



The Restaurant Ritual or "Pre-Prom Survival"

1. **Maitre d'hotel:** The chief honcho. Called "May-tra-dee" by his friends. Easily recognized by his tuxedo costume or dark business suit and known for his habit of leaning over your shoulder to whisper "Is everything satisfactory?"

2. **The Captain:** Sometimes confused with the Maitre'd because of his similar costume. Functions in the ritual by leading participants to places at the table, holding chairs out for ladies, providing the printed words of the offering (see below) and by taking orders with a smile.

3. **Waiter/Waitress:** Former wears cut off jacket. Latter wears clever costume. Functions in the rituals by serving the offering ordered through the Captain. Often is seen snapping fingers at busboy (see below) and scowling at money left on the table inside an upturned glass of water.

4. **Busboy:** Called "boy" because he is youthfully dressed in a cute plain little jacket. He assists the chiefs by toting and lifting and getting a little nervous and often landing in trouble with the head honcho.

The Relics

Many initiates to the Ritual of the Restaurant are confused over the relics used in the service. Some have been known to starve rather than offend the spirits by using the wrong fork or spoon. Much relief has come to those who have learned the wisdom of Confucius: "When in doubt, start at the out." Translated into slang, this means that seasoned ritual goers pretend to know what to do by also choosing the utensil to the outside of the place setting.

The Offering

Usually written in a secret language called "French" (or "Francaise" as some foreigners call it) The essential fact to remember in order to save money is to avoid some incantations called "A la Carte."

The other essential fact is to memorize the words "What does that mean?" One should repeat this mumbo-jumbo over and over to the Captain until he will understand that the printed words of the offering should be provided in English.

The Sacrifice

The sacrifice is composed of several features:

1. **Paying the Bill:** This is often done by laying money down on a little silver tray brought to the table by the Captain. If he likes the amount, he may bring part of it back.

2. **Separate Checks:** A practice frowned upon by all the tribal chiefs including one called "Cashier" who hides in an obscure corner of the room. To avoid hostility, it is wise to announce before the offering is ordered, "We want separate checks." If the Captain visibly pales, one should correct the statement by adding "Or we would like prorated checks." The last maneuver should be attempted only among friends. The total bill, no matter who ordered what, is quickly divided evenly among the paying guests.

3. **Tipping:** Ritual restaurants expect at least 15% tip for good service and at least 15% tip for lousy service. Either way. Because math is often difficult to do in one's head while being watched by a waiter with pleading eyes, the quickest way to figure is to take 10% of the total and divide by two and add to the ten.

