



Social Protocol

For law enforcement officers and representatives charged with diplomatic networking with Latino groups, here are a few social tips to remember:

- If possible, greet everyone in the room with a handshake and a smile. Also, if possible, say goodbye to each person, with a kind word and a smile.
- If you are a male person greeting a Latina female, follow her lead in a greeting—handshake or kiss. Once you are accepted, men and women will begin to greet you with hugs and “air” kisses on the cheek. Some men like bear hugs! This is a sign of acceptance.
- Accept business cards graciously. Be sure to take a look at the card, comment on it, and tuck it away carefully in a jacket pocket, purse, or better yet, a metal case.
- If you want to blend in, don’t eat with your hands. Drink out of glasses, not bottles or cans. Elbows on the table are not rude—what *is* rude is hands resting on the lap!
- When traveling to a new city—or a new country—research the location before arriving. This way you’ll be prepared with comments, questions and accolades when meeting the locals. They will appreciate your interest when you praise their winning sports team or delight in their local cuisine!
- Be social, not business-like. No Latin American expects to ‘get right down to business.’ Appropriate social conversation often gravitates toward family and personal interests, not work.
- Expect that your conversation may be interrupted when another person approaches. Don’t feel insulted. Remember the polychronic communication style accommodates inclusion of multiple streams of conversation.
- Be yourself, but be your positive, patient, tolerant self.