

Make merry but be wary when exchanging kisses under the mistletoe

For centuries mistletoe has been one of the most magical, mysterious, and sacred plants in European folklore. During the holidays, mistletoe takes on a more romantic twist — an invitation to light up the room with a kiss in celebration of winter’s glowing season.

With thousands of people now using the Clarisonic, never before have so many people looked so appealing under the mistletoe! So Clarisonic asked etiquette expert and author Jacqueline Whitmore to develop a simple set of tips to consider before getting near those innocent looking sprigs dangling in the foyer.



The Clarisonic Mistletoe Manifesto

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The office holiday party

In general, kissing someone from work in public is ill-advised. Far too often, office holiday parties end in infamy for workers who let the egg nog take over. Try to keep your head on straight when you find yourself under the mistletoe with a co-worker.

If you are a woman caught under the mistletoe with your male co-worker, take control and initiate the ever-so-safe “air kiss.” While shaking this person’s right hand, lean in close and gingerly touch his cheek with your Clarisonic smooth cheek while making a soft smacking sound. You’ve now fulfilled the mistletoe mandate without starting any office rumors. Men: consider offering a female co-worker the “hand kiss,” indicating respect. Don’t linger under the mistletoe any longer than necessary in order to avoid any further awkwardness.



Sharing a moment with your lover, spouse or partner

When you find yourself under the mistletoe with your significant other, the “full lip lock kiss” is perfectly acceptable. According to folklore, a couple’s kiss under the mistletoe is interpreted as a promise to marry and a prediction of happiness and long life.



Encountering a relative under the mistletoe

Bumping into a relative under the mistletoe can cause holiday etiquette confusion! Granted, you don't want to kiss your creepy cousin on the lips, so your best bet is to give a gentle "cheek kiss," symbolizing goodwill without being too mushy. Personal space tip: Keep your hands on your relative's shoulders – thus creating a comfortable distance. If you find yourself under the mistletoe with a small child, opt for the motherly "forehead kiss."



Just friends

The standard “cheek kiss” is most appropriate when standing under the mistletoe with a friend. However, if you’re feeling extra festive, consider the “corner to corner kiss” allowing the corner of your lips to just barely touch the corner of your friend’s lips. You may also choose to incorporate a light hug into the equation. But kissers beware, go too far and you’ll send mixed messages. When you find yourself faced with a person who clearly wants to be more than just friends, be prepared to deflect the attempted “full lip lock kiss.” Politely turn your face and offer the other cheek. Then offer to get your friend some hors d’oeuvres.



Meeting the neighbors



Neighborhood parties often bring together the most unlikely people. If you find that you and your neighbor are standing under the mistletoe, make the best of the situation. You can never go wrong with

the old-fashioned handshake.

Handshaking tip: Always carry your drink in your left hand so your right hand is free for handshaking.

Meeting a stranger

You could encounter that most awkward of mistletoe situations at a crowded party: the stranger. If you're uncomfortable kissing a stranger, employ the obvious strategy by pretending you don't notice the mistletoe and move away – after all, ignorance is bliss.

Alternatively, don your best blushing face, point out that you're both standing under the mistletoe and say something flattering, like "Well, I just can't resist." In this situation, the "air kiss" is a perfect choice. In most situations, remember this no-fail strategy: Give the impression that you are cultured and refined and go for the European "two-cheek air kiss" — it's a winner under the mistletoe, or anytime!

