

**TEMPLE**

**BASIC**

**ETIQUETTE**

# BASIC ETIQUETTE



**WARNING!**



**Please Switch Off  
All Mobile Phones!**



# BASIC ETIQUETTE

In many temples men should remove their shirts when they enter the SACROSANCTUM

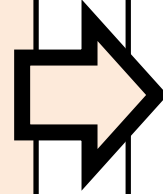


Temples should not be used for GOSSIP



# BASIC ETIQUETTE

Dress  
Simplicity



Women should  
avoid too much  
jewelleries





While in temple never, get distracted



# BASIC ETIQUETTE

## DON'T USE TEMPLES

to talk politics to discuss  
business deals to spread ill-  
will to  
gossip



## TEMPLE ETIQUETTE

Don't use  
MOBILE inside  
the temple for

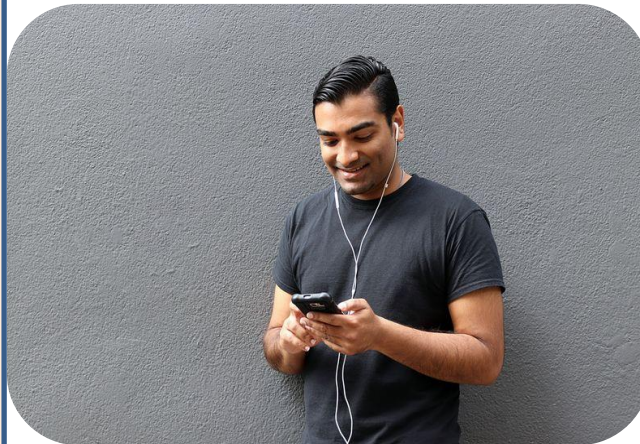
1. Talking
2. SMSing
3. Listening to  
Music
4. Taking  
Photos



### Talking



### SMSing



### Listening to music



### Taking photo by Mobile

**NEVER USE  
MOBILE  
PHONE inside  
the TEMPLE  
and do  
SMOKING**







seek & hide

JOURNEY DEEPER

Stop! Don't step into a temple before you read this. 11 things one should know about Hindu temple customs and etiquette.

Tuesday, June 16th, 2015

*By Deepa Padmanaban*

The spiritual land of India is dotted with Hindu temples, from the ubiquitous street side ones to some of the biggest and beautiful ones in the world. Hindu temples are not just sites of worship; many of them are architectural wonders. Take for example the 1st century exquisite carvings of the Hoysala temples in Karnataka, the beautiful dance sculptures of Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu, and the more recent but equally magnificent Lotus temple in New Delhi.

# The award winning architecture of Lotus Temple at Delhi



# **Brihadeeswarar Temple- UNESCO World Heritage Site, at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu**



Others such as the Tirupati temple and Vaishno Devi temple are considered powerful places of worship, thronged by thousands of devotees. They believe that visits to these religious sites will absolve all worries or fulfil wishes. No matter what the reason or belief, each of these temples warrants a visit to appreciate the intricate workmanship or simply to meditate and experience peace.

Though most Hindus believe in one Supreme Being, several gods exist in Hindu religion. Some temples are dedicated to one god only while some are home to several different gods. The priest in charge of each shrine performs the daily ceremonial ritual, 'PUJA', which includes making offerings to the God, showering the idol with flowers, and on special occasions, milk, honey and curd. The PUJA ends with the 'AARTI', the sacred lamp that is moved around the deity in a circular fashion.

Temples are places of community worship, but unlike other major religions, there is no common prayer or prayer time. Often simultaneous ceremonies and proceedings take place. Individuals or families can arrange for private pujas or ceremonies. Before entering a temple, there is certain etiquette that one needs to be aware of. Some of these are based on beliefs and some on ancient customs.

Here's our list of 11  
things one should know  
about Hindu temple  
customs and etiquette



**FOOTWEAR:** Removing footwear before entering the temple premises is not just a sign of respect, but also for cleanliness and humility. According to the ancient religious text, the Vedas, removing footwear is a symbol of leaving the outside world and thereby all materialistic desires and thoughts. Hence removing footwear is an important aspect of Hindu temple customs and etiquette. There are options available to keep the footwear safe outside. Big temples have dedicated stalls and staff to take care of footwear. In smaller temples, one can request the flower/coconut vendor sitting outside, who usually oblige for a small tip. Better to wear inexpensive and easy to remove footwear like slippers or sandals when weather permits.

**DRESS CODE:** Short or revealing clothes are generally frowned upon and it is advisable to wear conservative clothes while visiting a temple. In some temples such as Tirupati and Guruvayoor, there is a strict dress code. Pants and trousers are not allowed. Both men and women have to wear Indian clothes, such as kurtas, pyjamas or dhotis. In certain temples in Kerala, men have to take off their shirts and enter bare-chested while women are required to wear a saree or a long dress/skirt. Leather is not permitted in some temples such as Vaishno Devi.

## **TEMPLE TIMINGS, BUYING TICKETS, CAMERA: -**

Most temples are open only in the mornings and evenings. It is advisable to check the timings for each temple before a visit. Some temples may also require a ticket to be bought in advance. Some of the big temples also offer special tickets for a quick DARSHAN/PUJA. The prices of tickets may vary for non-Indian visitors. Carrying a camera and taking pictures may also incur additional fees. Some temples do not allow cameras inside.

**HYGIENE:** According to Hindu belief, it is necessary to have a bath before going to the temple. Many ancient South Indian temples have a temple tank, known as 'kalyani' where people in ancient times used to bathe before entering. Today however, not all temples allow the kalyani to be used for bathing. Women also generally do not visit temples during menstruation. Some temples such as the Ayyappa temple in Kerala do not allow women of menstruating age to enter at all.

**NON-HINDUS**: A few temples such as Guruvayoor and Padmanabha Swamy in Kerala, Puri Jagannath, Kashi Vishwanath of Varanasi, Lingaraj temple of Bhubaneswar forbid non-Hindus from entering. It may be a good idea to check with the locals/host before planning an itinerary.

**OFFERING**: Just as one carries a gift while visiting a friend or family, so also it is common practice to carry a coconut and flowers as an offering to the temple deity, though this is optional. Some believe that coconuts are a representative of one's self. After the offering, the coconut is broken, symbolising the breaking of the ego.

# JOIN HANDS IN PRAYER

DURING A PUJA: It is believed that joining both hands such that all the tips of the fingers are touching each other activates certain pressure points in the body releasing positive energy.

**SANCTUM SANCTORUM:** The innermost part of the temple where the idol of the deity resides, is called the sanctum sanctorum. This is considered the most sacred part of the temple and except priests; no one is allowed to enter here.



**PRADAKSHINA:** It is customary to **CIRCUMAMBULATE** the sanctum sanctorum or the temple in a clockwise fashion. The belief being that God is the essence of our existence and our thoughts and actions should be centred on Him.

Holy water, sacred flame and Prasad: After the puja, holy water, sacred flame and special offerings called 'Prasad' are offered as blessings to the devotees. The holy water, a concoction of camphor, and herbs which is used to wash the idol of the deity is considered to be charged with magnetic radiations and medicinal. The priest offers a spoonful of the holy water to all the devotees. This is accepted with a cupped right hand, sipped and then the right palm is touched to the forehead. When the sacred flame is brought around, with palms facing down, one reaches out both hands gently over the flame and then touch the hands to one's eyes. The 'Prasad' is an edible offering, generally a fruit or a sweet, which is accepted reverentially with a cupped right hand before eating.

## **OTHER ETIQUETTE:**

Just as one spends some time sitting and talking after dinner at a friend's place, here too one normally sits for a while at the temple after the PUJA.

While sitting, the feet should not point toward any of the Deities.

Eating is also not permitted, except for the Prasad.

Displays of affection such as hugging are also not considered appropriate in the temple premises.

This list of Hindu temple customs and etiquette should help you act like a bonafide Hindu temple veteran

# TEMPLE ETIQUETTE



**NO**  **PHONE  
ZONE**

**Do not use  
mobile  
phones**



# LAST but the MOST IMPORTANT

- Never use mobile phone inside the temple
- It will be construed that you don't have etiquette and manners
- It is distraction for you, as the purpose of your going to temple is to offer a sincere worship
- It is disturbance other temple devotees