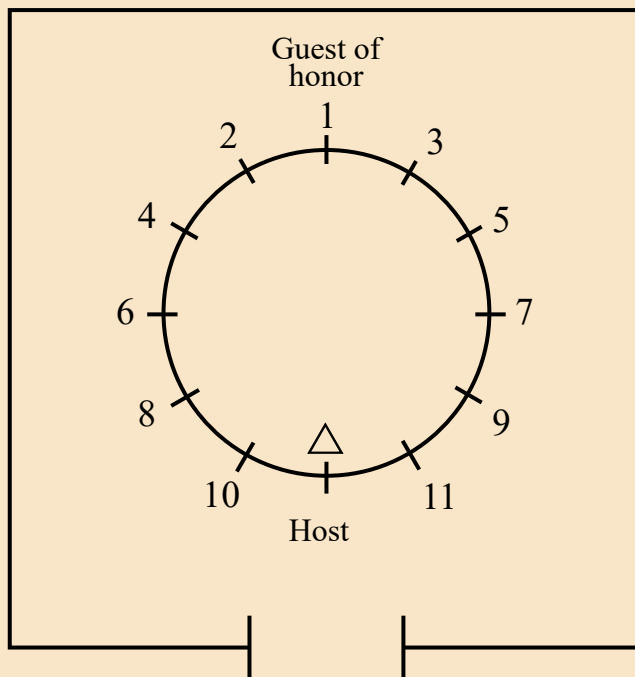
Western-style round table seating (2).

The host and guest of honor are seated facing each other, with the other guests seated in accordance of rank starting from the right side of the host.



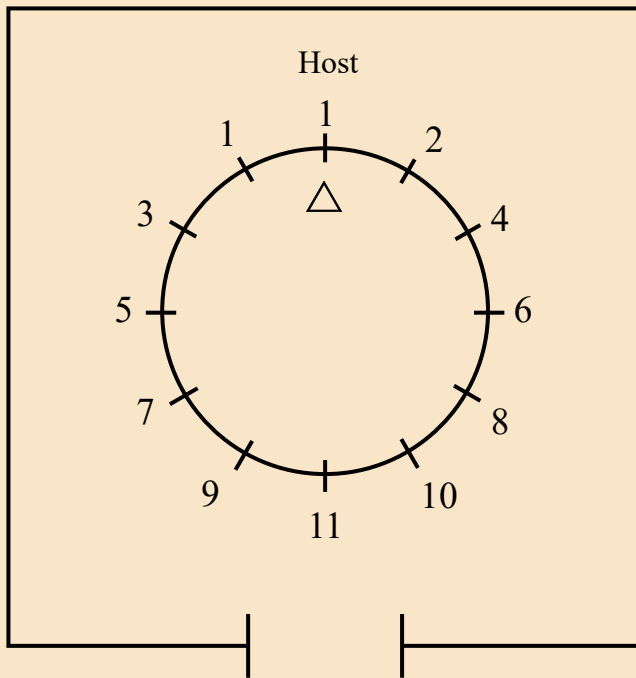
Round table seating in the Taiwan context (1).

The host and their spouse are seated next to each other, with the guests of honor sitting across from them (men on the left, women on the right). The other couples are arranged by precedence as in the figure.



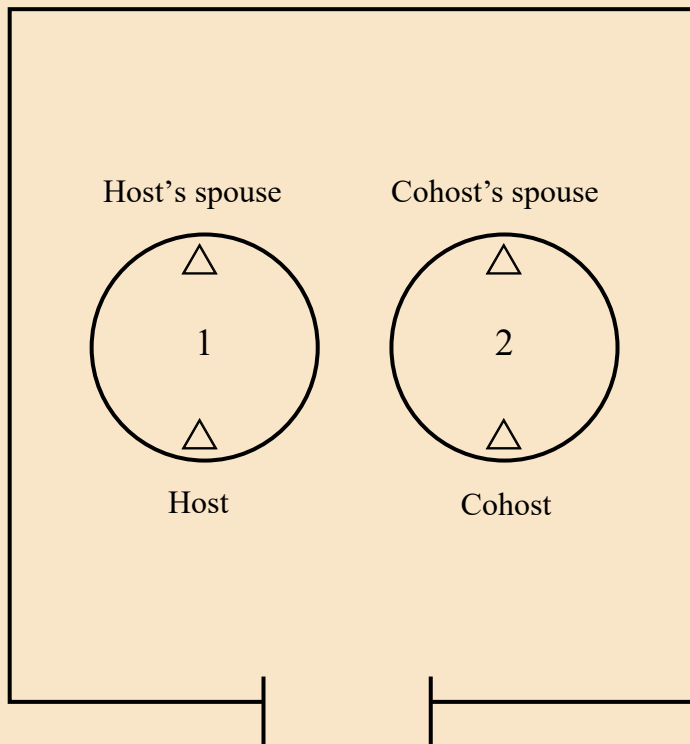
Round table seating in the Taiwan context (2).

The host and the guest of honor are seated across from each other, and the other guests are seated alternately in order of precedence on the right and left sides of the guest of honor.



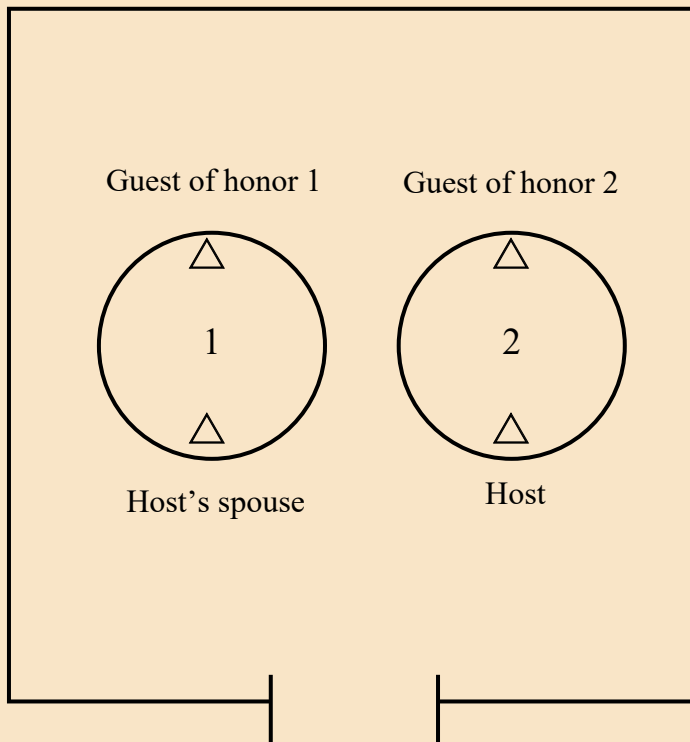
Round table seating in the Taiwan context (3).

If the rank of the host is higher than that of the guests and there is no guest of honor, the host is seated facing the entrance, with the guests seated on the host's right and left alternately in accordance with rank.



Seating at two round tables (1).

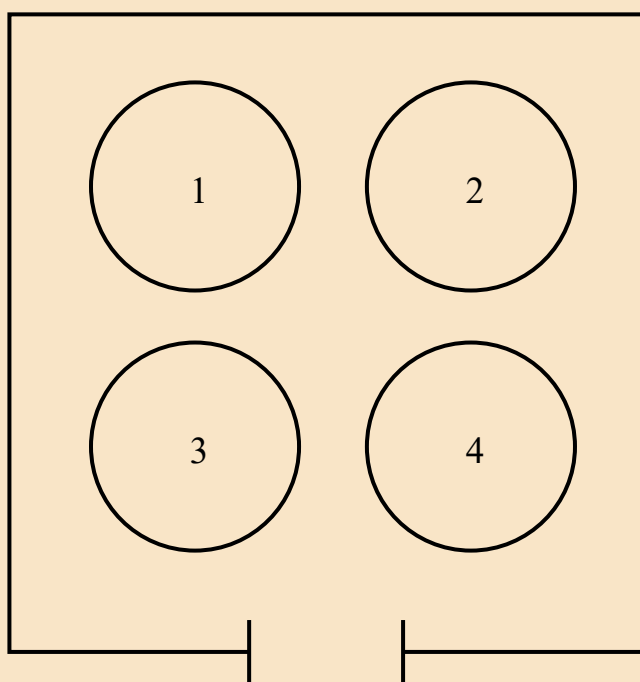
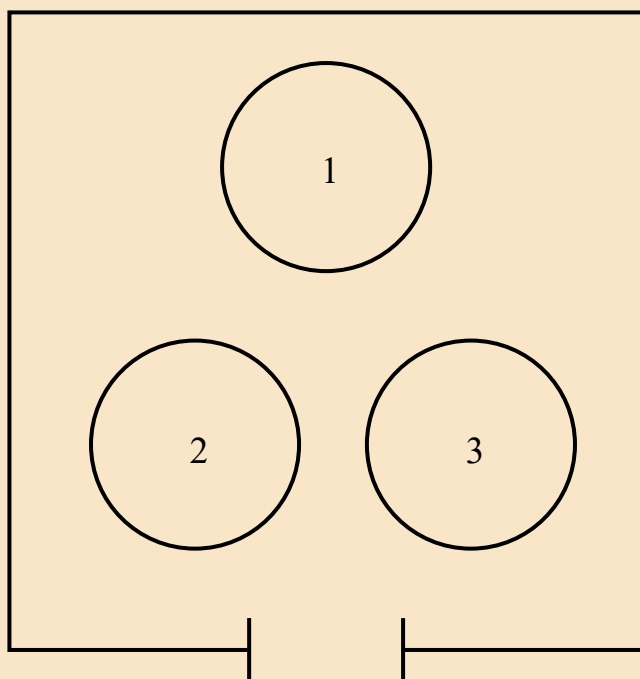
In this case, Western-style seating arrangements seat the host and their spouse across from each other at one table, and a cohost and their spouse at the other table.



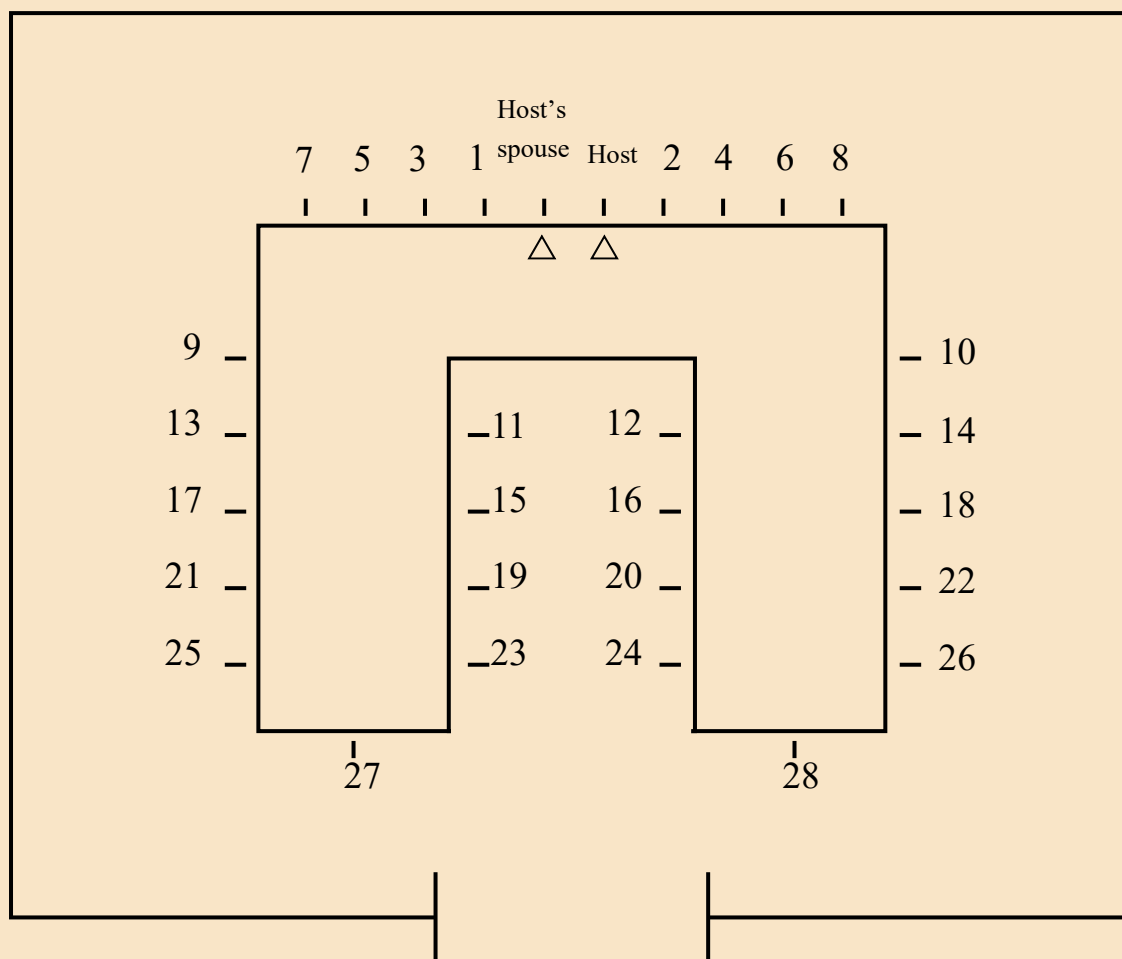
Seating at two round tables (2).

The host and their spouse sit across from the guests of honor at different tables.



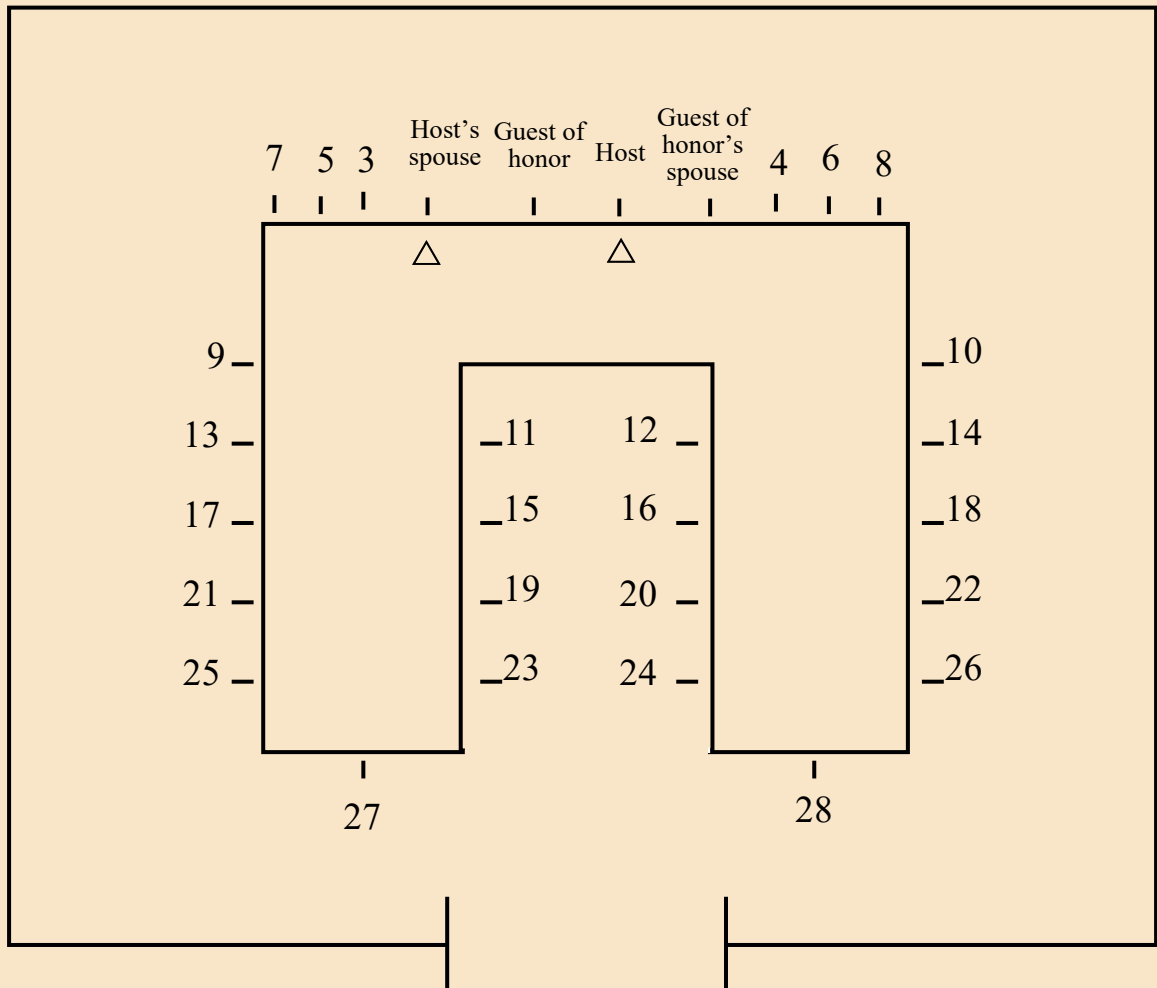


Arrangement for three or four tables.



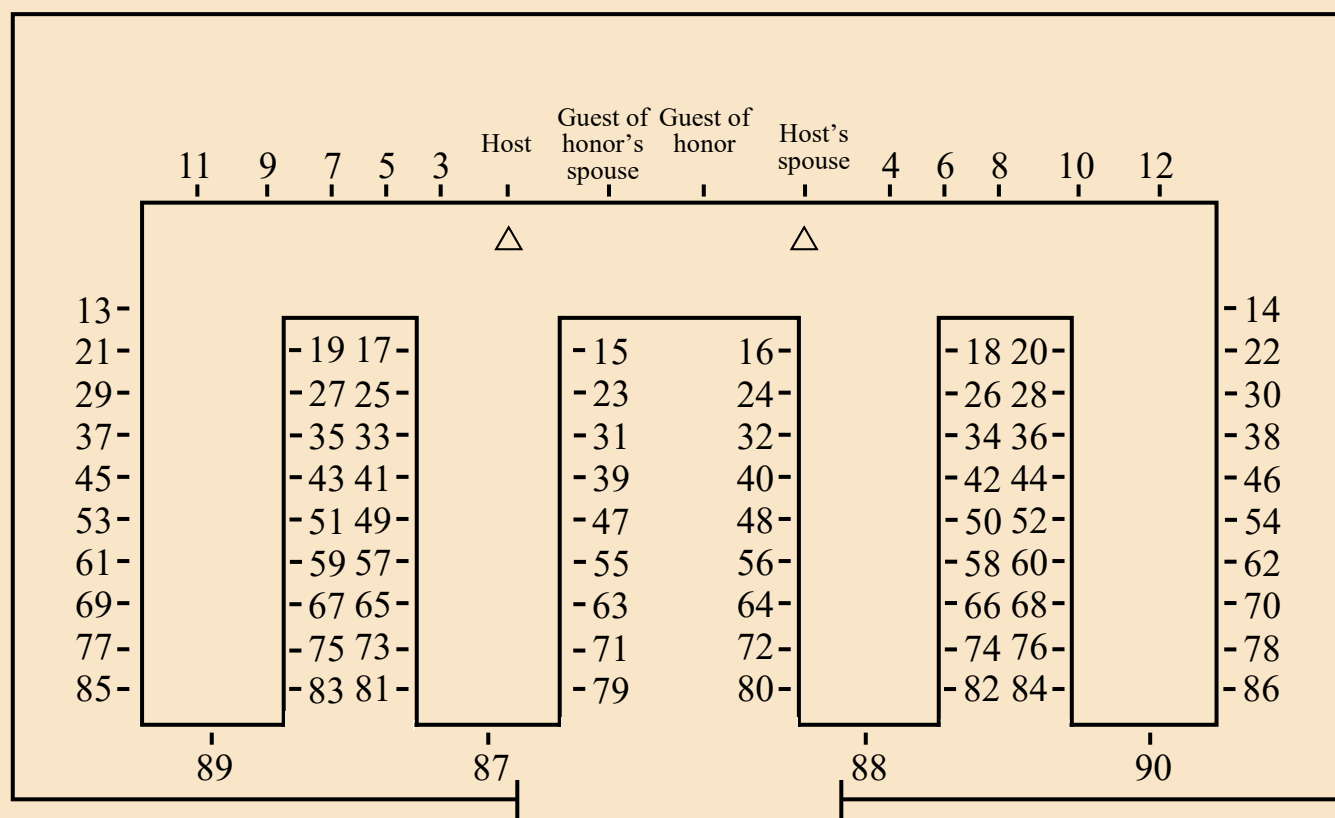
### Horseshoe-style seating (1).

When the rank of the host and their spouse is higher than that of the guests, the host and their spouse are seated at the middle of the top, with the guests seated to the right of the host's spouse and then the left of the host in order of precedence.



### Horseshoe-style seating (2).

When the host and their spouse and the guests of honor are of equal rank, they are seated alternately at the middle of the top side to show equal respect.



Double horseshoe-style seating.

If the rank of the guests of honor is higher than that of the host and their spouse, a seating chart can be arranged like this, such as when a premier and spouse host a banquet for another country's president and spouse.

### **2.3. Tableware setting**

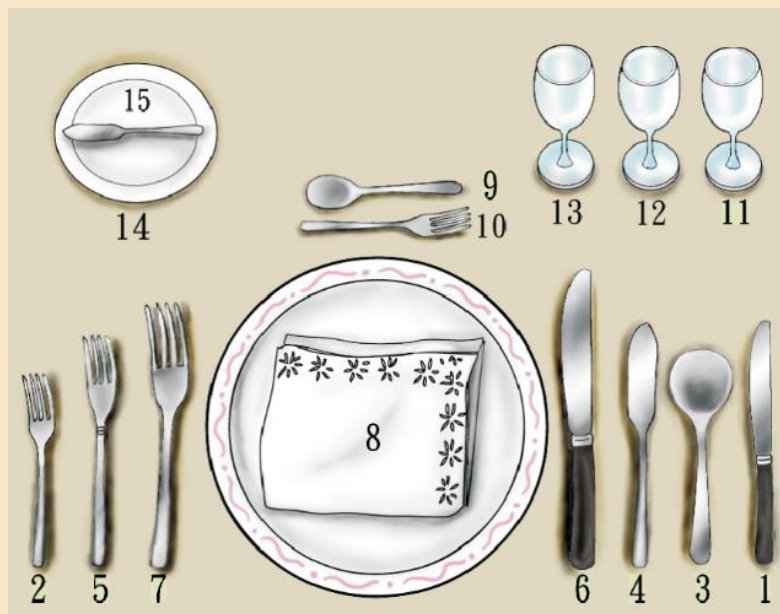
#### **Cutlery and glassware**

Wine and water glasses are placed above and to the right of the service plate, and a small bread plate is placed above and to the left of the service plate. The outermost cutlery is used first, with the fork held in the left hand and the knife in the right (opposite for those who are left-handed). The used cutlery is placed on the plate itself. The soup spoon should not be placed in the bowl. When leaving the table during a meal for a break or to get some bread, the knife and fork should be placed apart in the four o'clock and eight o'clock positions on the plate. After finishing the meal, used cutlery should be left side by side in the four o'clock position on the plate. The fork should be placed tines pointing up and the knife blade facing in. (See figures 2-6.)

#### **Napkin**

It is customary to wait for the host's spouse to open their napkin first before putting your own on your lap. Use the corners of the napkin to wipe your mouth, but do not use it to clean the cutlery or to wipe your face. When leaving the table during the meal, lay the napkin over the back of the chair or on its armrest. After the meal is finished, loosely fold the napkin and place it to the left of the plate. (See figures 7-12.)

Figure 2: Western-style tableware arrangement



1. Salad knife
2. Salad fork
3. Soup spoon
4. Fish knife
5. Fish fork
6. Dinner knife
7. Dinner fork
8. Napkin
9. Dessert spoon
10. Dessert fork
11. White wine glass
12. Red wine glass
13. Water glass
14. Bread plate
15. Butter knife

## How to use a knife and fork



Figure 3: Hold the fork in your left hand and the knife in your right hand.



Figure 4: When cutting, stick the tines of the fork into one side of the cut of meat, then cut off a bite-sized portion with the knife.



Figure 5: Resting position for the knife and fork when taking a break during a meal. (The knife and fork should be placed on the plate itself, without their handles touching the table.)



Figure 6: Position for the knife and fork after finishing a meal.



## How to use a napkin



Figure 7: Place the napkin on your lap with its fold facing towards you.



Figure 8: Refrain from using the napkin as a bib.



Figure 9: Gently use the corners of the napkin to wipe your mouth.



Figure 10: Refrain from using the napkin to wipe your face.



Figure 11: When leaving the table during a meal, lay the napkin over the back of your chair or on its armrest.



Figure 12: After the meal is done, fold the napkin loosely and place it on the table.

## 2.4. Table manners

- Don't leave purses, cell phones, or other personal belongings on the table.
- Bring your food up to your mouth, rather than lean over towards your food.
- Chew with your mouth closed, and don't speak too loudly.
- Finish the food on your plate if possible, but don't force yourself to do so.
- Refer to figures 13-14 for the proper way of eating soup, and remember never to make slurping noises.
- When removing a bone or fruit seed from your mouth, cover your mouth with your hand or napkin and spit it gently into your hand before placing it on your plate. Don't spit it directly onto the plate or table, as in figure 15.
- When you want to use a condiment or other item on the table not immediately in front of you, ask those near you to pass it to you, rather than reach across them, as in figure 16.
- When eating bread, break off small pieces and eat them one bite at a time. Other food should be cut into bite-sized pieces and chewed and swallowed before putting more food into your mouth. You should not, however, cut an entire piece of meat into small pieces all at once.
- During the meal, refrain as much as possible from sneezing, coughing, yawning, or blowing your nose. If you must do so, use your handkerchief or napkin to cover your mouth.
- Compliment your host on the food, especially if they personally

cooked the food.

- In most Western cultures, toasts can be proposed, but it is not common to drink the contents of your glass all at once, so please don't ask your guests to do so.
- If you drop and break a piece of tableware, remain calm and wait for assistance from the service staff. If you need to summon a member of the service staff, signal with your hand, palm facing inward, instead of calling them for help, as in figure 17.
- It is inappropriate to apply makeup or use a toothpick while at the dining table, as in figures 18 and 19.
- In most Western cultures, the host will generally deliver a speech before the dessert course. In Scandinavian countries and at banquets hosted by Taiwanese, however, the host will more commonly give a speech before the start of the meal.

## Proper way to eat soup



Figure 13: Skim the soup from the front of the bowl to the back. Bring the soup spoon up to your mouth, and eat from the side of the spoon without slurping.



Figure 14: To finish your soup, use your left hand to gently tilt the bowl away from you in order to scoop up the soup with your spoon. Do not pick up the soup bowl to drink directly from it.



Figure 15: Don't spit bones or other inedible parts of your food directly onto the plate or the table.

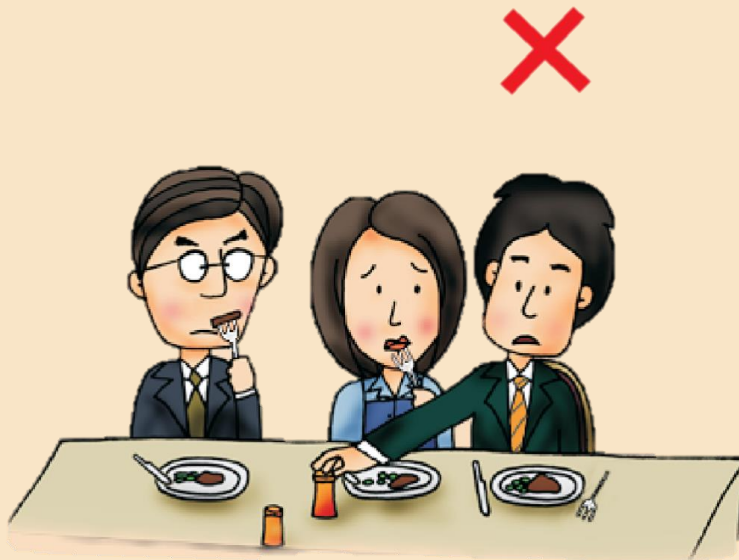


Figure 16: If you need an item on the table that is not within your reach, ask the person next to you to pass it to you.



Figure 17: If you need help from the service staff, simply lift your hand. Don't shout or snap your fingers.

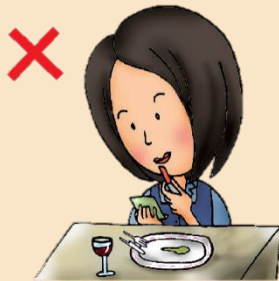


Figure 18: It is inappropriate to apply makeup or brush your hair at the table.



Figure 19: Don't use a toothpick or your finger to pick your teeth at the table.



## How to properly hold wine and liquor glasses



Hold wine and champagne glasses by the stem.



Hold brandy glasses with your palm at the base of the bowl and with the stem passing through your middle and index fingers. The warmth of your hand will help release the aromas in the liquor.



Hold tall and skinny beer glasses by the lower, narrower part of the glass.



Hold long-stem cocktail glasses as you hold a wine glass.

## 2.5. Types of banquets and parties

- **Luncheon or business lunch**  
Typically held between noon and 2:00 p.m.
- **Dinner**  
Usually held after 6:00 p.m., often with couples invited.
- **State banquet**  
Official banquet held to welcome a visiting head of state.
- **Supper**  
Held after an opera or concert performance. In Europe or the United States, a supper is often comparable to a dinner banquet in size and scale.
- **Tea party**  
May be held either between breakfast and lunch, or between lunch and dinner.
- **Cocktail, cocktail party, reception**  
Time should be specified in the invitation.
- **Garden party**  
Time should be specified in the invitation.
- **Buffet**  
May or may not have assigned seating, depending on individual circumstances. Guests typically serve themselves and eat in the order they arrive.
- **Soirée**  
Held after 6:00 p.m., and usually includes dinner and entertainment such as a musical performance or a dance.

## 2.6. Buffet etiquette

- Properly queue in the buffet line, do not cut the line, and refrain from talking while taking your food.
- Take reasonable portions of food in the order in which it is served on the buffet table.
- Don't take excessive portions of food so that it piles up on your plate, as indicated in figure 20.
- Don't get up from the table until you have finished chewing your food. It is not appropriate to chew and walk at the same time.
- Don't stack your plates when finished or reuse your plates. Instead, return them to the designated area or ask a member of the service staff to remove them.



Figure 20: Don't overload your plate while taking food at a buffet.



While at a buffet, wrap a napkin around your cold beverage to prevent it from dripping on you.

### 3. Dress



### **3.1. Importance of appropriate dress**

Dress reflects your manners and character, while offering insight into the culture, traditions, and economy of your homeland. You should try to appear neat and approachable in accordance with your status and age, as well as the occasion.

### **3.2. For men**

#### **1. Formal dress**

##### **(1) White tie and tailcoat**

A formal suit with a tail or dress coat and a white tie is the quintessence of formal attire. It is worn during state banquets, formal dinners, opera performances, and other evening events. The tailcoat and trousers should be made from black wool cloth. The front of the tailcoat should just reach the waistline and form a swallowtail with the back of the coat, giving the coat its hallmark trait. The trousers usually lack cuffs and feature black satin stripes masking the side seams. A white piqué shirt or a white shirt pleated in the front sporting a stiff wing collar, together with a white bowtie, should be worn. The waistcoat should be made from white cotton fabric with floral patterns. Other formal accessories include leather or white cotton gloves, black silk socks, and black patent leather shoes. Top hats are no longer considered fashionable (see figure 21).

##### **(2) Morning coat**

A morning coat should be worn when attending formal daytime events, such as presentations of credentials, weddings, funerals, celebrations, and official visits. The tailcoat should extend to the back of the knees, and a black one is preferable to a gray one. Wearing a black tailcoat with a gray waistcoat or a gray tailcoat with a black waistcoat is usually acceptable. Morning dress also includes trousers with dark gray stripes; a black twill tie with white, silver, or gray stripes; a white soft-front or regular soft-collar dress shirt; a black or gray silk top hat; gray sheepskin gloves; black silk socks; and black patent leather shoes (see figure 22).

Note: Tailcoats and morning coats are rarely seen at social events nowadays.

### **(3) Black tie / semiformal dress: tuxedo, smoking jacket, dinner jacket, dinner suit, or dinner coat**

The above are the norm for black-tie (semiformal) formal evening events. Jackets are typically black, featuring lapels faced with black satin. White jackets may also be suitable for formal summertime evening events. Trousers should be black with a silk braid covering the seam. White dress shirts with a piqué or pleated front should be worn. As for accessories, black bowties, black socks, and black patent leather shoes should be chosen (see figure 23).

## **2. General attire**

### **(1) Suit, business attire, or lounge suit**

This type of clothing is proper for official work-related occasions, such as paying a visit or attending a conference. Men should wear white or light-colored shirts, together with a necktie, black or dark shoes, and black or dark socks. The jacket and trousers should be the same color, preferably a dark color, and made from the same material. Men may wear a light-colored suit in the summer or during the day, but a dark suit is more appropriate for a formal banquet.

Note: When wearing a single-breasted suit, never button the bottom button, whether it has two or three buttons. You may unbutton the jacket when sitting down, but button it up after standing up. As for a double-breasted suit, the bottom button may be buttoned or left unfastened. However, never unbutton the other buttons when sitting down. When wearing a three-piece suit, leave the bottom button of the waistcoat unbuttoned. On formal occasions, you should never remove a suit jacket or tie or wear a short-sleeved shirt under the jacket. Suspenders, if worn, should not be visible. A necktie should have an elegant color and pattern, and be the same width as the jacket collar and long enough to reach the belt. The suit jacket pockets are for decoration only and should be empty, with pocket covers kept outside of the pockets. The color of the shoes, socks, and suit jacket must complement one another. For instance, dark shoes and socks should be worn with a dark suit jacket. Red, yellow, white, or other light-colored socks should not be worn with dark shoes.

Note: On formal occasions, either a Western suit or national costume may be worn.

## **(2) Smart casual or business casual**

On some informal occasions, men may wear smart casual or business casual attire. Wearing casual trousers with a long-sleeved shirt, leather or casual shoes (except for sports shoes), and a jacket or coat is acceptable. Ties are normally not worn on such occasions.

## **(3) Casual**

On informal social occasions, casual trousers or jeans with a polo shirt and casual shoes, but not sports shoes, may be worn.

### **3.3. For women**

On formal occasions, makeup, fragrance, and hairstyle should not be excessive. Accessories should not be distracting, such as by making tinkling sounds. For daytime activities, stockings, accessories, clothes, or shoes with small beads, sequins, or bright gold, silver, or other shiny materials should be avoided. Select earrings of matte, light-colored materials.

Women may wear cheongsams, dresses, or suits, as appropriate. As for cheongsams, normally short ones are worn during the day, and long ones or an evening gown with a shawl (but not a sweater) at night. High-heeled shoes should be worn, as flat shoes or low-heeled shoes would be inappropriate. According to Western etiquette, stockings should not be worn with open-toed high-heeled shoes or with flat shoes. During a daytime event, women may wear hats unless it is a religious event. On garden tours, hats and parasols are allowed.



Figure 21: Men's tailcoat



Figure 22: Men's morning coat





Figure 23: Women's evening gown and men's black tie ensemble

## 4. Accommodation



Whether staying at home, as a house guest, or in a hotel, be clean, tidy, hygienic, and quiet for the comfort and convenience of others. Etiquette is especially important when staying as a house guest or at a hotel in order to avoid upsetting others. Some suggestions are provided below:

#### **4.1. At home**

- Stay quiet at home and try not to make too much noise, such as by singing loudly.
- When opening or closing doors and windows, moving objects, cooking, taking the stairs or walking, do so lightly in order to minimize sounds and vibrations that may disturb others.
- Remind children not to run around or be noisy.
- When raising a pet in an apartment, try to keep it from bothering neighbors.
- When decorating, renovating, or moving, choose appropriate times and avoid times of rest, such as early mornings, lunch breaks, and nighttime.

#### **4.2. As a house guest**

- ◎ House guests should retire at the same time as the host or other guests.
- ◎ When entering someone's house or residence, knock, call out, or ring the doorbell. Do not barge or sneak in.
- ◎ Do not use a host's phones, open the refrigerator, or receive guests without permission.
- ◎ Before hosting a large get-together or traveling a long distance at night, notify the host or neighbors.
- ◎ After using the bathroom, remove any hair in the drain.
- ◎ Before moving out, clean the bedroom and bathroom, restoring them to their original condition.

#### **4.3. At a hotel**

- ◎ When making a reservation, be sure to tell the hotel how many days you will be staying.
- ◎ Refrain from making noise, speaking, and listening to the TV, radio, and other electronic devices at a volume that would disturb others.

- © Do not wear pajamas or slippers when walking in public areas or calling on other guests (see figure 24).
- © Do not smoke in bed or steal from the hotel. Do not leave the room or bathroom in a mess.
- © Leave a tip, as appropriate, and check out on time.
- © Do not let children run in public areas, such as corridors, restaurants, or lobbies (see figure 25).
- © When showering, put the shower curtain on the inside of the bathtub in order to keep the bathroom floor dry (see figure 26).



Figure 24: Do not wear pajamas or slippers in the public areas of a hotel.



Figure 25: Do not let children run in public areas.



Figure 26:

1. Bottom of the shower curtain is inside the bathtub.
2. Nonslip bathtub mat is inside the bathtub.
3. Bidet
4. Bath mat is in front of the bathtub.

## 5. Travel



When traveling by foot or by car, or when taking an elevator or stairs, etiquette is very important and should not be disregarded.

### **5.1. On foot**

When two people are walking, it is more polite to have a superior or a woman walk in front or on the right side. If three people walk abreast, the most senior person should be in the middle, and the second-most senior person on the right. If three people walk in line, the most senior person should walk in front, and the second-most senior person should take the middle position.

When a man and a woman walk together, the man should be on the woman's left. However, should the street be on her right, he may walk on her right due to safety considerations. In addition, men should help women carry heavy objects, open doors, and hold umbrellas (see figure 27).

When changing directions, check to see if anyone is behind you to avoid a collision. Pay attention to your personal belongings, especially in crowded areas. Should you bump into or brush against someone by accident, apologize. Be careful when choosing a location to get into or out of a taxi so as to avoid blocking traffic and endangering pedestrians.





Figure 27: When a man and woman walk abreast, the man should be on the woman's left side or next to the road.

## **5.2. By car**

When riding in a car, the seating arrangement will depend on whether a chauffeur or the host is driving.

### **1. Cars driven by a chauffeur**

When the steering wheel is on the left side, the higher-status passenger sits in the right rear seat and the other passenger takes the left rear seat. The positions are usually reversed when the steering wheel is on the right side. (Note: When the steering wheel is on the left side, all countries follow this principle. However, when the steering wheel is on the right side, this principle is not always followed, as in Japan, where the right rear seat is always reserved for the higher-status passenger.) Whether the steering wheel is on the left or right, the front passenger seat always has a lower status. According to international protocol, female passengers should never sit in the front.

To get into a car when there are three passengers and cars are driven on the right-hand side, the middle-status passenger should enter using the left rear door. However, when downtown or in areas with busy traffic, this passenger may enter first using the right rear door and slide over to the left side, with the highest-status passenger entering next. The third passenger should enter using the right front door. When exiting the vehicle, the passenger in front should exit first and open the door for the others, helping the highest-status passenger first and then the second-highest-status passenger.

### **2. Cars driven by the host**

In this scenario, the front passenger seat is reserved for the guest of honor. As the car is being driven by the host, the guest of honor should sit in front to avoid making the host feel like a chauffeur, which would be impolite. If a host couple drives for a guest couple, the host couple should sit in front and the guest couple in back. As the front seat is usually more comfortable, let passengers who are older or have more seniority sit in the front seat. Should the guest in front be dropped off first, the guest with the next priority should move to the front.

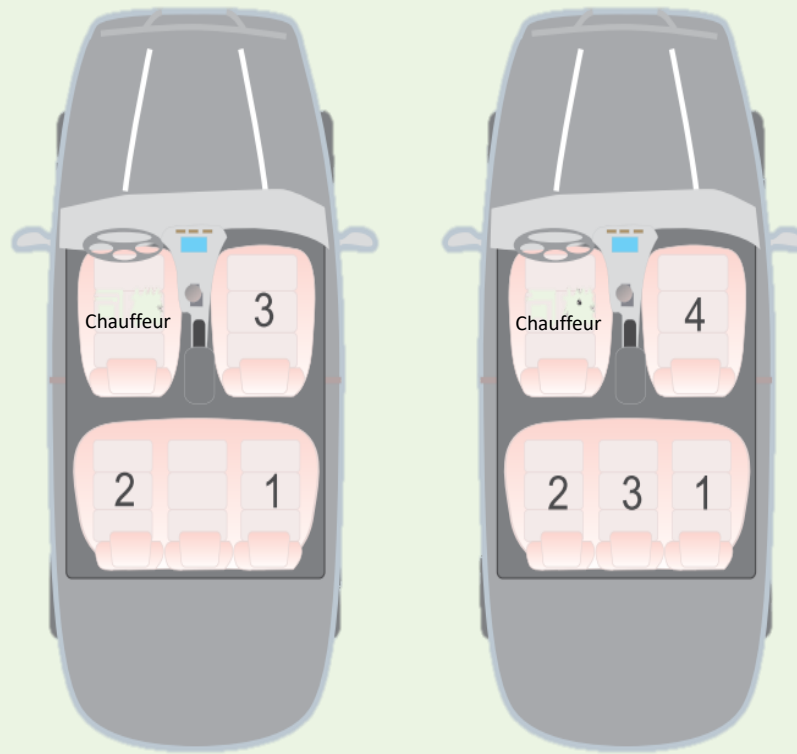
Note: To respect the comfort and personal space of passengers, do not make a guest sit in the rear middle seat. Instead, arrange for an additional vehicle,

especially for official events or when male and female passengers are taking the same vehicle.

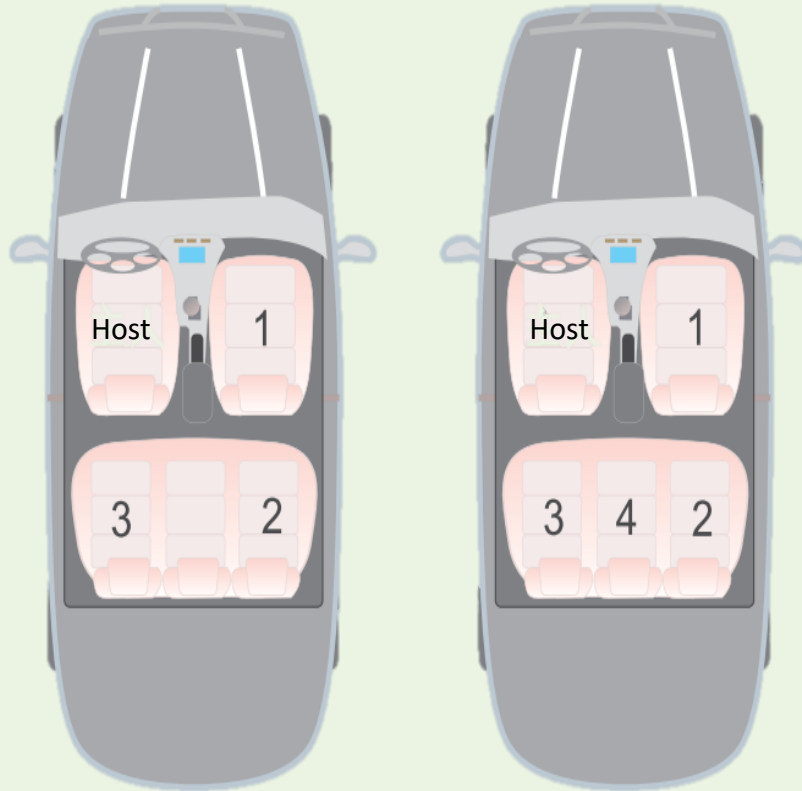
Note: When traveling by bus, train, or other forms of mass transportation, remember that the highest-status passengers should be seated in the front. Also, they should board last and exit first.

### Seating charts when steering wheel is on the left

When a chauffeur is driving, the right rear seat is for the most senior passenger.

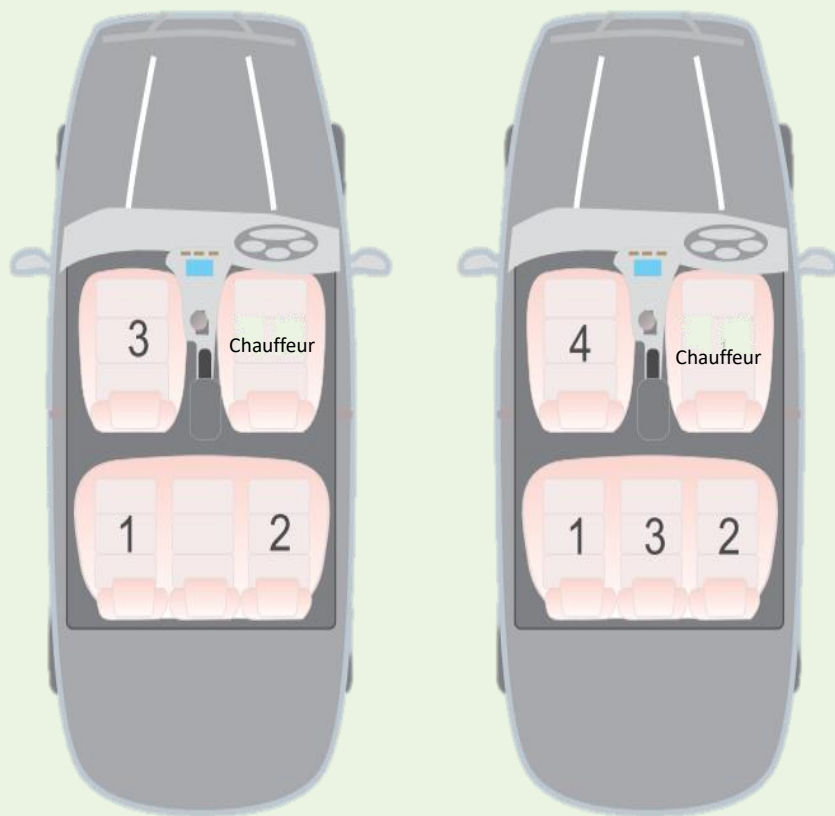


When the host is driving, the front passenger seat is for the most senior passenger.

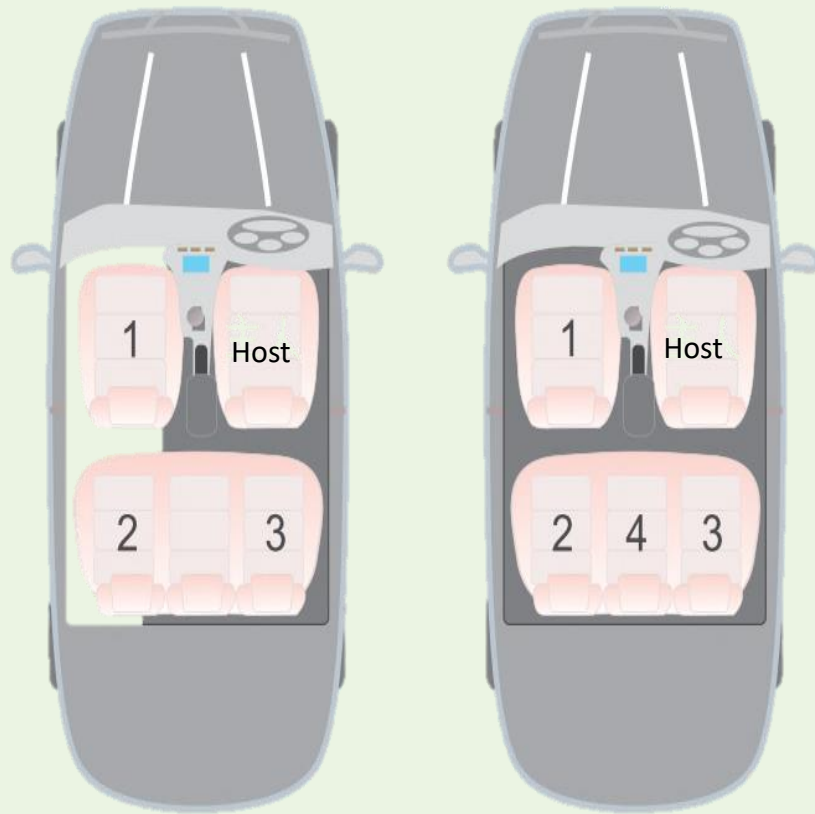


### Seating charts when steering wheel is on the right

When a chauffeur is driving, the left rear seat is for the most senior passenger.



When the host is driving, the front passenger seat is for the most senior guest.



### Seating chart for a jeep

The front passenger seat is for the most senior guest.





**Seating charts for a bus with nine seats**

The right seat in the middle row is for the most senior passenger.



### Seating chart for a tour bus

The far right seat in the first row is for the most senior passenger, with the next-most senior passengers sitting next to them. The order is repeated for the subsequent rows.



### **5.3. In an elevator**

- It is basic manners to let people of more senior status, women, the elderly and infirm, and mothers with small children enter and exit the elevator first.
- Before entering an elevator, give way to the exiting passengers and then enter quickly for the convenience of others.
- According to United States custom, after entering an elevator, turn toward the elevator door so as to avoid standing face to face with other people. As for European custom, passengers should stand facing the middle of the elevator.
- Do not speak loudly or smoke in an elevator.

### **5.4. On the stairs**

- When walking up the stairs, let women and the elderly go first out of respect.
- When walking down the stairs, men and younger people should go first for safety's sake (see figure 28).

Figure 28: When walking up the stairs, women and older people go first; when heading down the stairs, men and younger people take the lead.



### 5.5. By airplane

- When traveling by plane, elderly, disabled, and pregnant passengers, as well as passengers with small children, should board first.
- In the cabin, if you want to change seats, wait until all passengers are seated and notify the flight attendant first.
- When disembarking, let the passengers in the rows in front of you disembark first and refrain from rushing.
- In the cabin, do not talk loudly or make noises that may disturb other passengers.
- When standing up or walking down the aisle, try not to bump into the seats of other passengers.



When dining, return your chair to the upright position for the sake of the passenger behind you.

### 5.6. By public transport

- When boarding a bus, let disembarking passengers off first.
- When disembarking, wait for your turn and do not rush.
- In a train, cell phones should be set to mute or vibrate mode in order to avoid disturbing others.
- When talking, speak quietly.
- Do not place your belongings in empty seats or other people's space.

- When boarding a bus, hand carry backpacks so as to avoid bumping into other passengers.
- If you have a cold, wear a mask.
- Do not stand in front of a door, disrupting the flow of passengers entering and exiting the bus or train.

## 6. Interaction



Though interaction covers a wide range of situations, this section will focus on introductions, handshakes, visits, gifts, and flags, with the goal of enabling people to interact in the proper way.

## 6.1. Introductions

Before making an introduction, the host should first take into account any concerns or inconveniences among the parties to be introduced, and should ask the parties about potential problems beforehand when necessary. In addition, it is not appropriate to make introductions to those who are engaged in conversation or who are preparing to depart.

### Order of introductions

- A man should be introduced to a woman, except when a woman is meeting someone more senior or of higher rank (such as a president, bishop, ambassador, or government minister), in which case the woman should be introduced first.
- A person of lower status should be introduced to a person of higher status (see figure 29).
- A younger person should be introduced to an elder.
- An unmarried person should be introduced to a married person.
- A guest should be introduced to the host.
- An individual should be introduced to the group.

Note: Sunglasses should be removed during introductions.

### Titles used during introductions

Generally speaking, men are addressed with the title *Mr.*, married women with *Madame* or *Mrs.*, and unmarried women with *Miss*, while *Ms.* can be used for both married and unmarried women. Convention in the Republic of China (Taiwan) calls for addressing presidents, vice presidents, premiers, and government ministers by their official title alone, without their surname. Western practice, meanwhile, calls for addressing these high government officials with the honorific *Your Excellency*. *Your Majesty* is used for kings and queens; *General* for generals, lieutenant generals, and major generals; *Colonel* for colonels and lieutenant colonels; *Your Excellency* or *Mr./Madam Ambassador* for ambassadors; and *Mr./Madam Minister* for government ministers.



Note: In a Western context, *His Majesty* and *Her Majesty* are used when mentioning a king and a queen to a third party, and presidents, vice presidents, prime ministers, ministers, ambassadors and other high officials are referred to in the third person as *His Excellency* and *Her Excellency*.

#### Situations meriting self-introduction

- When the host's spouse and guests at an event are not acquainted, the guests may take the initiative to introduce themselves.
- Men who do not know the women sitting next to them at a formal dinner banquet should take the initiative to introduce themselves.
- When meeting new people at a reception, it is appropriate for both parties to exchange names and introduce themselves.



Figure 29: Introducing a person of lower status to a person of higher status.

## 6.2. Handshakes

- When shaking hands, stand about a step away from the other party, and extend your right hand with your thumb out and your other fingers together to exchange a handshake.
- The handshake should be neither too long nor too firm. To express cordiality, you can move your hand lightly up and down during the handshake, but not sideways or in circles.
- When shaking hands, smile and make eye contact with the other party (see figure 30). Gloves should also be removed beforehand.
- It is not necessary to bow during a handshake.

### Handshaking order

- A man and a woman meeting for the first time may prefer to acknowledge one another with a smile and a nod instead of a handshake.
- Unless he is older or of higher rank, a man greeting a woman should wait for the woman to extend her hand first.
- When two women meet, the elder or married woman should extend her hand first.
- Hosts are responsible for extending their hand first to greet guests.
- Do not extend your hand first when greeting someone older or of higher rank.

Note: In Europe and America, friends often hug in addition to exchanging a handshake when meeting and/or parting. But in principle, a man should not initiate a hug with a woman unless the woman expresses a desire to hug. In addition, cheek kissing is also common in Europe and North America, but it is generally only done by women to men and other women. It is common to touch just the right cheek, but there are also places in which it is expected to touch the right and then left cheeks. Cheek touching customs vary according to local tradition.



Figure 30: When shaking hands, smile and make eye contact with the other party.

### 6.3. Visits

For both official and personal visits, it is always appropriate to make a prior appointment so as to avoid being an uninvited guest. It is also important to arrive at the appointed time, neither early nor late. If, during the visit, the host is unable to engage in extended conversation, excuse yourself after a brief chat.

### 6.4. Gifts

- Remember to remove the price tag before wrapping a gift, and unless you are the one giving the gift, attach a card bearing the name of the gift giver as below:

With the compliments of  
Mr. & Mrs. Wang Da-ming

An example of a gift card in English.

Note: Chinese-language gift cards are usually printed with a red name on a white card.

- In some Western countries, it is acceptable to unwrap the gift directly after receiving it, so as to thank the giver and to compliment them on the gift.
- In Western custom, wedding guests who are not close relatives of the bride or groom are usually expected to give the new couple a beautiful or practical gift rather than money. Some couples provide a wedding registry with gifts for invited guests to buy either individually or collectively.
- When visiting a sick person at the hospital, it is proper to bring fresh fruit.
- Upon the passing of a friend or relative in Taiwan, it is appropriate to send a wreath of flowers with a written epitaph to the public funeral service.
- For funerals, written dedications, sympathy cards, banners and other epitaphs, as well as notes on wreaths, flower baskets, funeral crosses, and other gifts have the name of the deceased inscribed at the top with an accompanying expression appropriate to their gender and religion. The bottom of the epitaph carries the name of the person giving the offering with a phrase conveying their condolences. The Western

custom is to write the phrase “With deepest sympathy” at the top of a signed condolence card and place it in an envelope that carries the name of the deceased, such as “To the Funeral of the Late Minister John Smith.” When attending a funeral, it is appropriate for men to wear a dark suit with a black or dark tie and for women to wear a dark or black dress.

## 6.5. Flags

- **When flying two flags, the position of honor is on the right**  
(From the perspective of the flag itself facing its intended audience)  
When flying national flags, the position of honor is on the right. The host country's flag occupies the rightmost position of honor, with other nations' flags to its left. Therefore, when flying the national flags of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and a host country at the same time, the host's flag should be on the right (see figures 31 and 32).
- When flying the flag of the R.O.C. (Taiwan) next to non-national flags in Taiwan, the R.O.C. (Taiwan) flag should be in the middle, with its flagpole slightly higher and its size slightly larger (see figure 33).
- When flying multiple national flags at the same time, the flags should be the same size and height to show equality.
- When flying more than 10 national flags together, they should be arranged in alphabetical order according to the first letter of each country's English or French name. The national flag of the host country, however, should still occupy the position of honor to the right of all the other flags, which would appear to an observer facing the flags as the leftmost position.
- When flying fewer than 10 national flags side by side, with an even number of flags, the host country's national flag should occupy the right of the middle two positions, and the other countries' flags should be arranged in alphabetical order alternately to the right and left of the center. If there are an odd number of flags, the host's national flag should be positioned in the middle (see figure 34).

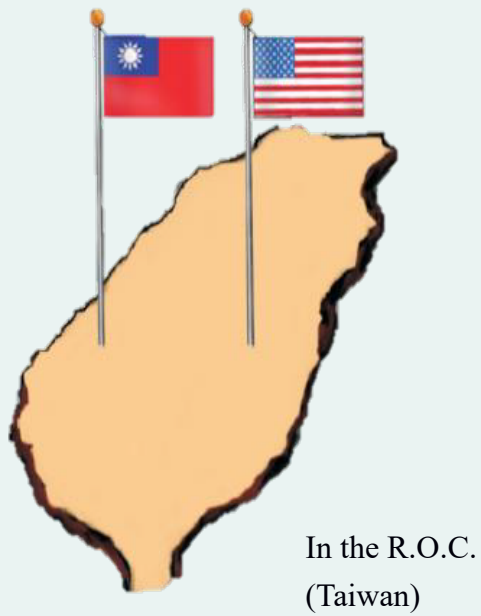


Figure 31: In Taiwan, the R.O.C. (Taiwan) national flag flies on the right.

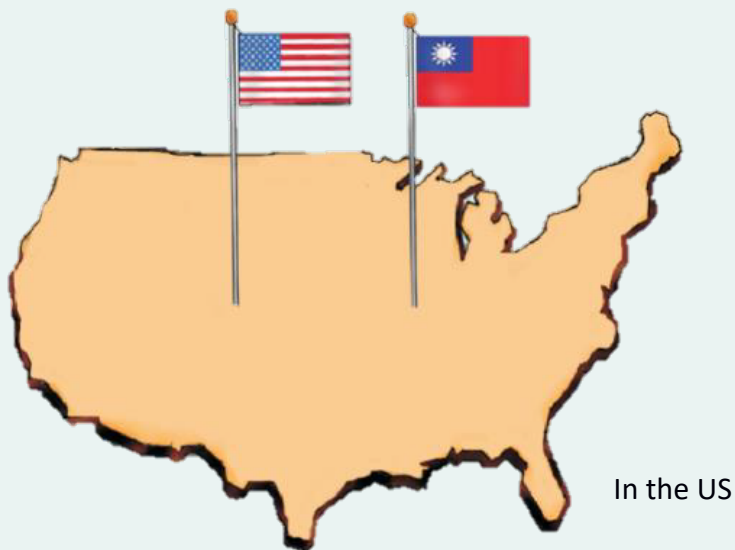


Figure 32: In a foreign country, the R.O.C. (Taiwan) national flag stands on the left.

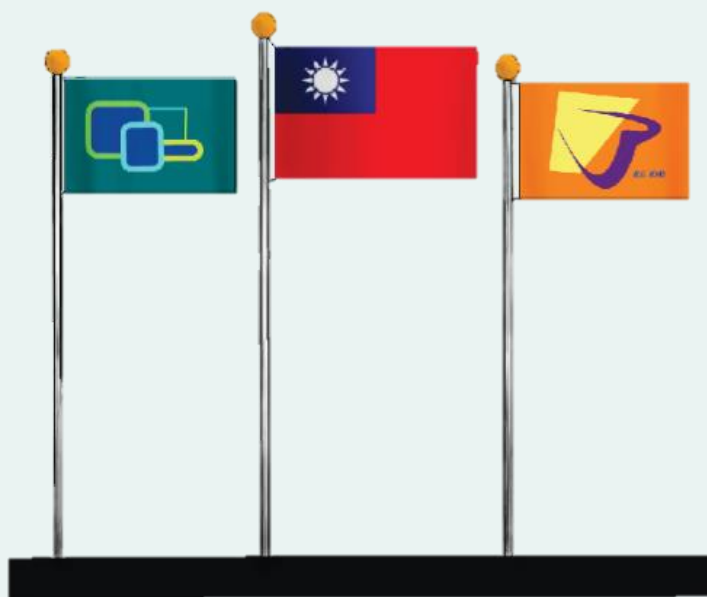


Figure 33: If a national flag is flown next to non-national flags, the national flag should be in the middle, higher than the other flags.

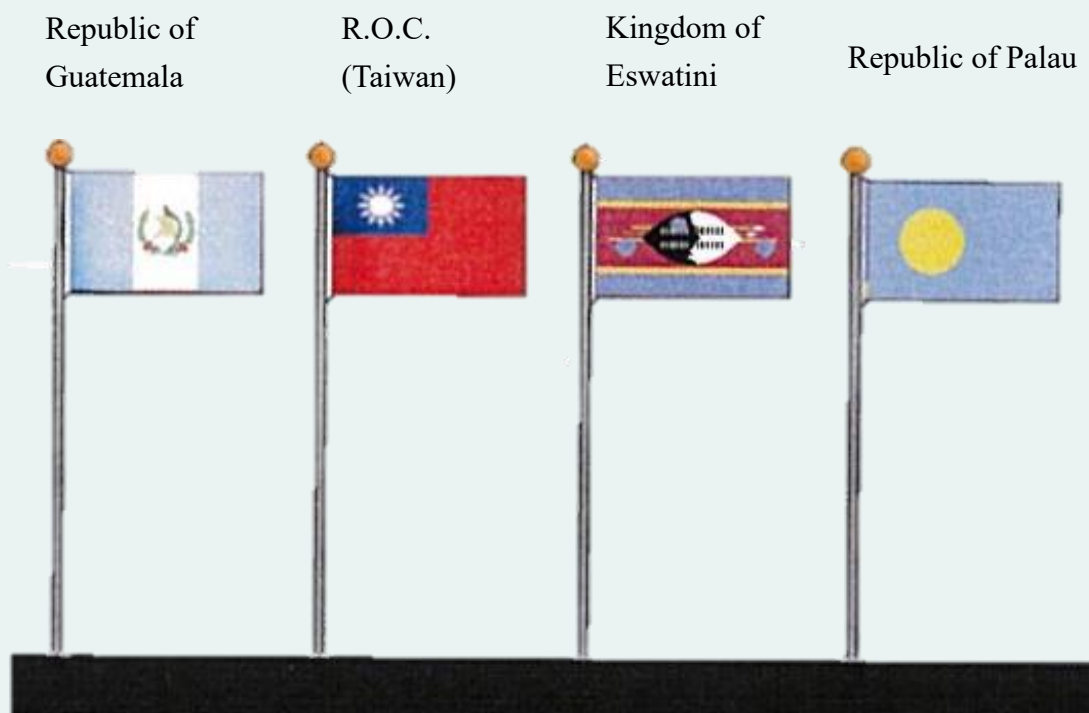
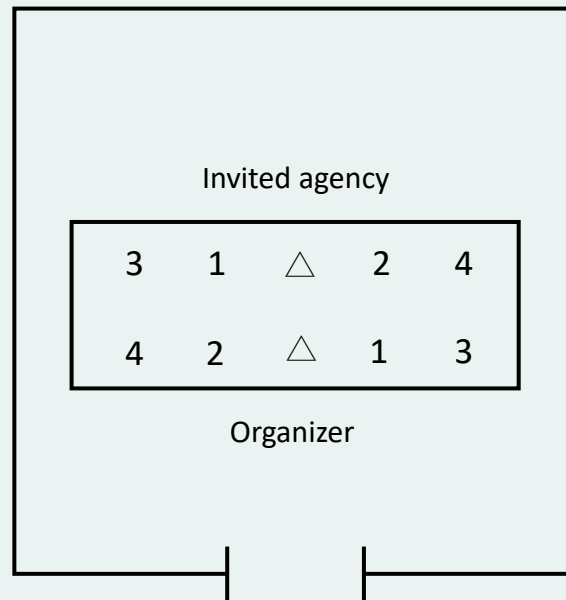


Figure 34: When flying fewer than 10 national flags side by side, and there are an even number of flags, the flag of the host country should be flown on the right of the two middle positions.

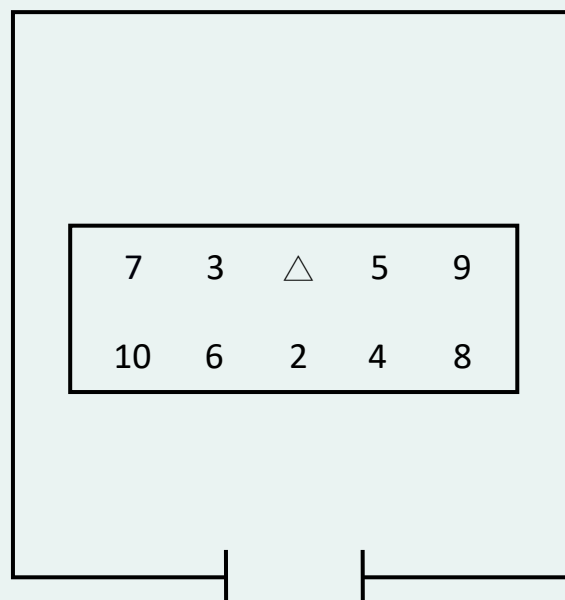


## 6.6. Seating arrangements for meetings

Small meeting with participants from another agency

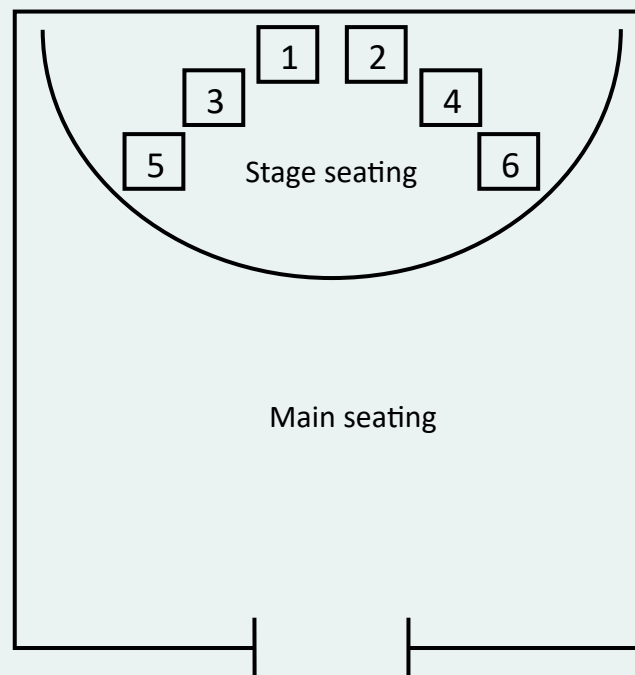
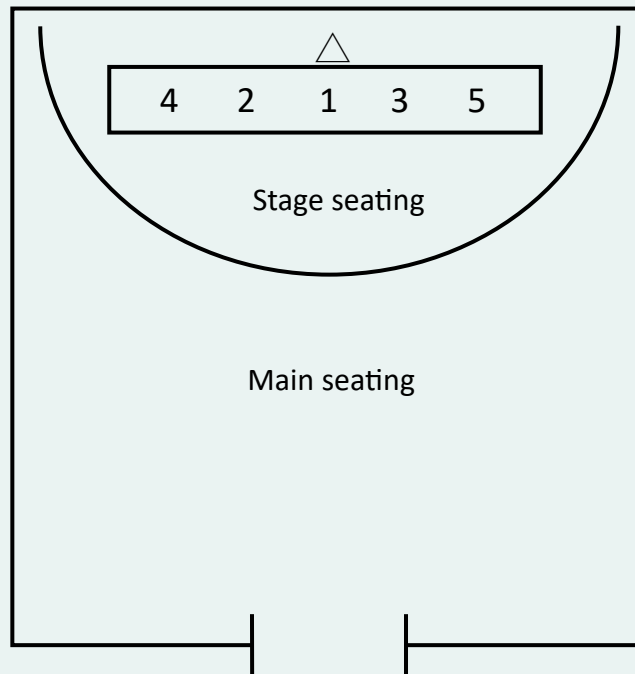


Small internal meeting



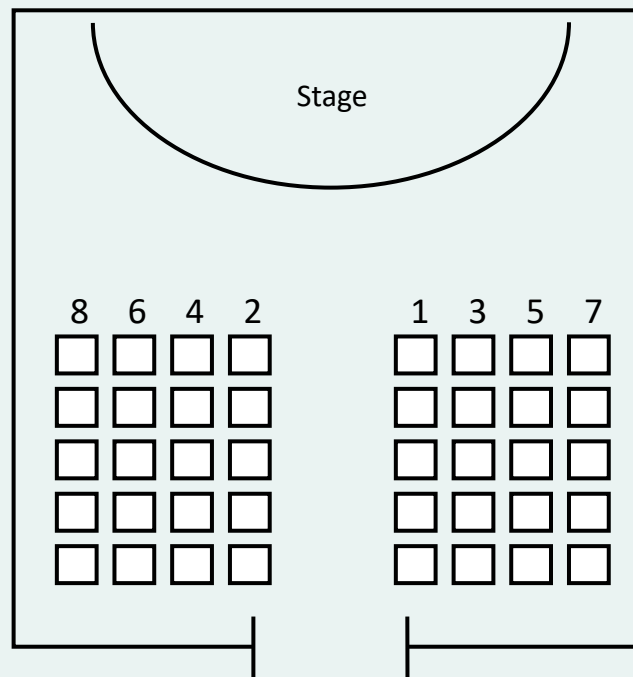
### Large conference (stage seating)

The seat of honor is in the middle, with the other guests seated alternately to the right and left in descending order of status.



### Large conference (main seating)

The front seat immediately to the right of the central corridor is the seat of honor, with the next-most important seat to the left, and so on.



### Conference order of address:

The head or representative of the organizing agency speaks first, after which the invited guests speak in descending order of rank.

### **6.7. Small talk**

- After the host and guests are introduced, it is appropriate to engage in some small talk. Conversation should avoid religion, politics, marriage, age, work, salary or other private topics in favor of more general topics like weather and sports.
- To show respect during business meetings, conversation, and small talk, it is important to pay attention to oral hygiene in order to avoid affecting the atmosphere of the exchange.

### **6.8. Cell phones**

- Do not use a cell phone while driving.
- When attending a concert or conference, turn your cell phone off or switch it to mute mode to avoid creating a disturbance.
- During a meal, go to the lobby or outside the restaurant to use the phone, rather than talking or texting at the table.
- When talking on the phone in a public area, lower your voice and keep your conversation short.
- Avoid using your phone while walking in order to prevent an accident.

### **6.9. Email**

- Set up official and personal email accounts separately.
- Write official emails using correspondence conventions, including proper greetings and endings.
- The subject line should reflect the content of the email, explain its purpose, and serve as a reference for the recipient.
- Unless it concerns an urgent matter, do not mark the email as such.
- Reply to emails in a timely manner. If unable to fulfill the other party's request directly, reply with a brief explanation.
- Keep email contents short and concise.
- Before sending an email, review its contents to ensure they are accurate, check the list of recipients, and confirm if any other parties should receive a carbon copy (cc).
- If an error becomes evident after sending the email, immediately correct the error and resend the email, adding in the subject line that it is a revised version and that the previous message may be deleted.

### 6.10. Social media

- It can be difficult, or even impossible, to permanently delete data from the internet, so be careful when posting or uploading information.
- Real privacy does not exist on social media, so be prepared to face reactions of others and bear responsibility for what you say online.
- Apply the same standards of etiquette that you would follow in everyday life to your activity on social media.
- Do not take to social media to post angry screeds, spread rumors, or slander your employer or colleagues.
- When posting on social media, uphold the principles of honesty, sincerity, and positivity, and focus on highlighting your interests and skills.

## 7. Entertainment



### **7.1. Receptions and garden parties**

There is typically no assigned seating for these types of gatherings, and guests usually stand or sit while conversing and eating, creating a lively atmosphere.

- By convention, the host typically stands at the entrance of the venue to welcome the guests and shake their hands. Guests should avoid lingering in the reception area for too long, lest others are prevented from entering.
- The host of a reception may arrange to make a speech welcoming the guests, though this is not typical for garden parties.
- After the start of the reception or garden party, the host may mingle and make small talk with guests, and guests should speak with and introduce themselves to other guests rather than stand or sit alone.
- At the event's conclusion, the host may stand at the exit of the venue to see the guests off. Guests who decide to leave early may do so directly without bothering the host.

### **7.2. Concerts**

- You should enter the concert hall about 10 minutes prior to the start of the performance in order not to interrupt the program. If late, wait for an intermission between performances before entering the hall.
- Smoking, snacking, and whispering are not allowed in the concert venue. Cell phones should also be turned off (see figure 35).
- When entering the venue, the man should help his woman companion in checking her tickets and finding and taking her seat.
- Guests should wait for the curtain to close and applause to end before leaving the venue.



Figure 35: Using cell phones is not permitted during concerts.



### 7.3. Dances

- Dances are a form of diplomatic or social entertainment, and are normally divided into tea dances and dinner dances. There are also formal balls and masquerades, among other types of dances.
- Except in the case of a ball or a more formal occasion, it is acceptable to arrive late to a dance. If it is necessary to leave early, do so without disturbing the host or other attendees.
- When asking for a dance, it is necessary to first obtain the other party's consent, and when asking a married guest to dance, it is best to first seek their spouse's consent as a matter of courtesy.



A dance is typically opened by the host and their spouse, or by the guests of most advanced age or status.

## **7.4. Golf**

### **Courtesy on the course**

- Avoid being late for a round of golf. Plan to arrive at the course before the arranged tee time. If you have invited others for the round, you should arrive early to manage course registration.
- Bring appropriate clothing and equipment. The order of play on the first hole can be decided by drawing lots or by each player's handicap. The order of play on subsequent holes is based on the players' scores on the previous hole, with the player with the lowest score starting the play.
- When playing from the fairway, the player with the ball farthest from the green plays first. The other players should not stand in front of the one making the shot. While waiting for someone to make a shot, choose a club and prepare for your shot; after the other players have made their shots, proceed to your spot and make your shot.
- The first player to putt is the one whose ball is farthest from the hole. When walking on the green, do not step on or through the areas between the balls of the other players and the hole.
- Do not waste time while playing the course; follow the principle of walking fast and taking time to make your shot.
- The players in the group should only make their shots after the group ahead has walked to a safe distance.
- Fellow players should show courtesy in helping to look for a ball. If there is a delay while looking for a ball, let the players behind play through.
- After finishing a hole, players should leave the green directly.
- When a player is making a shot, the others should not stand within the player's line of sight or the range of their swing, and should not walk around or make conversation. Keep a safe distance from the player making the shot (see figure 36).
- When moving their ball, players should first seek permission from their fellow players.

### **Priority on the course**

- Each group of players has a responsibility to keep up with the group ahead. If a group has players that are a hole behind the group ahead and are affecting the group behind, that group should let the members of the group behind play through, no matter how many players are in

the group behind.

- Priority on the course should be determined according to how fast each group plays. Those playing a full round of 18 holes are entitled to pass those playing a shorter round.



Figure 36: When a player is making a shot, the others should not walk around or engage in conversation.