



# RESTAURANTS

## Paris Cafes - Seat Yourself Or Wait To Be Seated?

In a cafe or bar, seat yourself. In a restaurant, probably wait to be seated. Be aware (in cafes, and bars) where there is a "stand at the bar or counter" option, you will be charged more if you sit down - even if you get up out of your seat just to order at the bar or counter.

I can tell a funny story of my first time in Paris. We were in the habit of ordering drinks at the bar, then taking them to a table and sitting down. I noticed we were getting dirty looks but couldn't figure out why. Then on our third day, as we took our drinks to a table after having paid for them, a bar-lady said "Excuse me monsieur, but it is more expensive if you sit."

So we stood at the bar. As we stood, my son, who was smoking, flicked his ash into an ashtray on an empty table beside us. The bar-lady attacked again: "Excuse me monsieur, but is forbidden to use an ashtray if not sitting." My son looked along the bar where no ashtrays were in evidence and raised his eyebrows questioningly. So the bar-lady responded with "Just flick on ze floor, monsieur; everyone else does." My son and I looked at each other in disbelief and started laughing, and to her credit, the bar lady discovered a sense of humor and began laughing with us. "Sometimes monsieur," she said, "We French can be very dirty people."

You should be aware that most of the Cafés in Paris, as well as the rest of France and throughout Spain, have a three-tier system, that's why you'll find most of the locals who are only looking for a café, beer, or glass of wine, will be at the bar since it is the least expensive. If you sit at a table inside, the price is a little higher, while outside, on the sidewalk, you'll pay the most. This is how they take care of the waiters' service fees. Take a look at the menu before you enter. It will tell you if they have separate pricing for the bar and tables.

Article from: Fodor's Travel @ [www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)

## Discussion

A discussion with a foreigner. How well can you answer his questions? Think of the "W" words to help you explain your answers and to give as much detail as possible.

1. Do you like to eat out in your country?
2. What's your favorite type of restaurant? Where is it?
3. Why do you like that restaurant so much?
4. How often do you go there?
5. Who do you usually go with?
6. What's your favorite item on the menu?
7. What's the atmosphere like? What's the service like?
8. Do you cook? What dishes can you cook?
9. Do you prefer cooking for yourself or going to a restaurant?

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