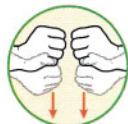


Etiquette 101: Hand Gestures

Country-Specific Gestures

You're in France and telling what you know is a pretty damn great anecdote (albeit mostly made up) about your time scaling Kilimanjaro without a guide and with one leg broken, when you glimpse from the corner of your eye one of your dinner companions playing an imaginary flute. What does it mean? Here, a cheat sheet to interpreting a world's worth of body language

GERMANY & AUSTRIA



Pounding on the table: "Good luck."



Rapping on the table: A way of saying hello to a large number of fellow diners.



Hands together, raised above head: "I really appreciate that."

FRANCE

Rubbing the side of your jaw with a curled hand: "How dull."



OK sign twisted over the nose: "He's stinking drunk."



Index and middle fingers pushing nostrils up: "It's so easy I could do it with two fingers up my nose."



Playing an imaginary flute: "This story is getting tedious and probably isn't even true."



Pretending to pull a hair out of your palm: "You're lazy."



THE NETHERLANDS



Tapping the underside of the bent elbow: "That person's unreliable."



Grabbing an imaginary fly in front of your face: "He's nuts."

POLAND

Flicking a finger against your neck: "Join me for a drink" (to a good friend).



RUSSIA

Making a sprinkling motion over a thumbs-up: "Job well done."



SERBIA

Salute with index and middle finger together and thumb out: A patriotic symbol; best not to use with other former Yugoslavs (and appropriated by racists in Germany).



INDIA

Tapping someone on the shoulder and then touching your forehead: "I'm sorry."



TURKEY

Making a salt-over-the-shoulder motion, but with an open palm: "Don't worry about it."



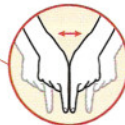
ISRAEL

Pointing down at an upturned palm: "Grass will grow on my hand before what you're saying comes true."



EGYPT

Tapping together two index fingers, pointed down: "Let's sleep together."



JAPAN

Wagging entire hand at a child: "You're being naughty" or "I'm warning you."



Waving hand in front of face, palm out: "I don't understand/don't want to be involved."



Arms folded over chest: "I am thinking very intently."



SPAIN

Patting your cheek with your hand: "What nerve!"



PORTUGAL

Kissing the side of your index finger, then pinching your earlobe: "Thank you for the wonderful meal."



BOLIVIA

Holding hand out, fingers extended, wiggling thumb: "We have no more today."



ARGENTINA

Finger twirled at the temple: "You have a phone call" (NOT "You're crazy").

SOUTH AFRICA

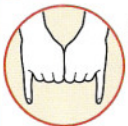
Bowl formed by two hands: "The tip you're about to give me will be huge" (from a porter, meant nicely, not too insistently).



Making quacking or "yap yap" motion with hand: "You forgot your blinker" or made some other faux pas (only to motorists).



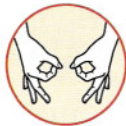
ITALY



Pinkies out, fists forward: Warding off bad luck.



Elbow out, hand down, shaking back and forth: "I can't take this anymore."



Two upside-down thumb circles: "Perfect."



Index fingers crossed over mouth: "I swear it."



Index fingers down in front of body: "We're in this together."



Screwing the index finger into the cheek: "I see a pretty lady."



Hand moving side to side over stomach, palm down: "I'm hungry."



Back of thumb moved across cheek: "You're clever."



Biting the knuckle of the index finger: "That pisses me off."



Index finger extended from hand: "She's thin as a rail."