



# South Asia: Hospitality

## Did you know . . .

- When are you ready to eat? Lunch is normally eaten around 2 o'clock or later. People here consider dinner at 5 or 6pm really early. Dinner in South Asia is around 8pm and can be as late as 10 o'clock!
- Barefoot! Before entering someone's home, it is polite to take off your shoes and leave them outside. Often, people have special shoes to wear in their houses (these shoes are considered clean because they aren't worn outside).
- People usually offer you something to eat or drink when you visit their homes. Always eat and drink what is offered to you in someone's home.
- Always use your right hand for shaking hands, eating, paying for things or just handing something to someone.
- Chai breaks (milk tea with spices) are common in the morning and afternoon. But there's always time for chai when someone stops by to visit!
- Wish your parents would let you eat with your hands? Forks are optional in South Asia! Most South Asian dishes are meant to be eaten with your hands. (Your right hand only!)
- Seconds, please! If you are allowed to serve yourself at a meal, start with small portions because your host will put more on your plate: two, three, maybe four times! After the second or third helping, you can indicate politely that you want no more by spreading your hands over your plate, smiling, and saying, "Thank you. I have had my fill."
- People want to help you. Sometimes they want to help so much that they will give you directions, even if they are not correct!
- Be prepared to sit on the floor in someone's home.



- Always carry toilet paper with you, especially in village areas. Most bathrooms don't have it.
- It is not uncommon for shopkeepers to offer you something to drink, like a Sprite or a cup of chai.
- Women should not shake hands with men.
- It is considered bad manners to point the bottom of your foot towards someone while seated on the floor or in a chair (crossing your legs with the foot resting on the knee and the sole is facing a South Asian sitting near you).