

ACADEMIC TABLE PARTY: SITZ

Academic table party, better known as sitz, is an old party tradition among university students. At the Sitz you sing drinking songs (singing is fun alcohol free as well) and eat, if there is time between singing. There might also be some kind of programme. Each person will receive a guide to the sitz at their own table and also a song book. There are many rules and following them is part of the party, but you should not stress because the best way to learn is by attending them.

Most sitz are fairly similar, but depending on the organizer the guidelines may vary a little. It is polite to follow the rules despite them varying from what you are used to.

Dress code

Before attending you should check the dresscode from the event description or invite you have received. The dress code may be a dark suit or cocktail. Sitz may also have a theme. The people attending then follow this theme.

Purchasing the ticket

Sitz are popular so you should buy a ticket as soon as it comes on sale. You need to inform the host of your dietary requirements and allergies and people you wish to sit next to. You will see the seating arrangement at the event and it is not proper to switch seats at the event.

Arriving to the sitz

A wise sitz goer will have eaten before attending the event.

It is important to arrive on time to the event. Coats are left at the cloak room and you greet the event host. Those who arrive early usually have time to get to know others at the event. This is also a great time to look at the seating chart, so you can find your own seat.

You should go over to your seat and stand behind it right before the starting time announced on the ticket. You may not sit until the toast master gives you permission to do so. The toast masters tasks are to lead the ceremony, lead the singing and give penalties to those who break the rules. At the sitz the toastmasters word is law.

Penalties

The rules of a sitz can usually be found from your seating place, e.g. on the back cover of the sitz songbook. The purpose of the rules is to ensure the smooth running of the event and to maintain good community spirit. A sitz participant who breaks the rules is usually subject to any punishment the toastmaster deems appropriate.

The punishment must not be degrading or violent. On the contrary, punishments are usually humorous. First-timers are usually a little more forgiving than veteran participants, as long as the same mistake is not repeated throughout the evening. Offensive or otherwise inappropriate punishments should not be carried out, but should be reported to the party's harassment contact person immediately.

Examples of general rules:

- No one may leave the table, even to use the restroom, except during breaks announced by the Toastmaster.
- No eating, drinking or talking during the songs. During the songs it is only allowed to sing.
- No eating, drinking or talking to a friend when someone has given permission to speak by the toastmaster.

Requesting to speak or sing

A speech or song is requested by clinking a glass with a utensil. The Toastmaster grants the permission.

The person asking for the song should know the song or suggest someone who does. Each participant finds a song booklet at their seat with the words to all the songs. The songs are numbered. When requesting a song, the number and name of the song should be given.

Sometimes the participants have their own songbooks. These are printed e.g. by student associations and contain more songs than the sitz song booklets. The owners of the songbooks may send their books around in the hope that new and old friends will write greetings in them.

Singing

All the participants should join in the singing. Singing skills are not required at sitz. The words to the songs can be found in the song booklet distributed to everyone, and although the lyrics may seem unfamiliar, the tune is often more familiar. For example, the tunes of various Christmas carols are familiar at the sitz. You should join in as soon as you get the tune.

During the songs, you may hear a variety of interjections. Anyone can shout them in between, within the bounds of good taste. If the toastmaster says no, the shout will be ignored.

- **Mellansup:** shouted between verses. When the shout is heard, a small sip of one's own drink is taken. This is the only permissible way to drink in the middle of a song.
- **Tempo:** corrects or changes the tempo of the song.
- **Omstart:** to start a verse or the whole song (if specified) again.

Eating, drinking and toasting

"If the main course is still warm when you eat it, the toastmaster hasn't done their job" ([HSOY ry](#)).

The participants eat at a sitz, if the singing leaves time for it. To be on the safe side, you should eat well before you come to the sitz, so that you don't get hungry. Do not eat during songs, speeches and breaks.

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Opening the drinks

There are many different types of drinks available at the sitz. Usually the ticket price includes a certain number of pours. Depending on the venue, partygoers may be allowed to bring their own drinks. You should check the instructions (you are not allowed to take your own drinks into restaurants etc.).

Each drink may only be drunk after it has been opened by singing about it. For example *Vesipoikien marssi* ("The March Of The Water Boys") march must be sung before you can drink water. Fortunately, this song is usually sung as the second song of the evening.

Toasting

Toasting is done after the song. The toasting is instructed at the beginning of the party. Every other person toasts first to the right and every other person toasts first to the left. Then you toast to the other side and finally to the person sitting opposite. Glasses are not clinged, but are only raised while looking into each other's eyes.

Breaks

The Toastmaster will determine the breaks during which you may leave the table. You must be back at the table by the end of the break. The end time will be announced at the beginning of the break.

Applause

There will be no clapping hands to applause. Instead, an open palm is used to beat the table.

Other remarks

- Experienced participants should drink alcoholic beverages in moderation and a lot of water in between. This trick is more likely to keep you going.
- Some songs involve drinking the glass completely empty. It's a good idea to have a drink on the table that isn't quite full.
- At the end of the sitz, you always thank the staff. The staff should be treated with courtesy anyway.
- If there are performers at the sitz, they should be thanked. This is done by shouting in unison after the performance: 'Det var det bästa, det bästa vi har hört!'

Rule of thumb: if you know the rules for the annual party, you will do well at the sitz, but if you only know the rules for the sitz, you will not do well at the annual party. ([HSOY ry](#))

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