

Global Culinary Essentials

Foreign Cuisines

This information is intended to be an aid in planning meals and meetings for participants from other cultures. One should not attempt to provide a meal or a setting that is typical of the participant's culture or cuisine. That is, do not try to create dishes from the participants' own local cuisine; they are able obtain authentic cuisine and experience their own culture readily at home. Rather, the information should be used to help incorporate foods, preparation methods, and customs that are enjoyed by the participants. This information should also help you avoid mealtime etiquette blunders and dietary faux pas. It is also likely that the meeting or meal attendees will wish to experience some of the local customs and cuisine. If you are able to provide this experience without offending their culinary sensibilities or violating their cultural norms, they are likely to be satisfied with the experience.

The Caribbean

Various settlers have influenced the cuisine of the Caribbean. Early settlers cultivated sweet potatoes, cassava, corn, papaya, and guava; they hunted iguana, and found abundant fish, shellfish, and fowl. The plants that flourished there included figs, oranges, bananas, breadfruits, mangoes, lemons, coffee and nutmeg. Later, settlers introduced wheat, olives, grapes, sugarcane, cattle and goats. The introduction of sugarcane and the sugar industry led to the production of molasses and rum. African slaves introduced their native foods, including okra, taro and ackee. Later yet, laborers came from China and India and they brought with them things such things as rice and curry.

The Caribbean can be divided into four groups; each is influenced by a different colonial power. The Spanish group consists of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. The French group includes Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint Bartholomew. The British group is made up of Jamaica, Barbados and Granada. The Dutch group consists of Aruba and Curaçao.

Many of these countries have their own culinary specialties. Jamaica is perhaps best known for its spicy vegetable soup known as pepper pot and ackee¹. Haiti is known for its creole-style dishes. Curaçao is known for its orange flavored liqueur. The Dominican Republic is known for Sancocho, a meat and vegetable stew. The island-state of Dominica is known for its mountain chicken, which is actually a large rather tasty frog. Barbados is known for its unusual seafood dishes made with flying fish, green turtles and sea urchins. In Puerto Rico you will find a cuisine notable for its use of sofrito², which serves as a base for many dishes as well as an all-purpose sauce. The cuisine of Cuba uses a great deal of black beans. Picadillo is a Cuban beef hash, flavored with raisins, olives, tomatoes and chili peppers.

¹ Ackee is an evergreen tree that has a fruit that resembles brains or scrambled eggs in appearance. The flavor is delicate and has leathery red and yellow fruits. Originally from western Africa, the tree has naturalized. It can also be found in Florida. The edible fleshy ripe arils of the tree is especially popular as a fruit in Jamaica. When unripe, the seeds and unripe arils are poisonous. An aril is a fleshy usually brightly colored seed covering.

² Sofrito is a mixture of onions, cilantro, garlic, sweet peppers and tomatoes that are fried in lard, which has been colored with annatto seeds. Annatto is a tropical tree. The seeds are used for coloring and sometimes as a flavoring agent, especially in Latin American cuisine.

The Caribbean Approach	
Milk Products	Evaporated and condensed milk are prevalent. Dairy-based desserts are common. Fresh milk is costly.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Endless varieties of fish and shellfish Pork is favored among those with Spanish heritage Beef and kid are popular on Jamaica All sorts of beans are used. Eggs are prevalent
Fruits and Vegetables	Great variety of tropical fruits and vegetables Starches (e.g., potatoes., sweet potatoes, yucca, taro and cassava) are dietary essentials
Breads and Cereals	Rice is a staple Corn and wheat flour are primary grains and used in baked goods Cassava bread is a specialty
Cooking fats	French influence: butter; Spanish influence: Lard Vegetables oil is also prevalent
Beverages	Coffee, fruit drinks, ices Fermented beverages from oranges, rice and spice
Seasonings	Cilantro (Coriander leaves) is widely used A great variety of herbs, spices, and citrus are used
Other	Coconut milk is used “as cream”
Cooking methods	Boiling, frying, grilling, pickling, salting and smoking are prevalent

Meal Patterns

Caribbean meals tend to emphasize starchy vegetables with a small portion of meat, poultry or fish. In many Caribbean countries breakfast consists of coffee with milk and bread; eggs, cereal and fruit may be added. The most popular lunch menu includes rice and beans with a meat product. In rural areas a starchy vegetable with dried salt cod is very common. The dinner meal is similar to lunch although extra meats, vegetables and beverages may be added followed by a fruit dish, ice cream or pastries for dessert. Fresh fruit is typically eaten as a snack.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Etiquette and mealtime behaviors are often consistent with those of their earlier colonial powers. In general terms, informality can be expected. Handshakes are common greetings, and business cards are often exchanged. Visitors should be punctual, but not be surprised by 30-minute delays. Formal titles and last names should be used unless invited to use a person’s first

name. It is acceptable to discuss business, while topics such as local politics and personal issues should be avoided.

Central America

Central America includes Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama. Many Indian tribes including the Mayans, who had a highly developed culture and cuisine, originally inhabited the area. The Spaniards arrived in the 1500's bringing with them their customs and foods such as bananas and sugarcane. The cuisine of Central America combines native techniques and ingredients with those from Europe and Africa. The Mayan influences include beans, chili peppers, corn, peanuts, pineapples, squash, and tomatoes. They also domesticated turkeys and kept bees for honey. They hunted deer and other game and gathered fruit and vegetables as needed. The Europeans, primarily Spaniards, brought with them rice and pork, which have both become central components of Central American cuisine. Each of the Central American countries has its own characteristic cooking traditions. In Guatemala we find that seasonings are mild and that bean dishes are a primary staple. Some dishes that may seem unusual are fried iguana, boiled iguana eggs, and baked parrots. Honduran cooking emphasizes seafood; they use conch and sea turtles. Hot papusas, a corn dog filled with meat and black beans and cheese is considered a specialty. Nicaragua is known for a variety of meat soups, tripe soups and tamales; pork and beef dishes are also featured. In Costa Rica, rice is commonly eaten. Casado is a fish, meat, or chicken dish that includes rice, beans, and cabbage. One of the Panamanian favorite dishes is Sancocho, a stew containing pork, beef, ham, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, sausages and green bananas.

Meal Patterns

Generally three meals plus one or two snacks are eaten daily. The midday meal is typically the largest meal of the day. Appetizers are commonly served with the midday meal and at supper, and may consist of tiny baby ears of corn and little pieces of charcoal-broiled foods, cheese filled pastries, or soft boiled turtle eggs. Hot sauces and chili peppers may be served as mealtime condiments. A late afternoon coffee break is a common occurrence. Sandwiches, such as empanadas, tortillas or arreglados³ are eaten almost daily. Guava paste and custards, cakes, and fritters served with syrup are popular desserts. Fruit flavored ices and ice creams are often served as snacks.

³ Bread filled with meats.

The Central American Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and milk products are not prevalent. Evaporated milk and cream used in some foods. Cheeses are common.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Fish and shellfish are widely used. Pork and beef are common. Chicken, turkey, duck and other poultry. Lizards such as Iguana may be served All sorts of beans are used. Eggs are prevalent
Fruits and Vegetables	Great variety of tropical fruits and vegetables Cassava and plantains are common starches.
Breads and Cereals	Rice and corn are the primary staples. Corn in the form of <i>fresh masa</i> or <i>masa harina</i> are made into tamales and tortillas Corn and wheat flour are primary grains and used in baked goods Wheat flour is commonly used in baked goods.
Cooking fats	Lard is the most commonly used fat Butter and oils are occasionally used.
Beverages	Coffee, hot chocolate and cold fruit drinks are popular. Rum and beer are local beverages.; Fermented beverages are brewed from local fruit juices and grain
Seasonings	Cilantro (Coriander leaves) and chili peppers are widely used Honey and sugar are sweeteners. A great variety of herbs, spices, and citrus are used; cocoa is used in many dishes.
Other	Coconut and coconut “milk” are used in many dishes. Nuts and seeds are often toasted and added for flavor.
Cooking methods	Soups and stews dominate. Braising, frying, steaming and marinating are also common. Raw cooked or pickled vegetables, fried plantains or fritters accompany many meals.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behaviors

When invited for a meal, it is proper to be on time, or ideally five minutes prior to the designated time. In Nicaragua, however, it acceptable to arrive about five minutes late. It is not customary to bring gifts. An aperitif or cocktail may be served prior to a meal, but they are usually not accompanied by hors d’oeuvres. The host will sit at the head of the table and the hostess, if present, will sit at the other end of the table. Honored guests sit at the right of the host

and hostess. The hostess, or host if not present, will normally indicate when it is proper to begin eating. It is proper to make positive comments about the food. Conversations can cover any topic. To indicate that you have completed a particular course or meal, the fork and knife are crossed on the plate with prongs down. After the meal, coffee is often served. If in a private home, the coffee and dessert may be served in the living room. It is appropriate to linger and talk for as much as one hour if it is a business meal – longer if it is a personal meal. It is considered appropriate to send a note or card commenting on the opportunity to meet and the pleasures of the meal and company.

China

In China, cooking is considered an art form and they consider eating to be an important component of life. It has been suggested that the Chinese have at least 80,000 distinctly different dishes. The Chinese do not eat one entree or one dish at a time as we do in the western world. Chinese tables are typically set with a variety of dishes served simultaneously. Everything is placed in the center of the table and each diner samples a little bit of all. The palate is treated to a variety of flavors and textures. Chinese ranks with French cooking as one of the most influential cuisines of the world. Many of the most popular foods such as rice, soybeans and tea are native to Asia. Other foods came to China through trade. These include ingredients such as pork and wheat from the Middle East and potatoes, tomatoes, corn and chili peppers from the Americas. The most important basic food in China is rice. It is a fundamental part of most every meal. There are many varieties of rice; each has a distinct flavor and texture. China is a very large country and each region has its own distinctive cuisine.

Cantonese cuisine is from the province of Canton in the south of China. The warm climate in Canton supports the growth of a wide variety of vegetables. The long seacoast provides ample seafood. The primary Cantonese method of cooking is stir-frying, which leaves vegetables crisp and meat tender. Cantonese food is also known for its delicately seasoned thick sauces. The primary ingredients are soy sauce, rice wine, ginger root, and garlic fermented black beans. The basic cooking utensils in Canton are the wok, the cleaver and chopsticks. Cantonese cooking is the most common type of Chinese cuisine found abroad.

Honan is the northernmost region in China and its cuisine relies on wheat rather than rice as a staple starch. Noodles, steamed breads and dumplings are common items. Garlic is used frequently and Honanese food is known for its very light and subtle flavors. The Honanese are fond of lamb which is not used much in other parts of China. A Honanese specialty is the Mongolian fire pot⁴.

Fukien is a coastal province in China. It is known for its seafood and mushroom dishes and for the production of soy sauce. Fukienese cooking is known as Hung-shu in Chinese. It

⁴ It is essentially the same as a fondue pot, but the cooking liquid is a broth and in which chili spiced meats are cooked. After the meat is cooked, it is dipped in a sauce and eaten. After the meats have been consumed, vegetables are cooked in the broth. When the vegetables have been consumed, the broth is added to the dipping sauce and other accompaniments. This mixture is then consumed as soup.

refers to a browning of food in soy sauce, either by first sautéing the food in a wok or by braising it in a covered pot. The color of the food changes to deep red, almost brown. The sauce in which the food has been cooked is saved and can be used time and time again. Soups are the primary item of a Fukienese meal and several soups may occur throughout the meal. Most Fukien dishes are subtly seasoned and the emphasis is on bringing out the food's natural flavors. Paper-wrapped foods and egg rolls are believed to have originated in Fukien.

Szechuan, Hunan and Yunnan cuisines are known for their highly spiced food. This is due to extensive use of Szechuan peppercorn (fagara). A typical treat or a snack would be peanuts boiled with salt and fagara. Szechuan cuisine is known for its use of chili peppers, fresh ginger, garlic and fagara peppers.

The Hunan cuisine is similar to Szechuan cuisine, but sweet and sour dishes made with freshwater fish are common. Furthermore, sesame oils, fermented black beans, black pepper and scallions are prominent. Yunnan cuisine is similar to Szechuan and Hunan cuisines, but yogurt and fresh cheese are used in many dishes.

Meal Patterns

The Chinese usually eat three meals a day, plus snacks. Grains, which they refer to as *san*, are considered the primary component of the diet and everything else, meat, fish and vegetables are considered accompaniments. The Chinese term for them is *cài*. In the south of China, breakfast often includes conge (rice porridge) served with meat or fish. Steamed bread, dumplings or noodles are also typical breakfast items. Lunch and dinner would include soup, rice and accompaniments of meat, poultry, fish or vegetables. The number of dishes that are served at a given meal depends somewhat on the number of guests at the table. Dessert is not a common item but when it is served, it is usually fresh or preserved fruit.

At a meal, soup is typically served first. After the soup, the grain items are served, typically to each individual, and then the primary food items (the accompaniments) are placed in the middle of the table. The composition of both the individual dishes and the meal as a whole is very important. Textures, colors and flavors should be varied; hot dishes are balanced with cold dishes; seasoned dishes are balanced with bland dishes; sweet dishes are balanced with salted dishes. Yin foods are bland or cool foods including vegetables while yang foods are hot, rich or spicy foods. What is classified as yin or yang food may vary from region to region and nuts,

small cakes and savories are often consumed. Dim sum was created in the teahouses of the tenth century. Dim sums are bite-sized dumplings made from a mixture of wheat, starch and tapioca flour, stuffed with force meats, fish, meat or vegetables and sometimes fruits. They can be steamed, deep-fried or baked, and are served as a snack, or with a meal.

The Chinese Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and milk products are not widely used, although custards and yogurts are common.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Fish and shellfish are widely used. Pork is prevalent while beef is less common. Goat is consumed, as is horse meat. Chicken, duck and other poultry. Soybeans are used extensively as tofu, soy sauce or miso. All sorts of legumes are used. Eggs are used.
Fruits and Vegetables	Great variety of fruits and vegetables are used. Shoots, sprouts, nuts and roots are common. Fruit is usually served fresh.
Breads and Cereals	Rice, wheat, corn and millet are the primary staples.
Cooking fats	Peanut oil is favored, but other vegetable oils, such as sesame and corn oil, are also used. Lard may be used for stir-frying and in pastries.
Beverages	Tea is a preferred beverage throughout the day. Soup often acts as mealtime beverage in the north. Wine and beer and a variety of fermented beverages are available.
Seasonings	A great variety of herbs, spices, and spice blends are used. Szechwan peppers are prevalent. Pastes from beans, shrimp and other foods are used for flavoring. Soy sauces, Hoisin sauce, oyster sauces, rice wine, rice wine vinegar and a variety of oils are all used for flavoring purposes.
Other	Nuts and seeds are widely used.
Cooking methods	Steaming is the primary method, followed by stir-frying. Soft frying and slow simmering/stewing are also common.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

It is appropriate to drink soup directly from the bowl in which it is served or to use a porcelain spoon. Chopsticks are prominent although forks may be used. Knives are considered a

barbaric implement and should not be used at the table. Westerners are often surprised how quickly meals are eaten. Chinese tables are round or square rather than oval or oblong allowing diners to sit equidistant from the *cài*. Food, when passed, must be received with two hands, as receiving or passing foods with one hand is a sign of disrespect or indifference. *Cài* is never sampled before rice is served; that would indicate that you are greedy and selfish. The host will indicate when it is appropriate to begin the meal by lifting the chopsticks and saying “*ch’ing*”. It is not appropriate to eat *cài* directly from its bowl; rather it should first be transferred to your rice bowl, or plate if used. It is impolite to “fish around” in your food; rather you should eat whatever you prod. It is proper to lift the rice bowl with some *cài* in your left hand and transfer the food to your mouth with the chopsticks in your right hand. In China, silence is often common once the food is served, as it is considered appropriate to “talk first, then eat.” Bones may be sucked with closed lips and lips are smacked to indicate dining pleasure. It is important to indicate that the meal was enjoyable. When full diners may lay their chopsticks across their rice bowl. The final morsel during a Chinese meal is often the fortune cookie. A note or letter of thanks regarding a meeting or meal is a common courtesy. Gifts are not expected. It is particularly important to avoid white flowers, as they signify death; white is the color of funerals.

Eastern Europe

The southern half of Eastern Europe is a wheat and wine-producing area. The northern half is a rye and beer producing area. The two basic grains of Eastern Europe are wheat and rye. Wheat is produced in the south and center; rye in the north and east. Generally both are processed into bread. The potato is a starch staple throughout Eastern Europe. The most valued meats are beef and veal, and large amounts of butter, cream and a variety of cheeses are consumed. Throughout Eastern Europe meat and animal products are emphasized. Seasonings play a lesser role and foods are often mildly or subtly flavored.

Meal Patterns

Four to five meals a day are customary including coffee breaks, which are usually served with small sandwiches such as a roll or pastry. Breakfast consists of tea or coffee and often porridge of oatmeal, barley or rice. Sometimes toast with butter and jam is eaten. Eggs, ham and cheese may be included. Lunch away from home consists of sandwiches and a pastry. At home, however, lunch is often a soup and perhaps sausage with potatoes. Supper includes soups and stews served with dark rye breads and rolls. Caviar is popular and often served with minced onions and sour cream. Evening teas are served with sandwiches and dessert foods.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

When invited for a specific time it is polite to arrive promptly. If you are considered a friend you may simply be asked to come for dinner, in which case 6 p.m. is common. It is acceptable to bring a gift for the host. Prior to the meal, drinks and some hors d'oeuvres are typically served. It is proper to comment positively about the food, which may be passed at the table. It is impolite to add seasonings to your food without having tasted them first; ideally they should be eaten as served. Conversations are lively, and it is normal to remain seated at the table long after the meal is finished.

The Eastern European Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and milk products from cows, sheep, goats and mares are used. Sour cream is important and other fermented dairy products are also important.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Pork is most prevalent while mutton, veal, beef and game are also common. A wide variety of poultry and game birds are used. Fresh and saltwater fish are eaten; caviar and other fish egg products are incorporated. Eggs are used.
Fruits and Vegetables	A wide variety of fresh and dried fruits and berries are used. Root vegetables are common. Hot peppers and paprika are prevalent, particularly in Hungary.
Breads and Cereals	Rye, buckwheat (as Kasha and in Blini) and wheat are common grains and used in breads. Pumpernickel and rye breads are staples. Oat and barley are used in porridge and gruel. Millet and rice can also be found. Egg noodles are prevalent.
Cooking fats	Butter and lard are most common, although goose and chicken fat are used if available. Vegetable oils are favored in Poland
Beverages	Tea is a preferred beverage in the former Soviet Union, coffee elsewhere. Wine and vodka are made locally.
Seasonings	Chives, cinnamon, coriander, dill, lemon juice, nutmeg, parsley, pepper and vinegar are used in the north. Horseradish root, caraway seeds, poppy seeds, mustards and mayonnaise are also used frequently. Paprika is used widely in Hungarian cooking. Garlic is used extensively in southern regions, but is not found in traditional northern cuisines.
Other	Nuts and seeds are widely used.
Cooking methods	Soups and stews are prevalent; Smoking, curing and sausage-making are also common. Various forcemeats are used. Preserves are important.

France

France has a long wine tradition and wine is used throughout France's cuisine. In addition, France is a great source of dairy products. The quality and flavor of French butter and cream is excellent and this has led to a variety of fine cheeses. Wines and dairy products are fundamental components of French cuisine. The French cuisine is characterized by the use of fresh ingredients often served with delicate sauces made with wine. Textures, flavors, and colors are carefully balanced and spices are subtle.

The basic foods in France are similar to those of the rest of Central Europe. Wheat flour, potatoes, a variety of root and leafy vegetables, beef, veal, poultry, pork and a variety of pork products and sausages are all commonly used. The use of stocks and broths, a thickening agent of fat and flour, and deglazing are all fundamental components of French cuisine. French cuisine uses a great deal of wine, herbs, butter, cheese and stock. In Normandy, apples and apple ciders and apple brandy are used more than wine and herbs.

French cuisine is typically divided into two categories. Classic cuisine (grand cuisine or haute cuisine) features very elegant food presentation. Provincial home cooking produces significantly less complex dishes.

Brittany and Normandy are located in the coastal regions of France. Seafood, lamb and mutton are widely consumed. It is also the richest dairy region of the country, and is thought to produce the finest butter, creams and cheeses in the world. Crêpes originated in this region. Alsace and Lorraine are located in the northeast, close to Germany. Sausages made from heavily spiced pork and lamb, sauerkraut and excellent beers and white wines are featured here.

In the mountainous French regions bordering Switzerland we find the famous Bresse chicken which is considered to have a very delicate flavor. To the west of this is the Burgundy region (Bourgogne) known for its wines and hearty local dishes. This is where Dijon mustard is made. Bordeaux, in southwest France, is known for its Bordelaise sauce. In the south central portion of France is the Languedoc region. It specializes in cassoulet (a casserole dish) that typically contains duck, goose, pork or mutton sausage, white beans and seasonings. The best cassoulet must be baked in an earthenware vessel for an extended period of time.

Provence is in the southeast corner of the country, and very close to the Mediterranean. Prevalent foods include olives, olive oil, garlic, tomato, eggplant, zucchini and seafood. Bouillabaisse (a fish stew) originated here. Although French cuisine is known for its rich sauces, soups, and use of cream and butter, there has been a tendency in recent years to develop a much healthier version called nouvelle cuisine or cuisine minceur.

The French Approach	
Milk Products	Milk is not a primary beverage, while milk, fresh cream and crème fraîche are used in food. Cheeses are common throughout.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Beef, lamb, pork, horse and veal are common. Variety meats are often used. Game meat is important. All sorts of poultry and game birds are used. Fish and shellfish, including snails, are common.
Fruits and Vegetables	A wide variety of fresh and dried fruits and berries are used. All sorts of vegetables are incorporated in the diet, as are various fungi.
Breads and Cereals	Wheat is the staple grain and wheat flour products are common. White bread is served at most every meal.
Cooking fats	Unsalted butter is preferred for freshness. Butter in the north, lard in the east and olive oil in the south. Goose and chicken fat are also used if available.
Beverages	Wine is the common mealtime beverage. Coffee is widespread. Cider, fruit juices, hot chocolate and a variety of waters (carbonated and non-carbonated) are prevalent.
Seasonings	Virtually anything that can be used for flavor can be used in French cuisine.
Other	Nuts are commonly incorporated.
Cooking methods	Roasting, baking and various forms of simmering and searing are the most common cooking methods. Often you will find that vegetables are blanched and chilled down quickly in ice water and then reheated quickly in butter just before serving.

Meal Patterns

The French eat three meals a day. Breakfast is a small meal and often consists of croissants and café au lait. Dinner is typically eaten around noon. It is usually the largest meal of the day and begins with an appetizer such as a paté. For a special occasion, a fish course would precede the main course. Salad is served after the main course and usually consists of some tossed greens with dressing. A vegetable may be served with or after the main dish depending upon how long or large the dinner is.

Dessert usually consists of cheese and fruit. Occasionally a cake, pastry or custard will be served. The evening meal would be a lighter meal, often consisting of soup or cassoulet served

with bread and wine. It has become more common to have a lighter meal at lunch and a more substantial evening meal.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

It is acceptable to be five or ten minutes late, but not more. The invitation may request your presence as much as one hour prior to the meal being served. It is acceptable to bring a gift. Typically some aperitifs and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Mixed drinks are not common. In a private home, the hostess will announce when the meal is ready and the host will guide you to the table. Host and hostess sit at opposite ends of the table with guests of honor on their right. As possible, men and women are placed alternately. One should not start eating until "bon appetit" is expressed and the hostess starts eating. It is proper to comment positively about the food. Conversation can be about any topic.

When silverware is crossed on the plate with the prongs down (fork on the left) this signals that one is finished eating. On the other hand, if the silverware is placed side by side, angled to the left side of the plate, this signals that you are not finished or wish to have more food. It is improper to leave the table before the meal is finished. The host will indicate this by standing up and putting his napkin on the table. Coffee is often served separately somewhat later and is accompanied by liqueurs and additional conversation. If the host asks if you would like something else, such as a fruit juice, this is an indication that you should be leaving soon. Accept the fruit juice or not, but do not tarry.

Germany

Germanic cuisine is found in Germany, Austria and regions of Switzerland. With its meaty entrees, thick soups, hearty breads and abundant desserts, Germanic food is robust and fortifying. Germany is well known for its sausages (wurst). Germanic cuisine has hundreds of styles of sausages in different sizes, shapes and colors. They range from the stark white weisswurst, which is made of ground veal, to the black blutwurst, or blood sausage. Typically, German sausages are served with sauerkraut and mustard. Germany's sauerkraut is seldom served plain as it is in the U.S. Caraway seeds, apple, bacon or onion are often added. Sauerkraut is made with both green and red cabbage. Germanic cookery is a 'meats and potatoes' cuisine. The centerpiece of each meal is the meat item. Unique to German cuisine is the combining of fruits and vegetables. For example, apples are combined with sauerkraut and pears are combined with green beans. Many vegetables are served cold: Cold bean salad, cold potato salad and pickled beets with onions are popular.

Meal Patterns

In Germany, it is customary to eat about five times each day. The first meal in the morning is called frühstück and consists of coffee, rolls and preserves. A small roll, called brotchen, may be freshly baked and served each morning. Eggs, cheese and ham are also frequent breakfast fare. Eggs are usually served hardboiled. The second meal of the day is eaten mid-morning. It is appropriately called Zweites Frühstück or second breakfast. It typically consists of sandwiches, pastries or bread, fruit, coffee or beer. The pastries are usually purchased at a konditorei, which is a pastry shop. German school children often carry their second breakfast to school. The main meal of the day is called Mittagessen, which means midday meal. Most Germans eat this meal at home and the general lunch hour lasts two hours. A recent trend is to have a lighter midday meal and a larger meal later in the day. Mittagessen usually begins with soup, often broth with dumplings. Following the soup, a meat course is served with vegetables and potatoes. Stewed fruit or pudding may be served as dessert, followed by cheese or candy. Desserts are sometimes skipped at this main meal and served instead at the next meal, which is called Kaffee. Kaffee takes place in the afternoon. Coffee is served with a cookie, pastry or small sandwiches. If desserts were not served earlier in the day, pastries or cake would

be included. The final meal of the day is called Abendbrot, which means evening bread. It is traditionally a light meal, often served cold. Bread and butter, sausages, meats and a salad would be typical. Snacking is common and city vendors sell sausages, French-fries, beer and soft drinks. There are a great number of German pastry shops called Konditorei. Germany's famous apple strudel can be found in these shops.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Punctuality is very important and arriving a few minutes early for a meal or meeting is acceptable. Greetings include handshakes and statement of your name. It is proper to address people as Herr or Frau with their last name. Titles may be used if known. When engaging in conversation, hands should not be pocketed. Gifts are acceptable. Drinks, usually wine or beer, may be served prior to the meal. Hors d'oeuvres are not common. Seating arrangements may vary and are up to the host, who will tell one where to sit. The host will indicate when it is proper to start eating by saying "guten appetite" or something similar. It is proper to make positive comments about the food. Meals are long lasting, and much conversation may take place. During festive occasions singing may ensue. A thank you note is appreciated and considered proper.

The German Approach	
Milk Products	Dairy products are very common. Cream, fresh and ultra-pasteurized milk, buttermilk, sour cream and yogurt are often used. Cheese is often eaten daily.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Pork is primary, and Germany is known for its cured pork products. Beef is also eaten, but less commonly. Veal and games meat are popular. Lamb and mutton are not popular. Geese and chicken are common poultry. Eggs are widely eaten. Fresh and saltwater fish and shellfish are often used. Lentils and white beans are the preferred legume.
Fruits and Vegetables	A wide variety of fresh, dried, and preserved fruits and berries are used. Apples are the most prevalent fruit. A wide variety of vegetables, including root vegetables are used. Potatoes are a staple. Pickled or fermented vegetables are common.
Breads and Cereals	Rye and wheat are the most common grains, but oats, barley and rice are also used. Breads of all types are popular, especially dark, dense breads. Dumplings are common. Pastries, strudels and tortes are German specialties.
Cooking fats	Butter is a favorite cooking fat although lard, chicken, and goose fat are used in some dishes. Vegetable oils are also found.
Beverages	Beer is the common social beverage, and comes in endless varieties. Coffee is widespread and tea and hot chocolate are also served. Wine and schnapps are local products as well.
Seasonings	A variety of herbs and spices are used.
Other	Nuts are commonly incorporated.
Cooking methods	Frying, roasting, baking and stewing are common. Schnitzels are often served. One-pot meals are commonly served with dumplings (knödeln). Smoking and pickling are widespread. Hot and cold salads are prevalent.

Great Britain & Ireland

British and Irish cuisine has never been recognized as exciting or elaborate. The food of the British Isles is natural and simple food. Pride is taken in the ability to cook foods that enhance rather than obscure the natural flavors.

Meal Patterns

Four meals are usually eaten each day. Historically, breakfast might consist of oatmeal, bacon, ham or sausage, eggs, toast, grilled tomatoes or mushrooms, smoked fish and stewed kidneys. Today, however, a lighter breakfast consisting of cereal, milk and maybe eggs would be typical. A large breakfast may be eaten during holidays or on the weekend. Lunch is typically small and eaten away from home, often purchased from street vendors or at the pub.

Tea is consumed at all meals, and as a beverage throughout the day. Tea breaks are often taken at about 2:00 p.m. and at about 5:00 p.m. When tea is served, sandwiches, biscuits or cookies may also be served. High tea includes potted meats, salmon cakes, ham salads, fruits and pastries, such as short breads. If high tea is served, the evening meal may be skipped or reduced.

On Sundays, the midday meal is usually larger than the traditional evening meal throughout the week. The main meal typically consists of meat as the primary component with a vegetable, potato or rice and perhaps bread and butter. Desserts are typically puddings.

Etiquette and Mealtimes Behavior

When invited to a meal or meeting, punctuality is recommended. It has been suggested by some that the British and Irish have formalized tardiness and that arriving 10-20 minutes late is acceptable. For some this is true, but there has been a greater focus on efficiency and quality in recent years and timeliness has become more normative. Arriving early is not acceptable.

Most business entertainment is done in hospitality establishments. Gifts are acceptable. This is particularly true if invited to someone's home. Avoid white lilies, as they are associated with death. Manners are considered very important, particularly with the older generation. A proper first time greeting is "How do you do?" A response is not expected. It is proper to introduce yourself by first and last name only. Titles are reserved for medical doctors and royalty. It is increasingly common to use first names, but wait until invited to do so.

Prior to a meal, it is common to socialize for 20-30 minutes, during which an aperitif may be served. It is proper and expected to have conversation during the meal. Business is typically not discussed during a meal. Avoid discussing royalty and national politics, and do not ask someone "What do you do?" This would be considered an invasive question. It is proper to start eating when all have been served or the host starts. The fork is held in your left hand with the tines facing down and the knife in your right throughout the meal. When done the silverware is placed side by side on the plate, angled to the left side of the plate. It is interesting to note that this is the same silverware position Germans use to indicate that they wish to have more food. If the silverware is resting on the rim of the plate on either side or in a crossed manner, this means that you are taking a rest from eating. Generally, conservative North American etiquette rules apply. After the meal, an after dinner drink may be offered.

The UK Approach	
Milk Products	Dairy products are very common. Cream, fresh and sour are often used. Cheese is often eaten daily. Puddings are a common item.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	All varieties of beef cuts and variety meats are important. Lamb, pork and game meat is also used widely. Large and small poultry and game birds are incorporated. Fish and seafood are also common.
Fruits and Vegetables	A variety of berries are popular. Fruit is eaten fresh or perhaps with a little cream. Potatoes and root vegetables are essential. Most common fruits and vegetables are used.
Breads and Cereals	Staple grains: Oats and barley in the north, wheat in the south. Rice and rye are also important.
Cooking fats	Butter, lard and bacon drippings are historical fats; vegetable oils and margarine are increasingly prominent.
Beverages	Beer and tea are the common social beverages. Coffee and hot chocolate are also served. Wine and spirits are consumed as well.
Seasonings	A variety of herbs and spices are available, but typically used sparingly. Various jellies and chutneys are used as condiments.
Other	Almonds, chestnuts and filberts (hazelnuts) as well as walnuts are frequently used.
Cooking methods	Roasting, baking, broiling frying and stewing are common. Drying, smoking, curing and pickling are widespread. Potting is prevalent. Puddings are important.

Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and Greece

In this part of the world, the olive has been prominent for thousands of years. The olive is the distinguishing food of Mediterranean cuisine. Although important as a food item, it is more important as oil pressed from the ripe fruit. Olive oil can be very light or robust in color, flavor and aroma.

In the Middle East common ingredients are made into uniquely flavored, aromatic dishes. Hummus is a dish of chickpeas that have been pureed with lemon juice, garlic, salt and olive oil. Tahini, a paste made from sesame seeds, may also be added. The dish is then properly called hummus ditahini. Baba ghannooj, is eggplant butter, and it is made from the cooked eggplant meat that is pureed with garlic, lemon juice, sesame oil and salt. It is frequently garnished with pomegranate seeds and spicy peppers. Both the hummus and the baba ghannooj are served on pita bread. It is a delicious combination that only hints at the original ingredients. The Eastern Mediterranean shares a similar cuisine although language, culture, and religion vary across nations. For example, shish kebob (skewered meats) and dolma⁵, are common to Greek, Turkish and Syrian cooking.

Israel is perhaps the one country that is most distinguished relative to the others as it has had proportionately more immigrants than any other country. Immigrating Jews from other countries introduce their own traditional recipes to Israeli cuisine. As such, Israeli cuisine has been influenced from various cuisines from around the world. The Jewish religion has many strict guidelines relative to acceptable foods, food combinations and food preparation methods. Referring to a text on kosher cuisine is advisable.

Meal Patterns

Typically three meals a day are eaten throughout the region. Breakfast is typically a light meal that includes coffee, bread, cheese, fruit or jam, and perhaps eggs and yogurt. An egg dish or a substantial soup dish is typically served for lunch while the typical dinner includes meat and vegetable stews or meat stuffed vegetables accompanied by rice and bread. If, by chance, the main dish does not contain a vegetable, a hot or cold vegetable dish as well as a salad may be served as a separate course. Fruits are usually served for dessert. Formal dinners begin with the

⁵ Dolmas are stuffed vegetables such as grape leaves, cabbages or eggplants.

The Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Greek Approach	
Milk Products	Fermented dairy products, such as yogurt, are very common. Cheese is often eaten. Fresh milks (when used) are used for dessert products.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Religion often dictates the choice, and the approved foods vary! Lamb is most prevalent. Camel and kid can also be found. Some variety meats are used. Fish and shellfish are widely available.
Fruits and Vegetables	The olive is a staple; apricots, dates, figs, grapes and grape leaves are also important. A variety of fruits and vegetables are available.
Breads and Cereals	Wheat, wheat flour, cracked wheat, rice and barley are important.
Cooking fats	Olive oil is common throughout. In Israel corn oil is also used and sesame oil is common in Egypt.
Beverages	Coffee, tea and fruit juices are common. Wine and spirits are also found.
Seasonings	Olive oil is combined with a number of seasonings to form classical Mediterranean flavor profiles. A variety of herbs (fresh is preferred) and spices are used.
Other	Nuts and seeds, including sesame seeds in the form of Tahini are important. Almonds, pistachios and walnuts are often added to dishes as a paste or simply as a chopped nut.
Cooking methods	“Stove-top” preparations such as stews and braises are prevalent. Grilling, broiling, frying, steaming and roasting are also common. Force-meats are often used.

anise liquors. Kosher cooking is prominent. Kosher cooking, however, is complex and beyond the scope of this manuscript.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Punctuality is important at the start of the meal or meeting, particularly for the guest. A host may arrive late. An ending time is not set. Handshakes are the customary greeting, although kissing of the cheeks may be done, in which case it is appropriate to reciprocate. Often, women do not mix with men. Even if invited to someone’s home, the wife may not be seen; she is likely in the kitchen. It is improper to inquire about her. If she does introduce herself, act warmly but not demonstratively. This gender division is often not the case in Greece and Israel. It is common to be invited for a lunchtime meal.

Silverware may be used, but it is also normal to eat with your fingers, particularly when eating appetizers. Take your cue from the host. If eating with the fingers, the right hand should be used; it should be used to pass food also. The left hand is reserved for hygiene purposes. Alcoholic beverages are often not served; do not ask for one unless it is clearly offered. Thank you notes are considered proper.

India

India is considered the land of spices and has traditional food preparation methods and culinary arts that date back many thousands of years. The foods and the approaches to cooking have remained basically the same, although they have been influenced by occupying forces as well as through trade.

India is a country of many climates, religions and social customs and it does not have one national cuisine. Indian diets are strongly impacted by religion and most Indians follow some sort of Hinduism while others are Muslims, Christians or Jews. All of these groups have different food habits and different food restrictions that impact their cuisine. Hindus, for example, are prohibited from eating beef; Muslims and Jews do not eat pork. Millions of Indians are vegetarians and vegetarianism is prevalent throughout Indian. Fresh meat, poultry, eggs and fish are often excluded from the diet. In some regions, foods that have the color of blood, such as tomatoes and watermelon, vegetables grown under ground, or vegetables resembling a head, such as the mushroom, are also avoided.

India is known for its curried food. However, the Indian use of the term curry is different than our use of the word. In India, curry refers to the preparation of foods with a sauce. The sauce does not have a predetermined spice blend. Commercial curry powder available in the U.S. is typically a blend of coriander, cumin, turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, and red and black pepper. Commercial curry powder is typically not available in India. Indian cooks prefer to develop their own individual spice mixtures that they prepare for each dish. This mixture of spices is referred to as garam masala and each cook will have a personal blend that he or she prefers. In Indian cuisine, a subtle blending of spices that enhance the character of the dish is typical. The spices themselves do not dominate the dish. Although the same spices are common to many dishes, you will find that they are used in different proportions to bring out different flavors. Indian cuisine varies by region, but a primary distinction can be made between northern India and southern India. Wheat is the staple food in northern India. Cooking makes use of dried spices and other preserved seasonal foods. Rice is the staple food in southern India. Dishes incorporate rice and many widely available vegetables. Yogurt, spices and ghee (pure clarified butter) are popular throughout the country.

The Indian Approach	
Milk Products	Fresh and evaporated milk are used. Fermented dairy products, such as yogurt, are common. Milk based desserts are frequently found.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Lamb, chicken and eggs are eaten frequently. Freshwater and saltwater fish and shellfish are common. A wide variety of legumes, also referred to as pulses, are a common protein food, particularly in the south where there are many vegetarians.
Fruits and Vegetables	A wide variety of familiar and exotic fruits and vegetables are available. Root vegetables are important.
Breads and Cereals	Although rice is the primary grain, wheat is also used, especially in the north.
Cooking fats	Ghee, a pure clarified butter, is the classical predominant fat. Vegetable oils and margarine are often substituted in the daily diet.
Beverages	Tea is the primary beverage. It is often prepared with milk and spices instead of water. Coffee is also popular. Diluted yogurt (lassi) and fruit juices are also popular. Beer, rice wine and fermented fruit juices are available
Seasonings	The cuisine of India is known for its elaborate use of herbs and spices, but Indian dishes are not necessarily hot or spicy. Aromatics in the north, spicier in the south.
Other	Almonds, cashews, peanuts, walnuts, betel nuts ⁶ and sunflower seeds are very popular and widespread in use.
Cooking methods	Dried foods are common. Braising, frying, steaming, broiling and cooking in ovens called tandoors ⁷ are prevalent. Preserves, such as chutneys are common.

⁶ Betel nuts are round hard nuts called supari by the East Indians. They are the astringent seeds of the betel palm (areca palm). They have been chewed throughout Asia since ancient times for their stimulating effects. Habitual chewing of betel nuts can turn your teeth black. Betel nuts are an acquired taste.

⁷ A tandoor is a clay oven typically heated by wood or coal with an opening on top.

Meal Patterns

Indian meal patterns are influenced greatly by region and social class. A rich tea or coffee made with milk, sugar and sometimes spices is enjoyed early in the morning. Breakfast is usually consumed between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., and consists of rice or bread, pickled fruits or vegetables as well as sambal which is a dish of cooked vegetables and lentils mixed with a sauce of oil, onion, garlic, turmeric, ground sweet peppers and salt. At about 4 p.m. or 5 p.m., sweet and spicy snack foods are eaten with coffee or tea. The main meal of the day is served in the evening and is typically eaten between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The typical dinner would consist of at least one rice dish, a main vegetable, legume or meat dish, a vegetable or legume side dish and baked or fried bread. Often the meal would be accompanied by pickled vegetables, or raita (a yogurt based vegetable relish). Dessert would typically be fruit or a sweet milk-based pudding. During meals it is customary to place all food courses on the table at once. Serving all foods at once allows people to freely combine tastes and textures and experiment with a variety of taste and texture combinations. At the end of the meal, herbs and spices such as anise, cardamom, fennel seeds and nuts (often betel nuts) are passed around. These are then rolled into betel leaves (paan) and chewed to freshen breath and aid in digestion.

Savory snacks may consist of deep-fried battered-coated vegetables, pancakes with or without fillings and fried seasoned doughs made from lentils and wheat. These snacks are often served with chutneys. Sweet snacks are often milk-based, and frequently use nuts, coconut, sesame seeds and lentil flour.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

When invited to a meal or meeting punctuality is advised. Rejecting an offer of food or a dinner invitation is a sign of superiority towards the person inviting or offering, and should be avoided if possible. When meeting someone, it is acceptable to shake hands with men, but not with women. The traditional greeting in India should always be used with women and is appropriate for men as well; foreigners use of the gesture is appreciated: “Namaste” is stated and the palms of the hands are pressed together in a praying position, accompanied by a slight bow forward. It is acceptable to bring a small gift. Upon arrival in an Indian home one may be adorned with a garland of flowers. It is an accepted sign of humility to (attempt to) remove the

flowers. Take care when seated not to show your feet or shoe soles as they are considered the dirtiest part of a person.

Traditionally men eat before the women. Age is respected and the elderly people are seated first. In India it is essential to wash well prior to the meal; even the mouth is rinsed. Water for washing should be running, as it is important not to “reuse” the same water.

It is important to note that foods are served rather differently in India, compared to western traditions. Great care must be taken when serving oneself, as an important Indian custom is to only touch one's own food. A central dish of rice or bread may be placed on the table with smaller bowls of curry and condiments placed around it. The fingers of the right hand are used exclusively in eating and for passing food dishes; the left hand is reserved for purposes of hygiene. Often serving utensils and silverware are not used. In which case the correct way to take food is to grasp it from above with the first two fingers and the thumb and not touch the remaining food.

It is an essential element of Indian hospitality to offer paan (the filled betel leaf) to guest after dinner, and it would be impolite to reject it. Serving many sweet snacks suggests the host is prosperous. Discussions during the meal should not center on politics or personal affairs.

Italy

Italy was a nation of small city-states until rather recently and Italian cuisine is often considered to be a collection of regional specialties. The primary culinary division is between the fertile north and the more arid south. It is the southern cuisine that is best known in the U.S. Here we find a marriage between olive oil, tomato and garlic. Pizza and stuffed pasta is often used. The cuisine of northern Italy is much more similar to that of France. The area surrounding Bologna has influenced much of Italian cuisine. Mortadella, an early form of the American bologna, was first made there, and Parmesan cheese was originally made near Parma. The cuisine of this area is known for delicate pasta, herb vinegars and cured pork products such as Prosciutto ham. In the eastern part of Italy, seafood and rice dishes are popular.

Along the Austrian border, sausages, sauerkraut and strudel can be found. In the north, butter and cream is used widely, and white sauces are preferred to the tomato sauces of the south. Popular dishes include risotto, which is a creamy rice dish, and polenta, which is cooked corn meal often topped with cheese or sauce. Panettone (“Tony’s bread”), is a popular fruit studded sweet bread. Wine is used in many sauces in the north, although Italians in the north seems to prefer the sweeter wines like Marsala rather than dry cooking wines. Parsley, oregano and basil are frequently used herbs. A primary flavor principle in the north is the combination of wine, vinegar and garlic. Lemon, nuts, capers and anchovies are added for variation. In southern Italy, we find the classic tomato sauce of olive oil, garlic, basil, tomato and bell pepper. Another well-known sauce is Pesto, which is made by pulverizing herbs, nuts and garlic with olive oil and Parmesan cheese.

Naples dominates the cuisine of southern Italy and the food is heartier than in the north. Less meat is eaten but chicken and legumes are readily available. Oysters, swordfish and eel are common seafood while eggplants, artichokes, tomatoes and sweet peppers are common vegetables. Mozzarella cheese, ricotta, and provolone are used extensively. To the best of our knowledge, this is where pizza originated. On the Island of Sicily, one will find a great deal of citrus fruits, wheat, olives and a wide variety of vegetables. Sicily is known for bread and pastry. Tuna, sardines, dried cod and sausage are popular.

The Italian Approach	
Milk Products	The milk of cows, sheep, goats and water buffalo is used. Typically, milk is not consumed as a beverage but is used in a variety of dishes such as desserts and cheeses. Cream is often use in the north.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Veal and pork are most common. Variety meats are used. Beef and chicken are also widespread. Turkey and other poultry can also be found. Seafood and shellfish are frequently used. Legumes are an important source of protein.
Fruits and Vegetables	Fruits, both in the fresh and candied forms, are popular for dessert. Many varieties of vegetables and fungus are available.
Breads and Cereals	The most common grains are corn, rice and wheat. Cornmeal is used to make polenta. Breads are mostly from wheat. Pasta is a staple item.
Cooking fats	Butter in the north and olive oil in the south.
Beverages	Wine and coffee are the primary social beverages. Fruit or nut-flavored syrups are used in sodas and other drinks.
Seasonings	Garlic and a variety of herbs and spices are used. Subtle in the north, more liberal in the south.
Other	Almonds, cashews, peanuts, walnuts, betel nuts ⁸ and sunflower seeds are very popular and widespread in use.
Cooking methods	Soups and stews are very common. Many dishes include bread dumplings, pasta, polenta or rice flavored with meat, vegetables or sauces. Steaming, grilling, braising and sautéing are most often used methods. Many baked products and pastries.

Meal Patterns

Typically, Italians eat three meals each day. Breakfast is usually a light meal consisting of bread and jam with coffee, café latte or hot chocolate. The midday meal is usually the largest meal and is often served in a series of courses beginning with antipasti. Antipasti are appetizers. Typically, they are combinations of meat, fish or vegetables and they are served in small portions. They are usually served on a single plate at the table. Sometimes an aperitif, such as vermouth, is served with antipasti. Following the antipasti, pasta, rice or perhaps soup would be served. The entrée follows. The entrée is typically meat or fish-based and accompanied by a vegetable. The salad course is served after the main course. In a private home, fruit or cheese

⁸ Betel nuts are round hard nuts called supari by the East Indians. They are the astringent seeds of the betel palm (areca palm). They have been chewed throughout Asia since ancient times for their stimulating effects. Habitual chewing of betel nuts can turn your teeth black. Betel nuts are an acquired taste.

would be served for dessert and on special occasions or in a restaurant, cakes, puddings or pastries would be eaten. Serving coffee, usually sweetened espresso, signals the end of the meal. The evening meal is a small meal consisting of soup or a fritatta (a flat Italian omelette) or salad with cheese or fruit. Bread and wine are served with both the midday and evening meal. It is becoming increasingly popular to eat a lighter lunch and eat the main meal of the day in the evening.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

It is impolite and ungracious to refuse a lunch or dinner invitation, particularly if it is repeated. It is acceptable to bring a gift; avoid chrysanthemums if visiting a residence, as they are associated with death and funerals. Handshakes are a common greeting, and one should address people with title and last name; if no title, use Signore or Signora. It has become more common to use first names, but it is wise to wait for the invitation to do so.

Punctuality is recommended for guests and visitors, although it is acceptable among friends to be as much as twenty minutes late. Paradoxically, to be “kept waiting” is considered impolite. Bringing a gift is acceptable, but do not bring wine as that is an insult, suggesting the host is not fully prepared or knowledgeable. Aperitifs may be served prior to a meal. Meals may last two to three hours on special occasions, such as when a foreigner is visiting. Meals are social events for building and assessing relationships, and business should not be discussed. The host or hostess indicates when the meal is to start and will sit at either end of the table. There is little formality and ritual during the meal, although toasts may be made.

Japan

Discipline, order and tradition are key ingredients in Japan in terms of culture as well as in the food. In Japanese cuisine, the appearance of the final product is very important.

Gastronomy in Japan is an aesthetic pursuit. Fish, meat and vegetables are shaped and formed and sliced into artistic presentations. Although emphasis is put on symmetry, simple elegance and harmony with nature is a key element.

The traditional Japanese meal is a meal of many dishes rather than one main course. There should always be an odd number of dishes on the table, as even numbers are considered bad luck. The primary flavor principle in Japanese cuisine is a combination of soy sauce and rice wine (sake) and sugar. Variations in flavor are achieved through the use of ginger root and sesame oil. Hot peppers and sometimes a fish flavored stock called Dashi is used. Dashi is made from kelp (seaweed) and bonito (tuna fish). Throughout Japan's history, food was scarce and Japanese cooking developed around this scarcity of food. Rice is the staple of the diet. Readily available fish, shellfish, and other seafood such as seaweed supplement the rice. Historically, meats were not widely used but are more common today.

Japanese cuisine has seen some influences from other cuisines. The Chinese brought soybeans, tea and sugar in the seventh and eighth centuries. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese came to Japan and influenced Japanese cuisine with their batter-fried shrimp. The result, Shrimp Tempura, is one of the most widely known Japanese dishes today. From the 1600s to the 1800s all Europeans were evicted from Japan and their influence ceased. It was not until after World War II that western food, particularly American dishes, again influenced Japanese cuisine.

Meal Patterns

Eating three meals a day is typical in Japan. Additionally, snacks may be eaten. Breakfast usually includes rice with nori (a dried purplish red seaweed) which may be stuffed and occasionally topped with egg. Soups, pickled plums and pickled vegetables may also be part of the breakfast. Lunch is often rice with leftovers from the night before. Tea or soup stock is sometimes added to the rice to make a complete meal. Hot noodles of various forms are also a

The Japanese Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and milk products are usually not found in traditional Japanese cuisine.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Fish and seafood in most any form are readily used. Poultry and game birds are popular. Beef and pork, and horsemeat are available. Eggs from both chicken and fish are readily consumed.
Fruits and Vegetables	A variety of fruits are used; fresh when in season or pickled for later use. Vegetables are very important; sprouts, roots and shoots are often incorporated. A variety of seaweeds ⁹ are used.
Breads and Cereals	Short grain rice is the staple grain. Noodles are important.
Cooking fats	Little fat is used. Most foods are either cooked with water or they are steamed rather than cooked in oil. Deep frying does take place.
Beverages	Tea is the primary social beverages. Rice wine (sake), beer, soft drinks and whiskeys are also important.
Seasonings	Delicate and subtle is the norm. A variety of sauces, pastes and pickled vegetables are used for flavoring.
Other	Nuts and seeds such as chestnuts and ginkgo nuts, peanuts, walnuts, poppy seeds and sesames are often added to dishes.
Cooking methods	Foods are often broiled, salted, simmered, steamed, pickled or served raw

popular lunch item, typically combined with bits of meat and vegetables. At dinner, soup or rice and a pickled vegetable are always served.

With the exception of special occasions, all of the foods are served at once and a great many dishes are served. Soup, when served with the meal, is often served first to stimulate the appetite or it may be offered at the end of the meal as an act of cleansing. If dessert is offered, it usually consists of fresh fruit. Green tea, beer or sake are served throughout the meal.

Chopsticks are typically used. Soups are drunk from a bowl; spoons are used infrequently. Snacks are often fresh fruit or perhaps crackers and confections such as sweet bean jelly or rice cakes. Sweet bean paste is a primary item in Japanese confections, which are usually eaten at teatime, never for dessert.

⁹ Nori is a dried laver, a purplish red seaweed used as a wrapper to wrap rice balls and rolls. Nori is sometimes made into a seasoning powder in which case it is called aonoriko. Kombu, which is dried kelp, is typically used in making dashi. It is also used as a general flavoring ingredient in other dishes. Wakame is a dried seaweed which after soaking is used in salads with cucumbers or mixed with miso and vinegar. It can also be added in its dried state to soups or served with shoyu.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Etiquette and ritual is important in Japan. Visitors, traveling for pleasure or business, are often invited to long-lasting, lavish meals. Entertaining seldom takes place in a private house, but rather at restaurants or inns. Punctuality is encouraged, although arriving five minutes late is considered “on-time” and polite; it allows the host to be fully ready. It is a sign of respect to offer a slight bow when meeting a Japanese person, who will always attempt to bow lower than the visitor. Sake is often served prior to the meal. If the occasion is festive or important, sake will be served during the meal as well; otherwise tea is served.

At the beginning of each meal in Japan, each guest should receive a damp perfumed wash cloth so he/she can wash his hands and face. Sake or tea is served to each guest by the host or hostess and after the first cup has been consumed, each guest pours for his neighbor. It is very impolite to pour for yourself. Typically, the food is covered; it is a sign of respect for the food. Bowls of food should be picked up and held as their contents are eaten. It is appropriate to make sucking noises while enjoying the soup and any host or hostess should receive compliments on both the flavor and palatability of the food and the artistic arrangement of the food.

Etiquette requires that the rice be tasted before eating the broiled, steamed or deep fried meat, poultry, fish or seafood, which is eaten with vegetables and rice. The pickled vegetables are traditionally saved until the very end of the meal to be eaten with the remaining rice. When receiving or passing a bowl of food, or business cards¹⁰ for that matter, use both hands as a sign of respect. Only rude people would raise their voices during conversation. Do not discuss World War II. Gifts are acceptable, but may be declined two or three times prior to acceptance. Gifts that come in pairs (e.g., pen and pencil) are considered good luck omens.

¹⁰ Business cards are ideally held in a holder and kept in a breast pocket. It is most impolite to keep business cards in pant pockets. Upon receiving a business card it is important to spend some time looking at it.

Korea

North and South Korea lie between China and Japan and have been influenced by both. Rice is a primary staple and noodles are also used extensively. Fish and shellfish are frequently eaten. The vegetables that grow in China or Japan are also available in Korea. Korean food is often pickled. Korean cuisine is unique in that hearty dishes are prevalent. Beef is prepared with a liberal use of garlic, ginger and chili peppers, sesame seeds, hot mustards and other seasonings. Foods are frequently spiced both before and after cooking and the Koreans have a distinct color scheme that is used with foods: White, red, black, green and yellow are important colors and should typically be evident in preparation and presentation of their food dishes.

Meal Patterns

Rice is considered the main dish of each meal. Everything else is served as an accompaniment to the rice. At least one meat or fish dish is typically included although two or three vegetables are usually included as well. Kimch'i is always included. Kimch'i can be made from cabbages, cucumbers, onions, turnips, parsnips or whatever is readily available. Soups are served at most meals. Dessert is rarely offered, but when it is, it is fresh fruit. On special occasions a cake or candy may be served. Beverages such as rice tea follow the meal. All dishes are usually served at once in Korea. Rice and soup are served to each diner while the focal items called panch'an are served on trays in the center of the table.

Breakfast is considered to be the main meal of the day, although this has been changing over time and many today eat a light breakfast. Soup is typically served at breakfast along with rice or some other gruel. Kimch'i, meat or fish, vegetable dishes, and dipping sauces will also be found at breakfast. At lunch time noodles are often served in a broth (chicken, beef, or fish) and garnished with shellfish or meat or vegetables. Supper is similar to breakfast. Snacks consist of rice, cookies, dried fruits or nuts. Appetizers may be served with wine prior to dinner. Appetizers may include batter-fried vegetable slices, seasoned bean curd, pickled seafood, meatballs or steamed dumplings. The typical meal will consist of many small dishes.

The Korean Approach

Milk Products	Milk and milk products are usually not consumed or used in food preparation.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Fish and seafood in most any variety and form are readily used. Chicken is the most widely consumed protein, other poultry are also important. Soy and Mung beans and their derivatives are widely used.
Fruits and Vegetables	A variety of fruits and vegetables, including seaweed are used.
Breads and Cereals	Rice is the predominant staple grain. Millet, barley, wheat and buckwheat are also found. Noodles are important.
Cooking fats	Peanut and sesame oils are preferred.
Beverages	Tea and herbal tea is the primary hot beverage, and is often spiced. Soups and barley water are mealtime beverages. Wine and beer is also consumed.
Seasonings	Spices and herbs are very important. A variety of sauces, pastes and pickled vegetables are used for flavoring.
Other	Nuts and seeds such as pine nuts, filberts, chestnuts and peanuts are often added to dishes.
Cooking methods	Steaming and braising are most common. Stir-frying, pan frying, and grilling are also done. Foods may be served raw.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Punctuality is not considered essential. Koreans do, however, expect westerners to be punctual. Bowing slightly and shaking the right hand or using two hands and shaking both of the other's hands is the ideal greeting. Two hands are used when passing a business card, food or receiving any object. It signifies respect. Most business entertainment takes place in restaurants or taverns; it is seldom one gets invited to someone's home. Gifts are acceptable, but should not be opened in front of others. You should not expect to meet someone's wife, although that is rapidly changing with the younger generation. Men go through doors first.

It is proper to wash prior to a meal. Hot towels may be provided. It is absolute taboo to move any utensil, or to start eating or drinking until the most senior or most honored person has started. When eating, it is impolite to fish around in your food. Whatever is prodded should be eaten. Silence may ensue while eating. Tea is served to each guest by the host or hostess and after the first cup has been consumed, each guest pours for his neighbor. It is very impolite to pour for yourself. Bowls of food should be picked up and held as their contents are eaten. It is appropriate to make positive comments about the food. Chopsticks should never be placed on top

of a bowl of rice, as this is a symbol of death used during the Ancestor Memorial Day. Males and females may eat at separate tables, even if in the same room.

Mexico

The cuisine in Mexico is still soundly based on the foods of the ancient Aztecs and Mayan Indians who ate such foods as corn, beans, chili peppers, tomatoes, squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peanuts and chocolate. These foods are still very important in Mexico and these foods have also influenced virtually every cuisine in the world.

The Spanish did introduce some foods in Mexico, however, and the most widely accepted and adopted are wheat, rice, beef, deer products, pork, chicken and citrus fruits. There are two major flavor principles that are used in Mexican cuisine. First, is the combination of tomatoes and chili peppers and the second is the combination of lime and chili peppers. Both are varied through the use of garlic, cinnamon, cumin, onion, saffron, and achiote (annatto). Spanish and native ingredients are used such as rice and beans, tomatoes, onions, chili peppers, salsas and corn tortillas fried in lard. Mexico has a variety of climates and the cuisine varies according to the climate. The coastal regions support rain forests and tropical crops. At higher elevations, you will find more temperate fruits and vegetables. Very high up in central Mexico, grains such as wheat are easily grown. The northern part of the country is relatively arid but it is well suited for grazing cattle. In the coastal regions, seafood is abundant, and a pickled raw fish dish called ceviche is popular. The state of Sonora is famous for its tripe stew known as menudo. In the central region on the plateaus, lamb and grains are featured in the cuisine. In the south, tropical fruits and vegetables are enjoyed and colorful spicy sauces are typical. In Yucatán, remnants of the Mayan heritage are apparent in the steamed foods, sauces made from squash, and delicate seasonings.

Meal Patterns

Meal frequency may vary from two meals a day to as high as five meals a day on special occasions. Four is more typical. The first meal of the day is called the desayuno and it consists of coffee with milk, sweet rolls and bread. Later in the morning, almuerzo is served. This is a more substantial breakfast that usually consists of fresh fruit, eggs, beans, tortillas, salsa and coffee. The largest meal of the day is eaten anywhere between early and late afternoon; it is called comida. Typically, it is a multi-course meal, which includes light soup, a main course of meat or

The Mexican Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and cheeses appear in many dishes. Milk is not an adult beverage, although sweetened milk drinks are popular.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	The most important protein source in Mexico is various forms of legumes. Beef, pork, and kid are used. Chicken, turkey and other poultry are common. Fish and shellfish are common as are eggs.
Fruits and Vegetables	A variety of fruits and vegetables, both familiar and more exotic, are consumed. Chili peppers are a native ingredient. Beans are very common.
Breads and Cereals	Corn is the native grain, although wheat and rice are also used.
Cooking fats	Lard is a favorite fat, although olive oils, and other vegetable oils are also used.. Butter is typically reserved for breads.
Beverages	Coffee, hot chocolate and hot milk drinks are prevalent. Fruit juices and soft drinks are consumed and beer is the most frequently served alcoholic drink. Wine is also available
Seasonings	Chili peppers are used to flavor a variety of foods; one of the most popular herbs is epazote, which has a distinctive pungent flavor. Other herbs and spices are available.
Other	Pecans, piñons (pine nuts), pumpkin and amaranth seeds are used, as are walnuts, almonds, filberts and sesame seeds. Nuts or seeds are often ground and used as thickening agents in sauces, replacing flour.
Cooking methods	One dish meals, such as soups , stews and casseroles are common. Simmering, frying, roasting, grilling and baking are common.

fish, plus a salad or vegetable. Beans and tortillas or rolls are typically served; a dessert may be served at the end of the meal. The evening meal, the fourth meal of the day, is called merienda and is eaten in the early evening for children or late in the evening for adults. It usually consists of coffee, hot chocolate or atole¹¹ and a light snack such as sweet breads and jam sandwiches or tacos. The fifth meal is usually eaten only on special occasions and is called cena (dinner). It is a large meal eaten somewhere between 8 p.m. and midnight. In more recent years, many Mexicans have started adapting to the tradition of a lighter lunch and a heavier supper. Snacking is common throughout the day. Fresh fruits, pastries and grilled meats are typical snacks.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Do not schedule or suggest a meeting or meal during the early afternoon siesta hours.

This would be considered rude. Punctuality is valued, but it is improper to arrive early. Gifts are

¹¹ Atole is a corn gruel made by boiling corn flour with water and adding milk, sugar and cinnamon to taste. Occasionally fruits, fruit juices or chocolate are added.

acceptable; avoid flowers as various flowers and colors have negative associations. Warm handshakes are typical; the full embrace is reserved for good friends. Women may kiss a friend's cheek. For business visitors the handshake is typical, although the women should be allowed to take the initiative. Titles are important and should be used with a person's last name. Do not use a person's first name unless invited to do so.

Prior to the meal a variety of drinks and snack, such as chips, dip and peanuts may be offered. Pre-meal socializing may last as long as an hour. Couples are usually seated together, and the hostess indicates when it is appropriate to start by taking the first bite. Both hands are to be kept above the table during the meal; do not put them in your lap. Tortillas may be served flat or filled. Filled tortillas should be eaten from the open end. Flat tortillas may be buttered. Mexican-American historical events and politics should not be discussed during a meal. It is proper to linger for about one hour after a meal. Coffee and liqueur may be served in a separate room.

Scandinavia

Scandinavia, as discussed here, will include Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. Fish is very important and is foundational to the cuisine. It is supported by the use of dairy products. Increasingly meats are playing an important role. Scandinavia has very short summers and fish, milk and produce obtained during the summer is typically preserved through drying, fermenting, pickling, salting or smoking. These methods of preservation are still used today, not for preservation purposes but for flavor and taste. The diet in Scandinavia is typically very hearty and used to contain much fat which was believed to be necessary to guard against the very cold climate in the winter. The food is increasingly becoming lighter as people realize that the fat content is not necessary. Heavy soups and dumplings are still characteristic dishes and the substantive nature of the cuisine is still evident.

Meal Patterns

Scandinavia tends to eat three or four meals per day. Increasingly, they eat hot or cold cereal for breakfast, although in the past, breakfast was more substantial and hotels still offer very substantial breakfasts. At lunch time, sandwiches are typically served. Sandwiches in Scandinavia are open-faced and toppings include sliced meats and cheeses, seafood salads, cucumbers and tomatoes. Typical lunch beverages are milk, coffee or possibly tea. Many Scandinavians pack a lunch and eat in their office as they work.

Dinner would consist of simple appetizers such as herring and cured, smoked fish. A main dish of meat or fish would be served with potatoes and a vegetable or salad. Flat breads are served with every dinner. In Norway dinner may begin with soup such as cream of tomato, cream of spinach, or fish soup. Fruits are often made into hot or cold soups or into compotes which may be served as either the first course or the last course, depending upon the level of sweetness in the soup. Dessert and possibly coffee would complete the meal. Coffee is often offered about one hour after dinner with a small snack. Alternatively one may relax with a glass of wine or beer. Later in the evening, open-faced sandwiches may be eaten as a snack.

The Scandinavian Approach

Milk Products	Milk and milk products, are readily available and widely used. Both as beverage and in cooking. Cheeses are popular
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	All varieties of seafood are used. Beef, veal, pork, lamb and mutton are popular. Game meat and game birds are prevalent. Chicken is prominent among poultry, but geese and ducks are also consumed. Eggs are eaten. Legumes such as peas are common.
Fruits and Vegetables	A variety of fresh, dried, and preserved fruits and berries are available. Familiar vegetables, including root vegetables and fungus are common. Potatoes and cabbages are essential staples.
Breads and Cereals	Whole grain products are used frequently. Rye is used in much bread, although wheat is predominant. Barley, oats and rice are also consumed. Breads are available in a variety of leavened and unleavened forms.
Cooking fats	Butter is preferred, although margarine, lard and vegetable oils are used.
Beverages	Coffee is the primary hot beverage; hot chocolate is also found. Beer, wine and liquor is available.
Seasonings	Generally mild. The predominant seasoning is dill. Caraway seeds are also used much.
Other	Almonds, chestnuts and walnuts are popular. Ground almonds may be made into marzipan, which is a sweet almond paste used in cakes and pastries and is a staple confectionery item.
Cooking methods	Poaching, sautéing, frying, baking and creaming is common. Forcemeats (from fish also) is prevalent. Drying, curing, salting and marinating is often done.

On special occasions and holidays a Swedish Smorgasbord (sandwich table), which the Danes and Norwegians call a Koldtbord (cold table), may be prepared. When eating from the smorgasbord or koldtbord, it is polite to eat one course at a time. A clean plate is used for each course. One typically eats in this order: herring dishes, cold fish, cold meats, salads, hot dishes, and finally desserts. It is easy to spot foreigners at the koldtbord because they will take various foods on their plates that do not belong together.

Etiquette and Meal Behavior

Being on time is highly valued and expected. The Scandinavians are generally reserved and do not show their emotions in public nor use many gestures. It is acceptable to bring a gift. The Scandinavians eat dinner shortly after arriving from work¹². A dinner party is usually held later in the evening. It is usually preceded by cocktails and socializing for 15-30 minutes. Simple hors d'oeuvres may be served; salted peanuts are a common item. The host or hostess

¹² During the winter months they typically work from 9-5, while the summer month hours are 8-4.

will indicate when the meal is to begin. Seating may be formal in which case the guest of honor is seated at the left (not right) side of the hostess and host. Most often the seating is informal. In either case, the host or hostess shows where one is to sit.

It is proper to begin eating when all have been served. Often the first ritualistic toast (skål, pronounced skoal) may take place shortly after the first few bites have been eaten. This toast welcomes all to the meal. It is improper to initiate a skål or drink of the alcoholic beverage until the host or hostess has initiated the first skål. Subsequent skåls can be initiated by anyone. The process involves lifting your glass and looking over it at the person(s) you are toasting, lift the glass slightly, take a sip, and return the glass to the table while maintaining eye contact. The last person to return the glass to the table is the person initiating the skål. The initial skål is shared among all at the table; subsequent skåls typically involve two or more diners.

Conversation may cover any broad subject, including politics, but excluding business or work related issues. Scandinavians have a clear demarcation between work and home. Dinners are usually long and slow with much conversation. People will stay at the table long after the meal is finished. If the silverware is crossed on the plate this indicates that more food is desired. Parallel silverware angled to the left side of the plate indicates that you are finished with the course. It is impolite not to finish the food on the plate. It is considered good form to make positive remarks about the food. At formal events the guest sitting at the hostesses left has (the unspoken) responsibility of toasting the meal. It is impolite to leave immediately after a meal. A guest should tarry a minimum 30 minutes, and may stay longer if the conversation continues.

Spain and Portugal

Spain and Portugal, the Iberian Peninsula, emphasize the fresh and natural flavors of food. The region's cuisine is diverse. Gazpacho¹³ originated in the south of Spain in Andalusia, which is known for its light and delicate foods. The central portion of Spain is known for its wild game and baby roasted meats. Along the east coast of Spain, rice dishes are popular. Paella¹⁴ is a rice dish seasoned with saffron and topped by items such as poultry, shellfish, beef or sausages. In the northeast in Catalonia, zarzuela is a seafood stew made with a tomato base is a specialty item.

Catalonia is also known for its spicy, tangy sauce called romesco which is composed of slivered almonds blended and ground together with garlic, chopped tomatoes, chili pepper, salt, olive oil and wine vinegar. Romesco is served with shellfish, meat and game. The Basque province is found in the central northern part of Spain. The cuisine here is known for its seafood dishes, such as stuffed crab and baby eels with garlic. Mushrooms, green peppers, onions, tomatoes, and white rice are used frequently. Unlike the rest of Spain, Basque uses cream a great deal.

In the northwest provinces we find Galicia and Asturias. Corn, chestnuts and apples grow here and cornbread is a popular item. Hard cider is the beverage of choice. This region is known for empanadas (deep fried meat or fish pastries) and fabada (pork sausage and bean stew).

The mountains separate Portugal from Spain. Portugal's cuisine is similar to Spain's. Olive oil, garlic, parsley, almonds, tomatoes, pork, beans and eggs are widely used in both countries, but fresh coriander, fresh fish and shellfish are more prominent in Portugal than Spain. Dried cod is a Portuguese staple and it is used in the national specialty bacalau (cod, tomatoes and potatoes) caldo verde (green cabbage soup) is another national specialty. Portuguese foods are typically more seasoned than those in Spain and more cream and butter is used.

¹³ Gazpacho is a cold soup that contains tomatoes, green peppers and perhaps garlic. It can also be made gazpacho blanco, which is white soup made without the tomatoes.

¹⁴ It has been suggested that paella originated in Valencia and got its name from a large two-handed frying pan in which it is cooked. Others have suggested that the dish was created for a tiny frail princess and was called paella meaning for her.

The Iberian Approach	
Milk Products	Milk and milk products are not prominent. Milk from cows, sheep, and goats are used at times and are used in some desserts.
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Protein Alternatives	Young animals such as suckling pigs, baby lambs, kid, and veal are preferred. Pork is prevalent and poultry and game birds are widely consumed. Large and small game is also eaten. Eggs are used. All varieties of seafood are used. Legumes, such as garbanzo and fava beans are widely used.
Fruits and Vegetables	A wide variety of fresh and dried fruits are used. Citrus, dates and figs and berries are prevalent. Olives, chili peppers, sweet peppers and tomatoes are the most frequently eaten vegetables, others vegetables are consumed as well.
Breads and Cereals	Wheat flour is used to make bread and pastries and short grained rice is common. Cornbread is popular in northwestern Spain and in northern Portugal.
Cooking fats	Olive oil is the primary cooking oil even for deep-frying. Butter and lard are used occasionally.
Beverages	Hot chocolate and coffee are favorite hot beverages. Tea is also consumed. Beer and wine are widely available.
Seasonings	Garlic, tomato and onion flavor many savory dishes. Citrus juices and wine are used. Saffron is often added to rice for color and flavor. Cinnamon is common in sweet products. Combinations of olive oil, garlic and ground nuts are widely used with fish, meat and vegetable dishes
Other	Nuts are added to many dishes - almond, pine nuts, hazelnuts and walnuts are prevalent.
Cooking methods	Soups and stews and one-dish meals are common. Sauces are important. Frying, baking, and steaming are frequent preparation methods.

Meal Patterns

The Spanish and Portuguese normally eat five meals each day. An early breakfast, called desayano begins around 8 a.m. It usually consists of coffee, bread with jam, pastries or a donut (churros). It is often eaten at a café. The second breakfast takes place around 11 a.m. It may include grilled sausage, sautéed squid or an omelette (tortilla). A light snack may be served around 1 p.m. and will typically consist of tapas. The main meal (comida) is eaten around 2 p.m. The comida is considered an important meal and usually starts with a salad or cold soup,

followed by a fish or tortilla dish, a meat course and finally a dessert, often fresh fruit or cheese. Wine is typically served with the meal and coffee follows the meal. After the comida, a siesta is often taken. A great many businesses close between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., which allows time for the comida and the siesta. Around 6 p.m., a snack of coffee or tea with some pastries or honey on bread is served. This is called merienda. Cena, the final meal of the day is usually eaten 10 p.m. or later. It can vary from a light snack to a multi-course meal. Tapas and a glass of dry wine may precede it.

Etiquette and Mealtime Behavior

Punctuality is important, particularly for a visitor. A host may be delayed. Do not attempt to schedule a meeting or meal during the afternoon siesta hours, as that would be considered impolite. Handshakes are common for men and women; men may additionally pat you on the back. A full embrace is normal in Portugal, while a kiss on the cheek may occur in Spain. Gifts are acceptable and a visitor may also receive one. Offering wine as a gift, however, is an insult as this suggests the host is not fully prepared. The host may give a speech during the meal. Toasting is common with raised glasses.

When planning meetings, meals or other business venues involving foreign nationals or residents of foreign countries and you are aware of which nationalities or cultures will be involved the State Department (202-647-4000) and the Protocol Resource and Operations Service (212-316-4278), a for-profit agency, may be able to provide helpful information.

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