

Culture File 17, Unit 17

Etiquette

There are many different 'unwritten rules' about eating and drinking. They are different in different countries. These are some 'rules' which are common in the U.S.A.

- Don't put your elbows on the table.
- Always serve women with food before men.
- Always serve guests first.
- To cut up food, hold your knife in the right hand and your fork in the left.
- When you eat soup, move the spoon away from you.
- Don't speak with your mouth full.

Culture File 18, Unit 18

Socializing

In North America, people may invite business acquaintances or co-workers to their homes. American houses are generally large and people like to entertain at home. It is seen as more personal than entertaining in a restaurant. It would be normal to take a gift if invited to someone's home.

Flowers are always a safe gift. Others are chocolate or wine, but something typical from your country is best of all. It will be a friendly occasion, and you will eat with their partner, and possibly their children. Once you have met the family of a business acquaintance, it is polite to ask about them at subsequent meetings.

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Weights and measures

The U.S.A. does not generally use the metric system. Canada, Australia and the U.K. do, but the U.K. still uses miles for road distances.

Spelling note: The endings of metric measures are written as *-er* in the U.S., but as *-re* in the U.K. and elsewhere: liter / litre, meter / metre.

Conversion chart:

Linear (approximately)

1 inch = 25 millimeters 1 foot = 30 centimeters
1 yard = 90 centimeters 1 mile = 1.6 kilometers

Weight

1 ounce = 28 grams 1 pound = 0.454 kilograms

Size

When you're shopping, you can ask, "Can you measure me?" if you don't know the sizes for clothes. But most stores can tell you your clothes size, or your shoe size in the U.S., British or 'Continental' (= International) systems.

Culture File 20, Unit 20

Cars

Words for cars are often different in American and British English.

American	British
Sports utility vehicle / SUV	Four wheel drive
MPV (multi purpose vehicle) / van	MPV / People Carrier
Sedan	Saloon
Station Wagon	Estate
Convertible	Convertible
sports car	sports car
limo	limousine

Words for parts of cars are also different.

American	British
(gear) shift / gear stick	gear lever
windshield	windscreen
fender / bumper	bumper
hood	bonnet
trunk	boot
gas pedal	accelerator
gas	petrol