

The A-B-Cs of Ireland's P-U-Bs

A few rules of etiquette ensure high spirits in Irish pubs

The Irish pub scene is as simple as *one* (wise-cracking bartender), *two* (cheery chums), *three* (pints... or four or five). Cozied inside four antiquated walls, these basic elements are what give Ireland's pubs their unmatched charm. From Laurels Pub to Dirty Nellie's, Irish pubs exude an inviting, often raucous energy that few other countries' taverns can parallel. However, the land of green and Guinness also nurtures unique customs and traditions that can confuse and even embarrass foreign lads and lasses. When you crawl the pubs with *Ambassadair*, remember these simple-as-A-B-C tips to maximize your merriment:

Always follow the "round" system. The Irish take turns buying rounds of drinks for all. This pub policy may as well be engraved above the door of every tavern in the country. When your turn comes to shout out an order, treat the whole table to tall



ones. Don't worry—your pub pals will happily take their turns footing the bill. Bear in mind, too, that although the Irish are no clainty drinkers, they don't admire a drunkard.

Be polite. The Irish are a welcoming bunch. Embrace their kindness with a firm handshake, friendly conversation, and a round on you. Let go of American preoccupations with time—at least for a while—and dig into the hearty social scene. "Time is secondary to relationships [in Ireland]," writes Dean Foster in his *Global Etiquette Guide*.

Check your inhibitions at the door. Here's a pub full of people from another land and culture and no language barrier (theoretically, at least). "The Irish appreciate the average person's ability to say something witty, beautiful, or philosophical," writes Foster. So, don't be afraid to chat it up—or ham it up. (This might be your only chance to perform that *Hamlet* soliloquy or sing "Danny Boy.") Avoid touchy issues, such as political conflicts or foibles with the English. But, with good spirits—in both heart and glass—you'll be "slagging" with the locals in no time. ■

Ireland pub crawl in the fall. See page 90, *Jul/Aug Journey*, for complete details on *Ambassadair's* Oct 20-27 trip.