

Dress Guidelines for Gentlemen:
Dinner, Cocktails and Afternoon Tea

by Mistress Laurent

The mark of a Gentleman is evident in his dress: it is always better to dress a bit more formally than the occasion demands. Dressing inappropriately or carelessly is a mark of poor breeding or ignorance of social etiquette. To be under-dressed or inappropriately dressed for the occasion is a faux pas – especially with the wealth of guidance available on the internet.

Many sites explain the nuances of Men's Dress codes; ranging from White Tie to very Casual Dress, however, this essay addresses proper attire (and its exceptions) for White Tablecloth Dinner, Cocktail and Teas.

Links for the full range of Dress Codes are as follows:



<http://www.realmenrealstyle.com/guide-dress-codes-men/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwZNCrxmiLM>

<http://www.askandyaboutclothes.com/clothing/style-tips/cracking-the-dress-code/>

<http://www.emilypost.com/everyday-manners/your-personal-image/69-attire-guide-beach-casual-to-white-tie->

For a dinner that is not "Formal" or "Black Tie" a suit and tie is advised. The suit may be of any color. The choice of a blazer or sports coat paired with light-colored slacks is also an option.

Alternatives appropriate for summer and tropical climates are simply a dress shirt and tie with lightweight slacks, or the Cuban dress shirt, the Formal Guayabera Shirt. This garment is worn with no tie and is clean, dressed-up and appropriate. <http://guayaberascubanas.com/>

Any color dress shirt is allowable: dress shirt means long sleeve and collar. Any color tie is also acceptable.

The proper shoe for this attire should be a closed-toe shoe. A dark calf-length dress-sock is preferred. No skin should show between the sock and the trouser-leg when a man crosses his leg.

Trousers, or slacks (not jeans, chinos, cargo pants or athletic pants) are appropriate.

Leather loafers, tie shoes, tasseled slip-ons are acceptable, if their style is not casual. Boat shoes, deck shoes, trainers, sneakers, athletic shoes, sandals and flip=flops are definitely not acceptable.

Shoes and belts should always match. If a pocket square is showing, it should definitely not match the tie. If there are

belt-loops, a belt, not suspenders or braces, should be worn. If suspenders are worn, they are attached at the tab on the waistline. Sorry hipsters, no clip-on suspenders.

The Rules of Dress for a Tea or an afternoon event are a little more lenient – especially in a tropical climate. Linen trousers in light colors or pastels are acceptable, as are Bermuda-length shorts in colors, prints or solid fabric. They should always be paired with a dress shirt and belt that matches the shoes, unless the shoes are Bucks. White belts are an abomination. If sandals are worn, they must be dress leather sandals, and not flip-flops. No socks with sandals, please!

Of course there are exceptions to the rules. One obvious exception is this: a man should always wear whatever his Goddess deems appropriate for the occasion.

Woefully, many people think casual attire at a fine restaurant or an event is acceptable. That, my friend, is the mark of poor breeding, or social ignorance. I ask you, wouldn't you rather be known as a Gentleman with style and knowledge of manners, than as the bumpkin that didn't know how to dress?