

# International Dining: Dos and Don'ts

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As a college student, I'm sure you dream of going out of the country; you hope to see new things and experience new exotic dishes. However, while you may be expecting to take risks while sampling new cuisine, you may not be prepared for the dining experience. So here I am offering a few tips and things to consider while eating out in a foreign country:

1. "Yes, I'll have a coke please."

Oh no you won't! Most of us are used to paying anywhere from sixty nine cents for a can of soda to two dollars thirteen cents for unlimited refills in a restaurant. This is simply not the case, in fact, soda is probably the most expensive thing you could drink in Paris. A can of soda is usually three to four euros and that's only for one can. Instead try drinking water, is simpler, cheaper, and good for you. Of course, most of us don't drink water while dining out, so go for a glass of wine which is still cheaper.

2. "Oh my god! This is taking FOREVER!"

Yes, yes it is. We live in a country where everything is fast paced, including our eating habits. When we go out we expect the service to be prompt and the food to get there fast. Well, it would seem that the French aren't quite the speed racers we are, they don't scarf their food down...oh no, they dine. Wait staff does just that, they wait for you to make a choice and then give you time to talk after you order, so sit and unwind. Once you do get your food you'll be given your space to eat, no one will be checking up on you every five minutes. If you choose to order dessert you'll also be given more time to chat as they let your food digest before giving you your sugar high. So when going out to eat, be patient!

3. "Is this it?!"

Along with extended dining time come smaller portions. Once again, our expectations are out of whack, we expect heaping portions and large beverages. The French eat in small portions, portions that are usually very rich. A friend ordered a simple coffee, now we all know the standard coffee size of a mug and in some cases a smaller mug however, on this particular occasion his coffee came in what seemed like a cute ceramic shot glass with a teeny-weeny handle.

4. "Finally, something I remember!"

Ah yes, one day you could know the joy of finding a familiar item on a foreign menu. I'm here to tell you my friend, it's not so familiar anymore. For example the classic club sandwich now comes with sliced hard boiled egg (in fact, a lot of things have egg added to them). Even the ever familiar McDonald's menu has confusing options. Another thing to know is they aren't so keen on custom orders meaning that you order it as it is, they aren't going to make changes and if they do they aren't happy about it.

Keeping all this in mind, get ready for a culturally different dining experience, just remember to have an open mind and a lot of patience.