

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Tips for being a good audience member

Watching a live theatre performance is a wonderful experience that's quite different than going to a movie, a concert, or a sporting event. The quality of every single performance depends in part on the audience and how they behave and respond. Please help make today's show the best it can be by following these rules of etiquette.

Arrive at least ten minutes before curtain time.

Should you arrive late to a performance, expect to miss the first scene and enter only with an usher to escort you to your seat.

Wear proper attire and remove all hats in the auditorium.

Keep your feet off the seats and the seatbacks in front of you.

Do not unwrap candy or cough drops during a performance.

If you expect you might have a cough, unwrap your lozenge in advance.

Silence all watch alarms, cell phones, and electronic devices.

Do not bring any food into the auditorium.

Any beverage must be in a closed container.

Remain for the entire performance.

If you must leave the theatre during a show, leave quietly during a blackout or a scene change. The only exceptions to this are crying babies and talking young children, who should be immediately taken out of the auditorium. If you do have to leave for any reason, do not expect to re-enter until intermission or curtain call.

Do not text, "check in," or even look at your phone once the performance has begun.

The light is distracting to those around you as soon as the house lights go down.

Do not take flash photographs during performances.

Photography without flash and videography of a show is on a show-to-show basis due to varying copyright laws, so check your program or ask an usher before the show to find out what's allowed.

Do not talk, whisper, hum, or sing along during a performance.

It distracts the actors since they can hear the audience. It also detracts from the experience for other audience members. The time to discuss the performance is during intermission and after it's over.

Please laugh during a comedy, clap after a song during a musical, and applaud at the end of a scene.

Applause—not yelling, whooping, whistling, or stomping your feet—is the acceptable way for an audience to show appreciation to the performers.

Reserve standing ovations, the ultimate compliment you can give a show, for the best.

When standing ovations become routine, they become meaningless.

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