

British Pub Etiquette And Customs

Visitors to Britain may find the best place to sample local culture is in a traditional pub. But these friendly hostilities¹⁾ can be minefields of potential gaffes²⁾ for the uninitiated.

An anthropologist³⁾ and a team of researchers have unveiled⁴⁾ some of the arcane⁵⁾ rituals of British pubs—starting with the difficulty of getting a drink. Most pubs have no waiters—you have to go to the bar to buy drinks. A group of Italian youths waiting 4 5 minutes before they realized they would have to fetch their own. This may sound inconvenient, but there is a hidden purpose.

Pub etiquette is designed to promote sociability in a society known for its reserve. Standing at the bar for service allows you to chat with others waiting to be served. The bar counter is possibly the only site in the British Isles in which friendly conversation with strangers is considered entirely appropriate and really quite normal behaviour. “If you haven’t been to a pub, you haven’t been to Britain.” This tip can be found in a booklet, *Passport to the Pub: The Tourists’ Guide to Pub Etiquette*, a customers’ code of conduct for those wanting to sample “a central part of British life and culture.”

The trouble is that if you do not follow the local rules, the experience may fall flat. For example, if you are in a big group, it is best if only one or two people go to buy the drinks. Nothing irritates the regular customers and bar staff more than a gang of strangers blocking all access to the bar while they chat and dither about what to order.

Amazingly for the British, who love queues, there is no formal line-up; the bar staff are skilled at knowing whose turn it is.

You are permitted to try to attract attention, but there are rules about how to do this. Do not call out, tap coins on the counter, snap your finger or wave like a drowning swimmer. Do not scowl⁶⁾ or sigh or roll your eyes. And whatever you do, do not ring the bell hanging behind the counter—this is used by the landlord to signal closing time. The key thing is to catch the bar worker’s eyes. You could also hold an empty glass or some money, but do not wave them about. Do adopt an expectant, hopeful, even slightly anxious facial expression. If you look too contented and complacent, the bar staff may assume you are already being served.

Always say “please” and try to remember some of the British bar staffs pet hates. They do not like people to keep others waiting while they make up their minds. They don’t like people standing idly against the bar when there are a lot of customers wanting for service. And they do not like people who wait until the end of the order before asking for such drinks as Guinness stout⁷⁾ which take considerably longer to pour than other drinks.

One Dutch tourist who spent six months visiting 800 of Britain’s 61,000 pubs and interviewing 50 publicans and bar workers and more than 1,000 customers said: “I cannot understand how the British ever manage to buy themselves a drink.” But they do, and if you follow these tips you should be able to do so, too.

Speaking of tips, you should never offer the bar staff a cash gratuity. The correct behaviour is to offer them a drink. Pubs pride themselves on their egalitarian⁸⁾ atmosphere. A tip in cash would be a reminder of their service role, whereas the offer of a drink is a

friendly gesture.

So now you have a drink, but what about meeting the locals? Pub-goers will indicate in unspoken ways if they are interested in chatting. Concentrate on those who have bought drinks and are still loitering⁹⁾ at the bar. Those who have moved to sit at tables are probably not seeking company. Look for people with “open” body language, facing out-wards into the room. Don't ever introduce yourself with an outstretched hand and a big smile. Natives will cringe and squirm with embarrassment at such brashness. The British, quite frankly, do not want to know your name and shake your hand--or at least not until a proper degree of mutual interest has been well established (like maybe when you marry their daughter) .

Talk generally about the weather, the beer or the pub and at an appropriate moment, offer to your new found companion a drink. This exchange is key to feeling part of the pub crowd and thereby getting to know more about Britain than its tourists spots. The ritual of sharing—buying rounds of drinks in turn—is of great significance. This is because the British male is frightened of intimacy, finds it difficult to express friendly interest in other males and can be somewhat aggressive in his manner.

If you are having British friends or business contracts, one of your hosts will probably buy the first round, but you should be quick to offer the next. The right time to offer to buy a drink is when their glasses are still a quarter full. The line of “It's my round—What are you having?” may not be in your phrase book, but it is one of the most useful sentences in the English language.

英国酒吧的礼仪与习俗

去英国的游客会发现传统英国酒吧是最能领略当地文化的地方。但对于初来乍到的异国来说，这些友善的酒吧却犹如潜藏着有惹事危险的“地雷区”。

一位人类学家和一组研究人员揭示了某些鲜为人知的英国酒吧仪俗。人们首先遇到的困难是从买酒开始的。大多数英国酒吧都没有酒保，你得到吧台去买酒。一伙意大利年轻人等了三刻钟才明白他们得自己去买。这听上去似乎让人觉得不方便，可却有它深刻的内涵。

在因其冷漠而出名的英国社会里，酒吧仪俗的形成是为了促进社会交往。排队的时候可以和其他等待买酒的人交谈。在英伦诸岛上，和陌生人亲切地交谈被认为是完全适宜的正常行为的惟一场所可能就是吧台了。“你如果没有去过酒吧，那就等于没有到过英国。”这个忠告可在名为《酒吧护照：旅游者酒吧仪俗指南》的小册子中找到，它对那些想要领略“英国生活和文化核心部分”的人是一种行为准则。

问题是如果你不入乡随俗的话，你将一无所获。譬如说，你们若是团体前往，那最好是一个或两个人前去买酒。酒吧常客和酒保最腻味的就是一大伙人一边聊着一边又优柔寡断不知喝什么酒好，把通往吧台的路给堵住。

就爱排队的英国人而言，酒吧里看不到正式的排队，这令人感到惊讶。酒保有本领知道该轮到谁了。

你可以做些动作引起酒保的注意，但有规可循。不要大声嚷嚷，不要在吧台面上敲击钱币，不要叭叭地弹手指，不要像快淹死的人那样挥动手臂，不要绷着脸，不要唉声叹气，不要翻白眼珠。在不该干的事当中还绝对不要摇晃挂在吧台后面的铃，那是酒吧老板用的，表示关门时间到了。关键是你要让酒保看见你。你可以举起空杯子或钱，可不要摇晃。你脸上可以流露等待、期望，甚至略带焦急的表情。你如果显得太心满意足的样子，酒保会认为他们

已经为你提供服务了。

要把“请”字挂在嘴边，要尽量记住一些英国酒保最厌恶的事。他们不喜欢酒客拿不定主意而让他们等着；不喜欢好多客人等着买酒而有人却靠着吧台闲站着；也不喜欢有人等到最后才说要喝像爱尔兰烈性黑啤酒那样的酒，因为比起别的酒来，准备这种酒的时间要长得多。

一个曾花了半年时间，去了英国61000家酒吧中的800个，访谈了50位酒吧老板和酒保以及1000多个酒客的荷兰旅游者说：“我不明白英国人是怎么给自己买到酒的。”可事实上他们就能。如果你按着本文所说的忠告去做，你也能如愿以偿地买到酒。

说到“小费”，你可千万别给酒保现金以表示谢意。正确的做法是请酒保喝一盅。酒吧为自己的平等气氛感到自豪。现金小费会使人想到酒保是伺候人的，而请喝一杯则是友好的表示。

好，你现在喝上酒了，那又怎么和当地人接触呢？上酒吧的人如果有兴趣交谈的话，会用非言语方式表现出来。注意那些已经买了酒可还在吧台晃荡的人。那些已经离开吧台，找到椅子坐下的人可能只想独斟。找那些脸朝外，朝屋里人看，用形体语言表示“可接触”的人。千万不要伸出手来笑容满面地自我介绍。对于这种轻率鲁莽，当地人会因尴尬而战战兢兢，坐立不安。坦率地说，英国人不想知道你的姓名，也不想跟你握手——至少在相互间尚未形成某种共同利益（譬如当你娶他们的女儿为妻）之前不会。

可以跟人泛泛地谈天气，谈啤酒，或者谈所在的酒吧。在适当的时刻主动提出给你新找到的同伴买酒。这种相互请酒是感受自己是酒吧群体中一员的关键做法，从而可以更多了解旅游点以外的英国。轮流买酒分担费用的习俗有它重要意义。这是因为英国男人害怕亲密，他们对其他男性表示友好有困难，举止行为上多少有可能不甚和善。

你如果和英国朋友在一起或者在洽谈商业合同，接待你的主人中有一位可能买第一轮酒，而你应该很快表示买下一轮的。在对方杯子里的酒还剩下四分之一时，就是你该提出买酒的时候了。“这轮由我买——你喝的是什么？”这句话在你的英语小册子里可能没有，但它却是英国语言中非常有用的一句话。

NOTE 注释：

hostelry ['hɒstəlri] n. 旅馆

gaffe [gæf] n. 过失，出丑，失态

anthropologist [ˌænθrəˈpɒlədʒɪst] n. 人类学者，人类学家

unveil [ʌn'veɪl] vt. 使公诸于众，揭开

arcane [ɑː'keɪn] adj. 神秘的，鲜为人知

scowl [skaʊl] vt. 板着脸表示

stout [staut] n. 烈性啤酒

egalitarian [ɪgæli'teəriən] adj. 平等主义的

loiter ['lɔɪtə] v. 闲荡，虚度，徘徊