



Toasts Around the World

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Learn how to "localize" your toast next time you are traveling abroad

The custom of toasting started with the ancient Greeks as early as the 6th Century B.C. At least they were the first ones to write about it. The ritual was a way for a host to assure his guests that the alcoholic liquid — the social lubricant — had not been poisoned. A guest drank from the same goblet as the host. The Romans sometimes added burned bread to lesser quality wine to reduce the acidity and make it more palatable. The Latin "tostus," which means toasted or parched, became synonymous with the drink. Much later even Falstaff said, "put toast in't" when he was requesting a jug of wine in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

So there you have it. This sometimes simple and sometimes elaborate ritual you see being performed everywhere — from sports bars to wedding receptions to presidential dinners — all stems from a custom developed to show guests that you aren't going to poison them with bad tasting wine.

Ever wonder why we clink glasses or mugs after a toast? This, too, goes back to the Greeks as proof the liquid had not been poisoned. The host would pour part of the guest's wine into his own goblet and drink it. If the guest trusted his host with his life, he would clink his flagon with that of the host to show his faith that he would not be poisoned. The clinking glasses completes the cycle of senses involved in drinking: taste, smell, touch, sight and sound. The sound aspect of clinking glasses for a toast grew increasingly important. Over the years, Venetian glass began to replace pottery cups and metal containers. To enhance the clinking, lead oxide was added to glass in order to improve the ring of the glass, which is most notable in Irish crystal. Some glass was so crafted it could clink in a given pitch, such as F or G sharp. Thus the words "chin chin," in many European toasts, are meant to imitate the sound of glasses clinking.

Drinking and toasting became a shared convivial event that is practiced in almost every culture on earth. A well-stated toast can make a simple moment special, as few things in life do. And this gracious gesture can be delivered by anyone. All it takes is a little forethought, practice, and a familiarity with some etiquette and protocol. It was with this in mind, that we developed the Periodic Table of Toasts©, which can be purchased from the www.jfamarketing.com website. The poster is a guide to help you toast your way through 35 nations. There you will find the name of the nation, the name of the national beverage, and the chief term for toast.



The Third Place

Toasts are customs that you share with others. Apart from the special occasions, they are regularly performed in what has become known as the "third place" — a pub in Dublin, a local bar in Milwaukee or in New York City, the rural roadhouse in Minnesota, the *bistro* in Paris, the *kaffeehaus* in Vienna, the *piazza* in Italy, the coffee house in Istanbul, the *Biergarten* in Munich. It is in these places that many of the world's toasts have been invented and perfected. Third places are a sort of social leveler where all people are viewed as equals. The origin of the word club is to cleave or to separate. Thus, country clubs and skyboxes separate rather than unite people, whereas third places bring them together.



The Periodic Table of Toasts is a guide to the toasts and beverages of 35 nations



Forty years ago, a British survey revealed that 90 percent of pub regulars did not walk more than 300 yards to go to a pub. There were four pubs in a square mile. In England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland the toasting venue became the public house, or pub. More prominent in the last century than today, they are still places where you can go and meet your friends in an ideal third place. These are all convivial places. It was Shakespeare who wrote, "Tempered drinking dispels all unkindness." As one social commentator wrote, "Third places must stand ready to serve people's needs for sociability and relaxation in the intervals before, between and after their mandatory appearances elsewhere (home, work, school). Third places are Gemütlich. No other language includes a word as effective in communicating the coziness and differing friendliness of certain settings as Austrian German. There is a vestige of this in the United States that came across on the TV show "Cheers." The TV show's tag line was "where everyone knows your name."

Toasts of the Town

Just as toasting once assured you weren't getting poisoned, in the 18th century, it helped people learn each other's names. Thus an early form of invitation to make a toast was "let us hob and nob," or give and take. Thus hobnobbing began to mean, go out and clink glasses. This contact also substituted for the time when everyone drank out of the same cup as it was passed around. Russians smash their glasses after a toast. One Russian poet says that this is done out of joy and to further honor the toast. In addition, smashing the glass ensures that no less worthy toast will be given with that glass. The most gruesome container used for toasting was the human skull. The Vikings developed the practice of drinking from the skulls of their fallen enemies, which were made into bowls. It is no coincidence that the Scandinavian words, "skoal" and "skull," both meaning empty things, are related.

With space for just 35 toasts, many were omitted. A favorite is "pula" from Botswana. Botswana is a semiarid country and the thing everyone desires most is *pula* or rain. Of course, Botswana is naturally obsessed with "pula," as it is also the name for the currency. While toasts don't change in places like Botswana, they do in such places such as Cuba. At the Bodegita, the little bar made famous by Ernest Hemingway, toasts are written all over the walls. Before the 1959 revolution, phrases like Cheers! and ¡Salud! lined the bottom of the walls. After the Communists came in, you could see Long Live the People's Revolution! And now with the development of Cuba's tourism industry we are back to Cheers! and ¡Salud!

There were many American toasts during the Revolution, some reserved for the Fourth of July — a custom that should be reintroduced. Imagine a picnic of hamburgers, potato salad and corn-on-the-cob and a toast "to what this country is all about!"



Early Americans had plenty of opportunities to praise or condemn with drink in hand. The famous Green Dragon Inn in Boston was where Sam Adams, Paul Revere and John Hancock would drink to popular opinions like this of 1776; "May stipenders and pensioners never sit in the American Senate." Stipenders and pensioners were 18th century terms for bureaucrats, lobbyists and all those who sought private gain from public coffers. Another favorite toast was "Freedom from mobs as well as kings."

Benjamin Franklin schooled European diplomats in American tavern toasting skills. There was this famous exchange between Franklin, the British ambassador to France, and a French minister: one evening, the British ambassador to Versailles led off toasting his king: "George the Third, who, like the sun in its meridian, spreads a luster throughout and enlightens the world." The French minister, not to be outdone, toasted the French king: "The illustrious Louis the Sixteenth, who, like the moon, sheds his mild and benevolent rays on and influences the globe." Without missing a beat, Franklin raised his glass and toasted, "George Washington, commander of the American armies, who, like Joshua of old, commanded the sun and the moon to stand still, and both obeyed."

The rituals became even more elaborate. A royal toast in 18th century England followed dessert. The table was cleared, except for decorations and port glasses. A decanter of port wine was brought in and the head steward poured a small sample for the host to taste to ensure it was palatable. If all was found acceptable, the wine steward handed the decanter to the host, who filled his glass three-quarters full and passed the decanter to his left, assuring the decanter did not touch the surface of the table. And so on. But eventually, toasting got out of hand. "What could be more crude or ridiculous," wrote John Tresler in 1791, "than to interrupt persons at their meals with unnecessary compliments." In many cultures, though, toasting became a friendly gesture.

An Internet search seeking toasts and their countries of origin showed: Irish toasts, 1,870 entries; Scottish, 62; Italian, 52; Russian, 26; German, 19; English, 14; American, 10; Swedish, 8; Spanish, 7; Welsh and Chinese, 3; French, 2; and Hungarian, 1. No entries came up for Japan.

Toasting and its traditions have become part of our vocabulary. We frequently say that this or that person is the "toast of the town." In 18th century England, it was customary to toast those not in attendance at an event. The toasts often focused on celebrities, especially beautiful women. These beauties became known as the toast of the town. A popular TV variety show, Ed Sullivan's Toast of the Town, kept the phrase alive in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.



A favorite is an Old Irish toast:

*May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live.
May your glass be ever full,
May the roof over your head always be strong,
And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead.*

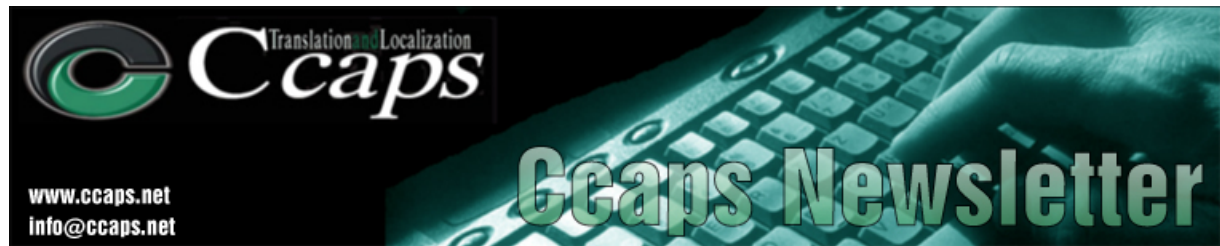
A Spanish favorite:

*Amor, Pesetas y Tiempo para gozarlos
(love, wealth and time to enjoy them).*

Each nation has its own toasts, and its own beverage. Both represent and are in a way the nation's ambassadors. If you are traveling for business or pleasure, you are highly applauded and recognized if you know the local toast and something about the national beverage. To Scottish Highlanders, for example, whiskey represents traditional values of egalitarianism, generosity and virility and to refuse a drink may be seen as a rejection of these values. In China, everyone around the table will toast you separately. But many times the host tells the waiter to fill the glasses of others with nothing but water beforehand. So while you are being drunk under the table, they are still standing.

Every drink can convey a meaning. In Austria for example Sekt (champagne) is drunk on formal occasions while Schnapps (strong liquor) is reserved for more intimate convivial gatherings. The choice of drink thus dictates behavior to the extent that the appearance of a bottle of Schnapps can prompt a switch from the polite "Sie" form of German to the highly intimate "du." If your boss wants to say something intimate to you, he or she is more likely to say, "Let's go have a beer after work" rather than "Would you care to join me for a cocktail."

Modern toasting rituals are the strongest and most formal in Germanic, Scandinavian and Eastern European countries. In these countries, no one should taste wine or other alcohol until the host has made a toast. We now turn to the toasts and drinks of the 35 nations we selected to help you succeed in your international endeavors.



Country	Beverage	Toast	Pronunciation	Meaning
Argentina	Wine	i Salud!	Sa luud	To your health
Australia	Beer	Cheers!	Chirz	Gladden
Barbados	Rum	Cheers!	Chriz	Gladden
Belgium	Beer	Santeie peye!	San-tea-pay	To your health
Brasil	Cachaça	Saúde!	Sow ude	To your health
Canada	Canadian Whiskey	Cheers	Chriz	Gladden
China	Beer	Gan Bei	Gan bay	Dry the cup
Croatia	Sljivovica	Ziveli	Zee vell ee	Joy
Cyprus	Beer	Is eyian	Is-e-ye-an	To your health
Czech Republic	Beer	Na zdravi!	Na zdravee	More power to your elbow
Denmark	Beer	Skål	Skole	To your health
England	Gin	Here's mud in your eye	He-ears-mud-in-yore-i	Hope you win
Finland	Vodka	Kippis	Kip piss	Cheers
France	Champagne	A votre santé	A-vote-songtay	To your health
Germany	Beer	Prosit	Proo-zit	To your health
Hungary	Wine	Egészségere	Eh-gey-sheh-geh-dreh	To your health
India	Beer	Cheers	Chriz	Gladden
Ireland	Beer	Sláinte	Slaw n-cheh	To your health
Italy	Wine	Salute	Saul-lu-tay	To your health
Jamaica	Rum	Cheers	Chriz	Gladden
Japan	Sake	Kampai	Kam-pie	Gladden
Latvia	Balzams	Preika!	Per-rie-ka	Joy
Mexico	Tequila	i Salud!	Sa-luud	To your health
Portugal	Port Wine	Àsua Saúde	A-sue-a-saw -ude	To your health
Puerto Rico	Rum	i Salud!	Sa-luud	To your health
Russia	Vodka	Na zdorovia	Na-z ado-row -via	To your health
Scotland	Scotch Whiskey	Slainte	Slanj	To your health
South Africa	Beer	Cheers-Gesondeid-Impilo	Chriz-Ga-soon-hide-Im-pl eo	Gladden-to your health-cheers
Spain	Wine	i Salud!	Sa-luud	To your health
Sweden	Aquavit	Skal	skole	To your health
Switzerland	Wine	Santé	San-tay	To your health
Togo	Beer	Chin-Chin	Cha-in Cha-in	To your health
Trinidad	ber	Hey man	Hay-mon	Cheers to You
United States	Beer	Cheers	Chriz	Gladden
Wales	Beer	Iechyd da	I ech yd daa	To your health

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