**General Southern Manners**

[By Amanda Galiano](http://littlerock.about.com/bio/Amanda-Galiano-4954.htm)

[Little Rock Expert](http://littlerock.about.com/)

Southerners used to pride manners above all else. Manners may be slipping in the south a little, but the true spirit of Dixie lives in many beauxs and belles. These may seem a little out of date to visitors, but you'd be surprised how often these general etiquette rules are used all around in Arkansas. Some are used less commonly in big cities like Little Rock, but there are many towns around Arkansas where Southern manners and Southern slang reign supreme.

All of these are adapted from actual etiquette books and columns (some from the 50s and 60s).

* **Be Courteous**: Southerners are always courteous and think of others first, often at their own expense. A Southern will help any stranger they encounter in need, even offering their last dollar or "the shirt off their back." This is rooted in the Bible's Matthew 20:16 and Mark 12:31. Southerners also always say "please" and "thank you."
* **Be Friendly**: In the same vein, people always comment on the friendliness of the South. Southerners make small talk with anyone and are always neighborly. They always make eye contact and say hello, and introduce themselves where appropriate.
* **Be Chivalrous/Accept Chivalry**: Men should hold the door open for ladies in the South. It's expected for the lady to say, "Thank you." Men should stand when a lady enters the room and at restaurants and dinner until the lady is seated. Men should offer their seats to ladies when limited seating is available, especially expecting ladies. Men should help ladies with their coats and jackets, and always walk on the streetside of a sidewalk when walking with a lady.
* **Respect Elders**: In the South, elders are treated with respect. Anyone who is your senior should be referred to as Ma'am or Sir. It's also common to call elder ladies Miss [first name]. Younger people of both sexes should offer their seats to elders when limited seating is available. One should never take a seat until their mother is seated.
* **Remove Hats**: Men should remove hats when they are inside, during the national anthem, when the flag is raised and during prayer. Women may wear their hats during these occasions.
* **Be Modest**: A Southerner never brags. They tend to understate their accomplishments and possessions.
* **Be Civilized**: A Southerner always maintains decorum. They never use foul language or make a commotion in public. Southerners also dress modestly, leaving a little to the imagination.
* **Don't Embarrass Others**: A Southerner never corrects someone in public, but will wait until a private moment when a correction would be less embarrassing. Southerners also never interrupt others when they are talking.
* **Take Your Time**: Southerners take their time and don't rush through dinner, conversation or anything else. If you're in a rush, you probably just need to leave the South.
* **Have a Firm Handshake**: In the South, many deals are sealed with a handshake. A good handshake is firm, but not bone-crushing and lasts about 3 seconds. Making eye contact during a handshake is important.