

Rules of Hospitality

The rules of hospitality are a foundational pillar of civilised behaviour within the [Grand Duchy of Dael Riata](#). These customary laws apply across all social strata, though the burden of generosity increases significantly for the nobility and those higher in the social hierarchy.

Formalities of Hosting

The offering and receiving of hospitality are governed by strict protocols to ensure the safety and dignity of both parties:

- **Authority to Offer:** Only a householder or their designated steward has the formal authority to offer hospitality to a guest.
- **Imposed Hosting:** In certain circumstances, a local landowner may require a household to host guests. In these instances, the landowner is expected to compensate the household for any food or drink consumed and cover any damages incurred as if they were the primary host.
- **Transactional Exceptions:** These rules do not apply to commercial establishments like [inns](#) or guesthouses (such as the [Water Gate](#) in [Dalreoch](#)), where hospitality is considered transactional rather than a civic or moral duty.
- **Short Visits:** A visitor may stay in a house for business without invoking these rules, provided they refuse all food and drink. Once a guest accepts even a small morsel or a drink, the full weight of the rules of hospitality is deemed to apply.

Expectations and Obligations

While there is a general expectation that hospitality will be provided—especially since most of the country lacks formal inns—it is not an absolute requirement.

Grounds for Refusal

A host may legitimately refuse a traveller under specific conditions:

- If the host lacks sufficient food to feed the guest without skipping a meal themselves (though this rarely applies to the armed or noble classes).
- If a [bloodfeud](#) exists between the host and the prospective guest.
- If the presence of the guest creates an immediate risk of the house being raided.
- If the guest refuses to agree to abide by the formal rules.
- If there is a dedicated guesthouse for strangers nearby.

Conduct of the Guest

A guest is under a sacred obligation to “keep the peace” while under a host's roof.

- **Prohibition of Violence:** Guests must not bring violence to the house or engage in conflict with

anyone else present, whether they were invited or not.

- Duration of Protection: The obligation to maintain the peace extends beyond the physical stay, lasting until noon on the day after the guest leaves the house.
- Etiquette: Guests must wait for the host to offer facilities, such as food or water for washing, before helping themselves. A “good host” is expected to anticipate these needs, providing sleeping quarters and a fire if the weather is cold or damp.

Fugitives and Pursuit

If a guest is a fugitive and their pursuers arrive, the host is expected to remain strictly neutral. The host should not shelter the guest from the pursuers, nor should they actively hand the guest over. The proper etiquette is for the host to insist the guest leaves immediately, though a good host will not mention the guest's presence to the pursuers. Guests should ideally leave early enough to reach another host before sunset.

Historical Breaches

The violation of these rules is considered a grave offense, often leading to deep-seated resentment and civil unrest.

- The Murchadh Precedent: The [Murchadh](#) family held these rules in such high regard that they famously hanged one of their own lieutenants for breaking hospitality.

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