

BBC Learning English – Ask About Britain

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Social Etiquette 社交礼仪

Finn: Hello. Welcome to another BBC Learning English programme. I'm Finn.

Li: And I'm Yang Li. 欢迎收听 Ask About Britain. 英国问答节目通过大量的采访录音来回答同学们提出的各种疑问。

Finn: And today we have a question about social etiquette from Li Jie.

Li: Social etiquette 社交礼仪。

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My question is about some social etiquette. For example: what do you normally bring to a party as a guest? Who pays when you go out as a group?

Li: Li Jie 想了解有关吃饭与请客做客的礼仪。The word etiquette 是个法语词, Finn, how do you spell it?

Finn: It's e-t-i-q-u-e-t-t-e etiquette. So Li, as a British person I take a lot of this for granted. But you know, it's something that foreign students should really be aware of as social etiquette can be quite tricky. To take something for granted.

Li: To take something for granted 就是理所当然的, 或者是想当然的。

Finn: And tricky.

Li: Tricky 就是难以处理的。礼仪这东西啊不是总从书本上能学到的。

Finn: And that's why we're here to help you, isn't it Li?

Li: That's right.

Finn: So let's hear what some people would normally do on different types of social occasion.

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I think a lot depends on the level of the relationship. For example, really really good friends I've known for a long time, I just want them to turn up. Just come here, bring themselves, have a bit of fun, be relaxed and there's no need for them to bring anything. And if I'm going to a party and I'm the guest, yes I'll bring a

bottle of wine, or if it is a lady who's doing the inviting I'll bring a bunch of flowers. Yes of course if there are children, I'll bring some chocolate. You can never go wrong with chocolate.

Finn: This man said that it all depends on the level of relationship.

Li: 这取决于相互之间关系的疏密程度。特别熟悉的好朋友不需要客气，空手来，一点没问题。

Finn: But if you're less familiar with the host when you're invited for dinner then you should bring something. For example, a bottle of wine 一瓶酒。

Li: Or a bunch of flowers for the hostess 给女主人买上一束鲜花。

Finn: And if there're any children, you might want to bring a box of chocolates 一盒巧克力。

Li: What if you go to a big party with lots of people?

Insert

We'll normally bring wine, drink, sometimes we bring food as well. But the person actually hosting would normally provide that as well.

Sometimes if you're having a big barbecue people will say oh – if you've got 30 people coming - then people will say "Oh do you want us to bring something?" and they might make a dish or a pudding or a potato dish or a salad and then you'll all just muck in together.

Finn: Now here we're looking at a big party or a big barbecue in the summer.

Li: 大型聚会或有几十人参加的夏季烧烤聚餐。那情况就不一样了，对吗？

Finn: Well people would normally muck in together which means that they will each bring a dish to contribute to the party. Muck in.

Li: 每人带一样菜的聚餐 muck in 拼凑。当然也可以带甜点或沙拉。

Finn: And so, parties are great aren't they? But can take a lot of time to prepare for and for the party itself, so a lot of people, especially young people, prefer to go out for meals in restaurants.

Li: 其实在中国也是如此，年轻人一起出去搓一顿。那结账的时候是不是都采取 AA 制呢？

Finn: Let's listen to a few more people we talked to:

Insert

We normally all just split the bill between us and sort of, you know, just add a tip onto it and then split the bill between us.

- Finn: Now this lady said that they would normally split the bill between them. Split the bill.
- Li: 平分 split the bill. Isn't there another phrase with the same meaning, Finn? Go Dutch?
- Finn: Very good, yes. Go Dutch. Well you could say that but nowadays people don't use it as much as split the bill. Split the bill is a bit more colloquial 更加口语一些。
- Li: That's good to know Finn. Chinese students love idioms but the danger is that some idioms are a bit out-of-date. Let's listen to some other people.

Insert

Well, I guess it kind of depends also on the group that you're with at the time and how well you know the other people. You know, so whether they're close friends or whether they're family, it can differ then as well. Or if you go out with work colleagues and stuff, you're more likely to divide the costs equally between you. Whereas sometimes if I go out with my brother, say, or other family members, one of us might just pick up the bill. But yeah, it kind of depends on the people you're with and the circumstances, whether it's an event like a birthday or something like that.

For birthdays we usually all go out and then the person whose birthday it is doesn't actually pay for their meal. So everybody else splits the bill. But the person whose birthday it is doesn't actually pay.

They invite people to their houses for their birthdays and then people will bring them presents. So you invite a crowd of people, you'll supply the food, people will bring drink and they'll bring presents and cards.

- Finn: So it all depends on the circumstances.
- Li: 根据具体情况而定。
- Finn: Generally people divide the cost equally between themselves if it's a group of friends or working colleagues.
- Li: But as one woman says there, if she goes out with her brother or a family member then one of them would just pick up the bill.
- Finn: Yes and it's also worth noticing that perhaps when we go out to celebrate someone's birthday, then the birthday girl or the birthday boy would pay for nothing and everybody else would share the bill.
- Li: 过生日的人不买单，而是由其他人来分摊。A bit different from the Chinese way, I suppose?
- Finn: Yes, a bit different from the Chinese way. But as we heard there, when you go to someone's house for a birthday party then that is a little bit more like the Chinese way. Because as guests you normally bring presents and cards for the host.

- Li: Well Finn I think we have covered quite a lot on the topic of social etiquette today.
- Finn: We certainly have. And if you have any further questions please email us at chinaelt@bbc.co.uk
- Li: 感谢李杰的来信和所有的听众朋友，我们下次节目再会。
- Finn: Bye bye.

Glossary

social etiquette 社交礼仪	level of relationship 关系疏密程度
go Dutch AA 制	split the bill 分摊
a bottle of wine 一瓶酒	a bunch of flowers 一束鲜花
a box of chocolates 一盒巧克力	a potato dish 一道土豆菜
muck in (聚会时) 人人带一份菜	add a tip onto the bill 账单加上小费
take something for granted 理所当然	circumstance 情况