

Being thoughtful and courteous to those around you entails occupying one seat, positioning yourself near an outlet if you plan on using tech, and only ever using headphones to listen to music.

# COFFEE SHOP ETIQUETTE

TEXT AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
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Like many people who work from home or are office dwellers in desperate need of a break, I find myself frequenting coffee shops and cafés quite often, particularly during the winter months when cabin fever strikes. I find that a caffeinated kick and a change of scenery go a long way to warm the soul and boost inspiration!

**W**hether it's to catch up on work or connect with someone locally, on any given day you'll probably find me heading for a coffee shop/café. One thing I've learned over the years is that frequenting a coffee shop/café entails a certain level of etiquette – you learn tricks and tips along the way that will not only improve your experience but that of your fellow coffee lovers, as well.

## WORK OR PLEASURE?

Coffee shops are exceptional places to casually run into folks you know and be social. For introverts, particularly those of us working mostly from home, such interactions can bring a welcomed reprieve. Living in Ephrata, Jessica and

I might venture out on a weekend for a crepe at nearby Griddle and Grind Café. New Holland Coffee Co. is another gem, featuring a gas fireplace in a large but cozy gathering space, perfect for connecting with friends.

On the flip side, if you just want to focus on being productive, I'd suggest that you frequent a coffee shop/café that's located outside of your comfort zone/zip code. In such cases, the go-to place for me is The Baker's Table at the Cork Factory complex in Lancaster. During the week, I can usually focus there uninterrupted for hours, plus it's a wonderful spot for a meeting. On weekends, they offer a brunch buffet with omelets made to order, which is another draw, particularly if we have house guests and don't want to cook.

## BE WELL POSITIONED

If you want to talk with others, sit in the middle of the seating area. If you want to be left alone, sit to the side. If folks have headphones on, take the hint: it's almost a certainty they want to be left to their own devices. Mean Cup at Champion Forge is perfectly set up for this scenario – large tables populate the middle of the shop, while smaller tables are set against the walls. There's even a quiet area furnished with a sofa and chairs. The close proximity to Franklin & Marshall College means plenty of folks are intently working and “in the zone.”

Stationing yourself at the counter is an excellent option for working in a standing position. I switched to a

standing desk in my office to appease a nagging muscle injury and now look for similar ergonomics in public spaces. The Baker's Table, Griddle and Grind Café and New Holland Coffee Co. all have counters at the perfect standing height.

Getting outside is often a cure for cabin fever. Chestnut Hill Café, Square One Coffee and Griddle & Grind are three cafés with beautiful, naturally shaded patio spaces that open in the spring and often double the seating capacity.

## BE MINDFUL OF YOUR FOOTPRINT

Should your small group need to move a table or chairs to sit together, make sure you return them to their proper places before leaving.

Don't strew your journals, bags or power cords about. If the coffee shop/café is small and busy, seating and space will be at a premium and simple courtesies could be the difference between another visitor finding a seat or not.

Putting your stuff on another chair is also a no-no, as it will discourage others from finding a seat or even asking to share a table with you.

If you are feeling under the weather, camping out in public is another no-no. Yes, a coffee shop/café might provide a cure for the doldrums of cabin fever, but it's not a prescription for battling the flu. Nobody wants to catch what ails you!

## CHECK YOUR TECH

Be sure to charge your tech devices before leaving home in case you can't situate yourself near a power outlet. Remember to bring power adapters, cables and headphones so you can listen to audio without disturbing those around you.

To preserve the atmosphere, not all establishments offer WiFi, which makes them wonderful spots for conversations and reading but not so much for working.

Step outside to make longer calls – such a gesture will reduce noise and be considerate of others around you. It's a coffee shop, not an office.

For the love of all things holy, going to a coffee shop/café to download data while streaming movies and gaming – chewing up bandwidth so the rest of us can't even load a website – is rude. Please stop! The way any hot spot or even cell tower works is there's a digital pipe, or bandwidth, and only so much internet can “flow” through that pipe. Streaming



Sea Salt and Black Pepper Fries, served with garlic aioli, chipotle dipping sauce and ketchup.



NEW HOLLAND COFFEE CO.  
836 W. MAIN ST., NEW HOLLAND

Melissa Burkhart,  
assistant manager  
and head barista  
at New Holland  
Coffee Co.



20 W. MAIN ST., EPHRATA



Shayleen Wiker, co-owner of Griddle & Grind Café & Creperie in Ephrata.



A delicate chocolate crepe is filled with mocha cream filling and sweet, tangy berry drizzle, topped with strawberries.



Fox Meadows Creamery's apple crisp ice cream with caramel in Griddle & Grind's crepe-bowl.



content while updating your software on public WiFi is rather annoying for the rest of us. There, I said it.

### BE CONSIDERATE OF BARISTAS

This shouldn't need mentioning, but placing an order while talking on the phone is exceptionally rude to the person waiting on you behind the counter. His or her job is to serve you delicious food and caffeinated drinks, not to tolerate being treated poorly.

Be patient! In most cases, an order entails more than pouring a cup of coffee from a pot. There's some finesse involved in preparing those specialty drinks. Keep in mind that in addition to counter service, they might be fulfilling orders online or over the phone and from a drive-through.

If you are going to camp out for a while, buying one drink isn't going to cut it. If space allows, a two- to three-hour visit is the sweet spot for focused productivity. In such cases, I try to place at least as many orders in that timespan. My personal view: if my cup runs dry, it's time to place another order or make room for a customer who will. If you can't handle too much caffeine, switch to caffeine-free tea, juice or water.

If you see the baristas are slammed with orders, and your cup has run empty, wait until the queue eases up before ordering a refill. If you're camped out, there's no need to hurry and they will appreciate your patience.

With a myriad of coffee-based beverages, there's no shame or pretense in curiosity. If you're unsure about something you'd like to try, feel free to "ask questions about the drink," says Melissa Bukhart, assistant manager and head barista of New Holland Coffee Co. "Every coffee shop does things a little differently, so don't assume you know what it is."

In the event you're dissatisfied with your drink, you may be able to request a change to be made to improve it. According to Sierra Hrubochak, co-owner of Griddle & Grind Café & Creperie, "If you don't like a drink, tell me why *specifically* so I can fix it. I want to make you a drink you enjoy, but I can't if I don't know what's wrong with the first one. It's heartbreaking for me to have someone bring a drink back because I want them to enjoy it."

### TABS AND TIPS

Leaving a tab open cuts down on the number of transactions, which is a time saver for everyone. An open tab allows you to skip the peer pressure of the \$1, \$2, \$3 point of sale (POS) tip during each trip to the counter for your \$3 purchase. An open tab also allows you to overcome minimum card purchase requirements. If you want to buy a colleague or friend a drink, keeping a tab open while you find a seat allows him or her to order free of peer pressure.

If gift cards are available, load one up. A gift card cuts down on the number of bank-based transactions and will aid in budgeting and expense tracking.

Base your tip on time. If I'm at a mom-and-pop coffee shop and buy three cups of coffee for \$6-\$8 total, but occupy a table for a couple of hours, I'll tip "on time" (more) and not on the 20% rule.

I'm a strong advocate for always carrying cash for roadside stands, and it might be just as helpful for coffee. If you're planning to visit a coffee shop/café for the first time, it's probably a good idea to verify accepted payment methods. Some shops have cash-only policies. Two that come to mind are Café One Eight in downtown Lancaster and Higher Grounds in Mount Joy (although they will accept checks).

### REWARD YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Sign up for rewards. Coffee shops/café might offer kickbacks based on the number of cups of joe you buy. Starbucks has a great program with a birthday treat and the occasional BOGO happy hour, not to mention free refills on certain drinks.

Learn which beverages include free or inexpensive refills. Iced and cold-brew coffees are usually applicable but that's typically not the case with nitro. Also, adding sweet cream or flavorings might cost you a few extra cents.

Don't forget that a gift card from a person's favorite coffee shop/café is perfect for birthdays, the holidays, work achievements, saying thank you, etc. Oftentimes, they can be ordered online.



An assortment of scrumptious pastries beckon from the display case at The Baker's Table.



Sarah Leonard, front of house manager at The Baker's Table in Lancaster, with an Italian Cold Cut Sandwich, latte and a fruit tart.

THE BAKER'S TABLE  
480 NEW HOLLAND AVE.,  
LANCASTER

