You’re the Guest…

It’s nice to be treated to a meal out and your host certainly wants you to enjoy yourself. Still, it’s important not to presume on your host’s hospitality or take advantage of his generosity.

- Respond to the invitation right away.
- Arrive on time.
- If you’re arrived before the host and have been asked to take a seat at the reserved table, it’s best not to order anything other than water, especially since you’re the guest.
- Never criticize the choice of table to the maître d; no matter how much you dislike the location. The host alone should request a switch.
- Wear your name tag on your right side. It can be read more easily by another person as you shake hands.
- Use an “official title” (e.g., Dr. Smith) when greeting someone, even if you know the individual personally.
  - Make sure that you hear the person’s name. If not, ask to have the name repeated.
  - Whenever possible, volunteer your name first. This demonstrates friendly confidence.
  - To remember a name after an introduction, repeat it several times during the conversation. In addition, try to associate the name with something about that person.
  - Make immediate eye contact and smile when introduced.
  - Always shake hands from a standing position. Hold the other person’s hand for a split second longer when shaking hands. This conveys confidence and pleasure in meeting the person.
- Talk to the person on your left, on your right, and across from you. Be attentive, listen, and choose your subject with care. Avoid topics that may lead to conflict or be inappropriate, such as politics, gossip, religion, off-color jokes, gender issues, and personal questions, i.e., age, weight, marital status and health.
- Watch your volume as well. The other diners at the restaurant have their own conversation to attend to.
- As a general rule, don’t choose the most expensive dishes on the menu, even if your host says, “Please don’t hesitate to order anything you want.” But don’t feel you have to order the cheapest items on the menu either. Try to order in the same general price range as your host or any other guests.
- If there are no prices on the menu, keep from going overboard by remembering that pork, chicken, pasta, and rice-based dishes are generally less expensive than beef, lamb, fish, shellfish, caviar, and anything with truffles.
- Never complain about the food or service – that’s the host’s responsibility and he’ll decide if and when.
- If you need to send food back, do it only if there is really something wrong with it, not because you’ve decided you don’t like it or would prefer something different.
- Since you’re the guest, don’t try to take the check or pressure the host to let you pay.
- Thank your host twice: once at the end of the meal and again, ideally, with a handwritten note the next day. At the very least, a phone call or an emailed thank-you is in order.
- Don’t forget to say: “Thank You”, and “Please”.

Sources: Emily Post’s Etiquette: Manners for a New World, 18th edition

Special Note to Mentees: Make a conscience effort to NOT order alcoholic drinks even if you are of legal age to do so. You always want to impress your mentor! Thank you!