

Cheers!

Ten Tips to Delivering the Perfect Holiday Toast

Holding your champagne glass while standing under the mistletoe may feel a bit daunting when you are called upon to make an impromptu holiday toast. Practice these tips to dazzle your guests with warm holiday cheer.

- 1 | Plan ahead.** A good toast is based on proper timing and a thoughtful message. Mark Twain once said, “It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.” Start planning early so you won’t be caught off guard.
- 2 | The host of the event typically offers the first toast (but not always).** You may not be the host; but instead, the one selected by your host to offer a festive greeting. A welcome toast is offered at the beginning of the holiday meal to celebrate the occasion.
- 3 | Make sure the glasses are full.** After all, a holiday toast isn’t nearly as special if Aunt Susan must gulp down water instead of her favorite champagne. Liquor is not necessary; other options include sparkling soda, punch or tea.
- 4 | Remember the four S’s: Stand, smile, speak and sit.** When you are making a toast to a group of people, or a table with several guests, stand up, raise your glass, smile, make eye contact and say something heartfelt. Take a sip, take your seat and continue to enjoy the holiday party or meal.
- 5 | Keep it short.** A toast should be brief but meaningful. During the dessert course, a special toast may be offered to the guest of honor. Mention a special accomplishment, an admirable quality or tell a brief story. The goal is to be short, sweet and sincere.
- 6 | Put the knife down.** Tapping the side of your glass with a knife is not the proper way to capture your audience’s attention. Position yourself front and center of the room and raise your glass. Others will eventually follow.
- 7 | Clink at your own discretion.** It is not necessary to clink, however, if someone reaches towards you, go ahead and gently reciprocate by touching glasses. The key word here is “touch,” otherwise you may find yourself apologizing over broken crystal.
- 8 | Never drink a toast to yourself or clap when someone is honoring you.** This act is comparable to patting yourself on the back. When you are toasted, acknowledge the effort by nodding your head in appreciation and mouthing “Thank you.”
- 9 | Refusing to participate in a toast is bad manners.** You may not consider the person being toasted your close and personal friend but not raising a glass in his or her honor is an inappropriate gesture and a disrespectful act towards the person offering the toast.
- 10 | Don’t forget to toast the host.** Your host has spent a great deal of time planning and executing the holiday event; showing your gratitude with a toast is a gracious gesture and one that will be remembered.

Ever wonder what kind of toast Mark Twain gave at his holiday party? *Cheers!*

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