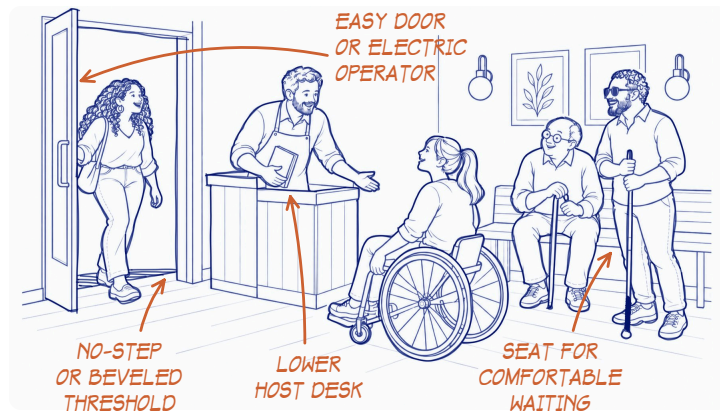


Patron Field Guide

Know your rights. Use the space.

Have a Seat at the Table

Going out to eat should feel effortless. Here's what to look for, what to ask for, and how to speak up when something isn't right. Bring it to Disability Night Out on October 10, 2026 – and to any dinner after. Accessibility codes vary from state to state. This guide covers the basics – a starting point for a more accessible experience. If you need something more, restaurants are required to make reasonable modifications for you under the ADA. Have a suggestion for this guide? Write to us at gather@disabilitynightout.org.

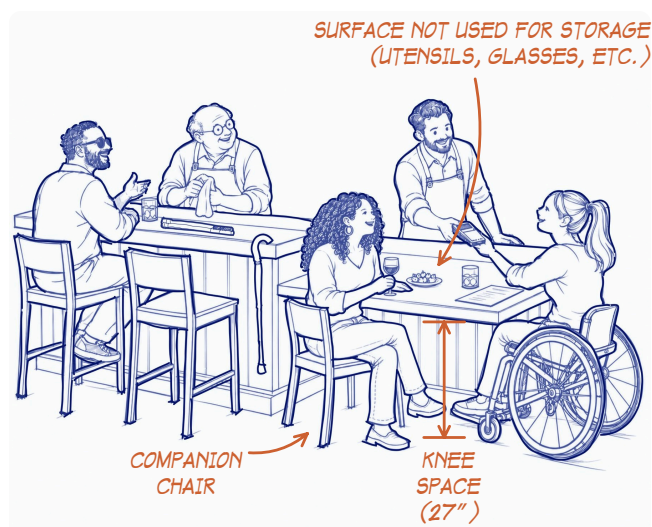
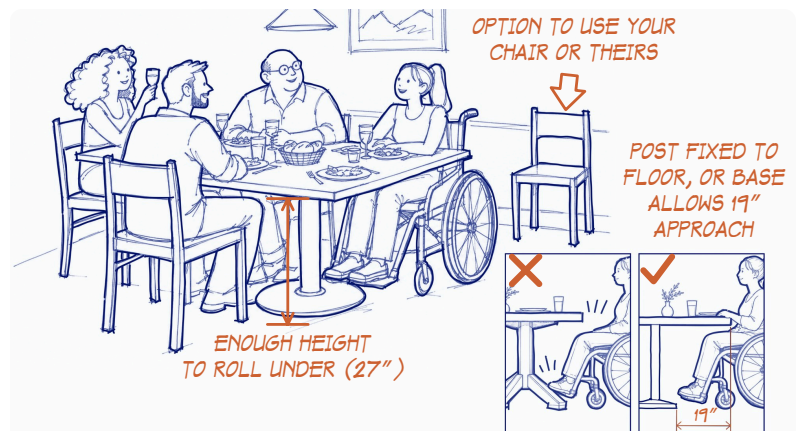


Arriving and Waiting

- ☐ The host greets you at your level – a lower part of the stand, or they step around it.
- ☐ Somewhere to sit while you wait, out of the doorway.
- ☐ A door that's easy to open, or an automatic opener.
- ☐ No step at the door (a beveled lip up to ½" is fine). A step? Ask if they have a ramp.

A Seat at the Table

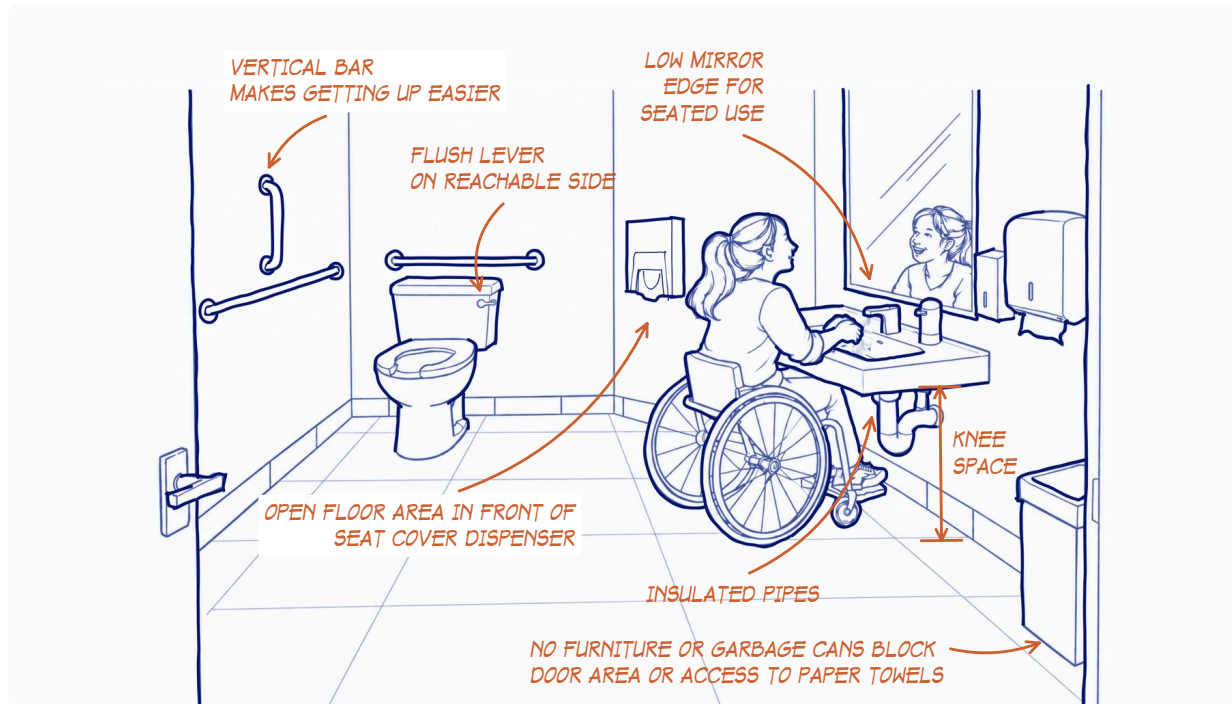
- ☐ With your party – along the side, not in the aisle.
- ☐ Room to roll under (27" high below).
- ☐ A table height that works (28"–34" to the top).
- ☐ A four-legged table, or two bases more than 30" apart. A center post works only if it's fixed to the floor with 19" of knee depth. X-shaped bases catch footrests.



The Bar Counts Too

- ☐ A low part of the bar you can pull up to (28"–34" high) that's not used for storage of utensils, glasses, etc.
- ☐ Room to roll under (27" high below).
- ☐ Room for you and a friend (60" wide), with regular-height chairs.
- ☐ Real bar service, face to face – menu and card reader included.

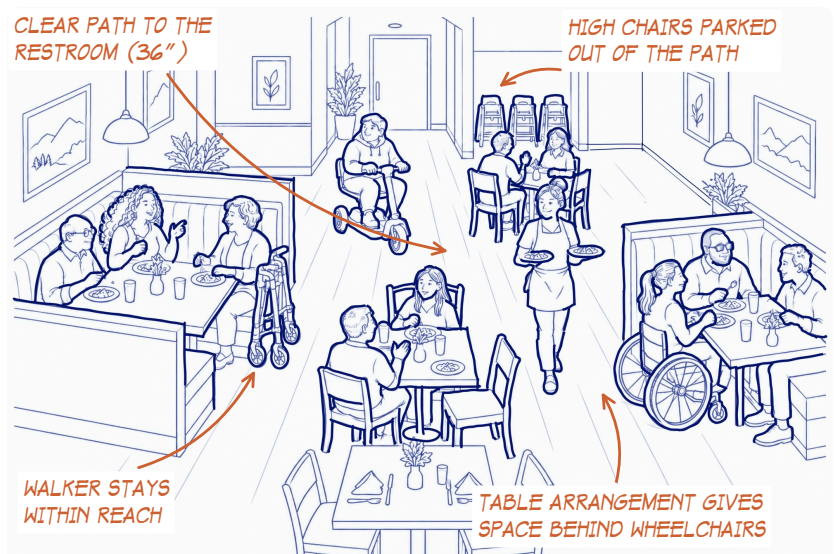
Restroom Basics



- A door that opens without a fight (32" clear width), with a lever handle you can work one-handed.
- Room to turn around (60") – not blocked by furniture, trash cans or storage.
- Grab bars alongside and behind the toilet.
- A sink you can roll under, with the pipes insulated.
- Mirror, soap and towels you can reach (48" high max.).
- Soap and towel dispensers reachable from sitting at the sink, so you don't have to reposition your mobility device with wet hands.
- A coat hook you can reach (48" high max.).

The path to your table

- A clear 36" path to your table and the restroom, even with every chair full. Not through the kitchen or a back hallway.
- Accessible tables in every area – raised, sunken, outdoors, etc.
- Nothing sticking out more than 4" from a wall above about 27", where a blind person's cane can't detect it (signs, hanging plants, etc.).
- It's fine to ask to move tables.
- Staff should ask a blind person before guiding, and offer an elbow – never grab your arm.
- Your wheelchair, walker or cane stays within reach – staff shouldn't take it away. Your mobility device is an extension of your body, and it's yours to control.



Night Out Checklist

Before you go

- ☐ Look at photos or a street view for a step-free entrance.
- ☐ Call ahead if you don't want surprises: "Is there a level way in? Is the restroom accessible?"

The front door

- ☐ Everyone uses the same front door – not a side door or a passageway through the kitchen.
- ☐ Level entry, or a bump no higher than ½". A step needs a gentle ramp (1" rise per foot).
- ☐ A door wide enough (32" clear) that opens with one hand.

Patio

- ☐ No step up onto an outdoor dining deck.
- ☐ Firm, even ground – no gravel.
- ☐ Accessible tables outside too.

Counter service

- ☐ A lower counter to order and pay (36" or lower, 34" in California).
- ☐ A card reader you can reach if it's fixed to the counter – or one handed to you. You shouldn't need to go to the high counter to pay.
- ☐ Self-service water, condiments, napkins, etc. within reach (48" high max.).

The service moment

- ☐ The server talks to you, not just to your companion.
- ☐ Asks before helping – "Would you like a hand with that?" – instead of grabbing your chair or deciding for you.
- ☐ If you're blind, they can read the menu aloud, and can use the clock face convention – "I placed your wine at 10 o'clock and the rolls at 3 o'clock."
- ☐ Asks the whole table out loud instead of pointing or holding things out silently – "Here's the bill. Who would like it?" – so a blind guest can take part.

Sensory and communication

- ☐ Light good enough to see faces and read lips.
- ☐ A quieter table, on request, for less sensory overload.
- ☐ A range of menus is available: large-print, digital, and ideally Braille. All printed menus should have good contrast and large enough text.
- ☐ Service animals welcome.
- ☐ Captions on at all times for TVs and screens.
- ☐ Ordering by pen and pad or phone is fine.
- ☐ Request seats where your group can see each other to sign, if needed.

Your wheelchair stays with you

- ☐ If you transfer into a regular chair or booth and staff want to take your wheelchair away, you can say: "No, you can't move my wheelchair. Under the ADA, it's a mobility device I need, not property like a stroller, and it must stay right next to me for my safety and independence."
- ☐ You can point out that they can move other tables and chairs if they want more aisle space for servers.

Words that work

- "Could we move to a table with more room?"
- "Is there a step-free way in?"
- "Can you reduce the music volume so we can hear each other?"
- "Do you have a larger-print menu?"
- "Can you write down the specials for us?"
- "Could you turn on the captions for the TV?"
- "Can you tell me where the restroom is, and the clearest way there?"
- If getting around is tight, suggest to the manager: "Walk through the restaurant holding a yardstick sideways, and you'll find the tight spots pretty easily."

Know your rights. The Americans with Disabilities Act gives you the right to full and equal access to restaurants, cafés and bars. You're not asking for a favor. You're asking a business open to the public to actually be open to you. Questions? The ADA National Network answers for free: 1-800-949-4232, adata.org.



After the meal, share it. What worked and what didn't – the good nights count as much as the gaps.

disabilitynightout.org/share

Everyone deserves a seat at the table.