

Dining Dilemmas

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 15 March 2011 10:39



Dear L.A.Plume,

I have a friend with whom I go out for lunch; when the check comes she gives it a cursory glance, puts some money on the table and quickly dashes out saying she is late getting back to work. The problem is that she never leaves enough money for her share. It seems petty of me, but it is annoying. What can I do other than just not go out with her any more?

Peg

Dear Peg,

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Ask for separate checks when you order, and ask the server to bring the check when you order so your friend has it in plenty of time to pay what she owes.

L.A.Plume

Dear L.A.Plume,

What can you do when you go out with a group for a meal and that one person in the party wants to pick apart the check because everyone else had two glasses of wine and she only had one, or she had a salad and everyone else had an appetizer? At that point, it only seems fair that everyone's check be calculated according to what they actually ordered, however then you have to get into the math of equally dividing the tax and the tip appropriately. After a pleasant meal and a few glasses of wine, this task seems too perplexing. What is the solution? Generally, "our" group just equally divides the check.

Mary

Dear Mary,

Before you order, just say to the table, "Our custom is to divide the check equally between us; if that doesn't suit you, please ask for your own check." Stare directly at the offending person when you make this announcement so you are sure they understand.

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L.A.Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

When someone brings a bottle of wine to a dinner party, should the host open the bottle or treat it as a gift and save it for another time? It confuses me, as I have already selected the wines I want to serve and the odd bottle usually just doesn't fit in with what I had planned. Also, what do you say when someone brings you a bottle that you know you have given them on a previous occasion?

Wine Lover

Dear Wine Lover,

I consider a bottle of wine given under those circumstances as a hostess gift to you. You can ask if they would like you to open it, in which case you should. If someone has brought you wine that you have given them, it may be a simple matter of their having paid attention to that gift; maybe they assumed that's the wine you like. The best thing you can do is to put a note on the bottle, and when you drink it, send a note, or mention to them that you enjoyed it.

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L.A.Plume

Dear L.A.Plume,

I went to my daughter's house for dinner the other night and invited some of her neighbors. She didn't want the neighbors for dinner, so I had to uninvite them. Then I invited a male friend of mine to girls' night out because his wife doesn't like to go out and he does. The girls said that wasn't appropriate. Why aren't people more outgoing and willing to meet new people?

Bonnie

Dear Bonnie,

Glad to hear from you again! The first rule is that guests of guests shouldn't invite guests. You really should ask people first before inviting someone else to join them. And what were you thinking when you invited a man to girls' night out? Do you think, maybe, it's time to have a cocktail party yourself and invite all your friends so they can meet each other casually?

L.A.Plume

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