

# HOW TO GET AN EMERGENCY RESERVATION

## BRIBE

- 1 Determine how much to offer the maitre d' as a bribe.**

The right amount will depend on the exclusivity and reputation of the establishment. Offer a minimum of \$10. You usually get only one chance to try the bribe.
- 2 Fold the bill into your right palm.**

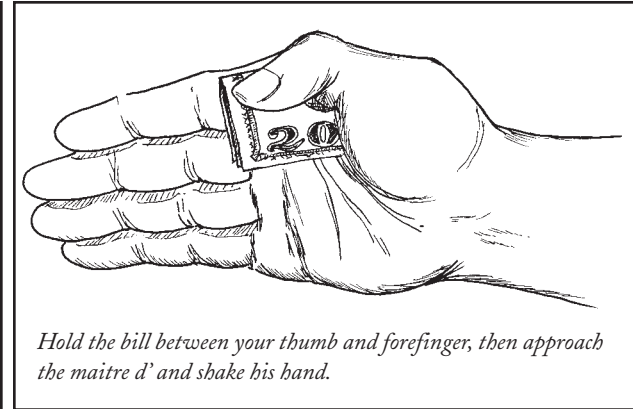
Hold it between your thumb and forefinger.
- 3 Pass the bribe.**

Shake his hand as you tell him how you are sure that he understands how important this night is to you. Be prepared, however, for the occasional maitre d' who takes your money and does not honor your request.

## SOB STORY

- 1 Talk calmly to the maitre d'.**

Controlled pleading can prove effective if you bend the right ear at the right time. A friendly, familiar demeanor is most likely to get the first available table. A whiny or arrogant voice will not help at all. If the maitre d' looks harried, wait until he or she has a moment to focus on you.



*Hold the bill between your thumb and forefinger, then approach the maitre d' and shake his hand.*

- 2 Explain your situation.**

Be sure to stress the importance of the evening and the special need for a table, embellishing the facts as necessary: an anniversary dinner, a plan to propose marriage (but be prepared to produce a ring), a recovery from a long illness, an overdue reunion.
- 3 Speak with emotion.**

Catch your voice, have difficulty breathing, shed a tear. You become harder to ignore. Also, the maitre d' will not want you upsetting the other waiting guests and creating a scene.
- 4 Appeal to the host's understanding nature.**

Create the impression that you would be especially embarrassed in front of your date, since you told her you had a reservation.

**5** **Look to fellow diners for sympathy.**

If you cannot sway the host or maitre d', approach other diners and bribe or persuade them into giving up their table. Use the special event strategy (step 2, above). However, be careful to avoid offending the patrons or embarrassing your date. It is best to try this when your date leaves your side for a moment.

**6** **Pull rank.**

Your final option is to play the “do you know who I am?” card. Unfortunately, you actually have to be somebody for this one to work.

**Be Aware**

- Do not try the “lost reservation” ploy; no one believes it anyway. Claiming that the restaurant is at fault for misplacing your reservation provokes confrontation rather than conciliation, and rarely results in a table.
- You can try the “celebrity name drop,” but it could backfire. Asking for a table in the name of a celebrity will sometimes get you seated even though the celebrity is “late” in arriving, but the host may also ask you to wait until your group is all present before seating you—and you will be precluded from using other tactics.

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