

New Theatre-Goer? Here's a quick and easy

Guide to *How to Enjoy a Play*

1. Do a little research!

Find a synopsis or review of a professional production of the play you're about to see. If you're viewing a historical play, google its time period. If there are historical/political figures or celebrities in the play, find out who they are and think about how they might be important. You'll enjoy a play far more if you know what's going on! Also, if you have the time and resources, you may enjoy reading the play before you see it and experiencing the text before it has undergone a creative team's interpretation.

2. Go with friends or family!

Make it a social event! Going to the theatre in a pair or group will help you to relax and enjoy yourself. If you arrive to the theatre early, you'll often find things to look at and discuss in the lobby, including cast and crew bios and dramaturgical information about the play. Plan other social events surrounding the performance, such as dinner, dessert, or a walk. Sometimes there will even be talkbacks or receptions preceding or immediately following a performance.

3. Follow the rules!

This one may sound like a no-brainer, but many audience members don't think the rules apply to them. If you don't follow the rules (such as "no food," or "no cell phones"), you're more likely to be distracted from the performance. Also, by not following the rules you are potentially distracting other audience members from enjoying the show. If you notice someone else not following the rules, you may notify the house management staff.

4. Read the program!

There are often things in your program to help you understand and enjoy the play you are seeing. Look for any of these things: plot synopsis, character list, scene breakdown, director's note, dramaturg's note, or cast bios. It's also cool to see how many different people it took to produce the play. Check out the lists of artistic staff, production staff, and crew.

5. Keep an open mind!

Theatre is an art form, and art expresses the social, political, cultural, intellectual, and emotional views of the artist. Because theatre is collaborative, often many viewpoints are expressed in a single production. Try to figure out the viewpoints the play explores. You don't need to agree with them—in fact, if you don't agree, the play may get you thinking and help you to develop your unique view of the world. If you do agree, you can use the play as inspiration! Don't be afraid of letting the play transform you!

6. Go out after the performance!

Many people enjoy going to dinner before seeing a play. What they don't realize is that it's often *more* enjoyable to go out *after* the play! If you spend time socializing after the performance, you can discuss what you just saw. The cool thing about live theatre is that everyone sees and interprets the performance differently. Many audience members in New York go out for coffee and cheesecake after a night of theatre!