Luncheon Etiquette

A family lunch in Spain, to the uninitiated can sound rather like a drunken fist-fight while a family luncheon in Alqueria has been known to mobilise the army. The Alquerian variety is full of contradictions. Certainly anarchy prevails, but it is anarchy with a protocol.

Unlike the northern European counterpart one must arrive early for lunch. It isn't a matter of politeness it is the Alquerian penchant for malevolent gossip. To arrive early makes one a gossiper, to arrive late one becomes the 'gossipee'. The traditional gossip will have an initial nucleus of truth but by the time the individual in question arrives he or she will be held responsible for every global misfortune from the Black Death to the Tory Party. Many victims have had to leave Alqueria and live in Spanish exile. Amalia Culogrande who arrived very late now lives incognito in a large paper bag behind Loco Paco's dung beetle stables.

The most important rule when attending any sort of occasion in Alqueria where food is involved is, you mustn't eat anything. This is not a matter of protocol or politeness it is a matter of survival. The astute among you will ask the question. 'Why attend the luncheon party in the first place?' In answer to this I will draw the reader's attention to the above paragraph.

One has to develop the technique of pretending to eat. Politicians are good at this as they are highly trained in the art of 'pretending to tell the truth' which gives them the edge. Would be diners must learn to masticate thin air and swallow imaginary morsels of imaginary food. To reinforce the impression of eating one can pretend to have indigestion, a bout of flatulence will add that finishing touch.

Not actually eating the food does leave one with a problem, mainly the food remains on the plate. A small hungry rodent such as the Alquerian Three Toed Stenchrat can be smuggled in and surreptitiously feed but animal rights groups are against this

practice. A better solution can be had at Pepe Malaropa's Clothing Emporium where suits and party frocks can be bought with hidden waterproof pockets especially constructed for the hiding of food.

One may however consume the liquid refreshment. Remitroot, whether in the form of beer, wine or spirits is the jewel in the crown of Alquerian cuisine. While I was carrying out my research in Alqueria I had my first taste if Remitroot Whisky. After my third glass I passed out, when I regained consciousness I was driving a refrigerated lorry to Düsseldorf.

So armed with the above advice one can accept that luncheon invitation with confidence and dine like only an Alqueria can.

Buen provecho