



Marine Corps Birthday Ball

Do's and Don'ts to Make Your Night Memorable

There is only one ironclad rule for the birthday ball; Make it a good one.

-The "Marine Officer's Guide"

THE ATTIRE

- With all this talk of Marine Corps Ball invites, I figured I'd give all the lucky women that are attending some professional military education on proper ball attire. While I truly enjoy the ball for the camaraderie, I know I'm not the only Marine who finds the event particularly hilarious. Ladies, if you thought all eyes were on you, you're absolutely right. Marines love to play fashion police; especially female Marines since we are required to wear our uniforms. Marines, male & female, scan the ballroom just to find those OMG, she did not, moments.
- **First things first**, the annual ball is a formal event. Some young ladies fail to realize this. It is to honor their birth and those that have gone before them.
- **Leave the stripper shoes at home.** Clear platforms scream 'I'm paying me to be here!' Every year, at every ball, there is always one.

- **Pass on the skin-tight mini dress.** If you wear it to go clubbing, it isn't formal attire. A classy cocktail dress can work, as long as you aren't wearing stripper shoes!
- **Admit it to yourself and wear a girdle if you need one.** It doesn't matter if the dress is breathtaking, if it doesn't fit right! Wear a dress that compliments your figure & makes you feel confident & sexy.
- **No rainbow nails.** Per Marine Corps grooming standards, female Marines can wear red polish (with certain uniforms) and maintain a natural or French manicure up to 1/8 an inch in length. Because it's classy! Stick to a few colors that accent your dress.
- **Wear a color that complements his uniform.** Hot pink & lime green are absolute no-nos.
- **Slits are sexy,** but please be tasteful.
- **Pass on the glitter.** See #1.
- **Less is more.** Classy make-up looks 100x better, hands down. Men actually agree.
- **No Tiaras.** It simply looks adolescent.
- **Lastly, leave the attitude at home.** Marines will be Marines. Meet the other ladies and enjoy the evening. Giving off snobbish vibes will only get you that in return.
- I am not a hater by any means. If you got it, flaunt it just look classy doing it. **ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE HIS WIFE!** You are a representation of your escort. Take pride in your attire as he does in his uniform & wear an elegant dress that accents your best features, in a hue that compliments your complexion. I challenge you, young Marine wives, girlfriends, escorts, etc., follow these guidelines and save yourself (and your Marine) the embarrassment.

THE EVENT

- **DO remember the reason you're there and pay attention during the traditional areas of the event.** While it is fun to get dressed up, the traditional things are the reason you're there. **Pay attention.** Stand and follow the flag when it comes in, put your hand over your heart for the National Anthem, stand and read correct responses for toasts and don't talk while the program speakers are speaking. If you aren't sure how to do some things, ask your service member or the people at your table.
- **DON'T stay quiet if you don't understand something.** It's OK to ask questions! Every branch is different, every branch within each branch is different and every unit is different. They don't all have the same level of formality. I've been to balls with a receiving line (we'll get to that next) and others without one. Some have seated dinners and others have buffets. Some have guest speakers and others don't.
- **DON'T worry about using the correct silverware.** Really, the service members are used to eating in much less formal settings (sometimes without utensils), so they probably don't use the correct silverware themselves. Most tables are set simply, but others may be

more formal. A good rule of thumb is to start from the outside and work your way in — outside fork for the first fork use, outside spoon for the first spoon use, etc. The silverware above the plate is normally reserved for coffee and dessert, so save them for last. If you forget, don't worry. Just pick one and use it. No one is judging or grading you.

- **DO pay attention to how much you drink (if you're of age).** If you want to drink at the event, feel free, but monitor how much you're drinking. **Remember to have a safe plan to get home.** With dim lights and loud music toward the end of the night, you may not realize how much you've consumed. Try spacing out each drink with a glass or bottle of water to prevent a hangover and embarrassing mistakes. If you simply must have some of the grog (the ceremonial combination of various types of alcohol that tells the unit's history), only have a small amount. I've seen people drink the grog all evening and they pay for it in the morning. Or, like a past ball, they tumble into the grog table and almost break the table. People took photos, and with the advent of social media, you can imagine the embarrassment in the morning.
- **DON'T sneak drinks if you're underage.** That's pretty self-explanatory. If you're caught, you could potentially shut down bar access for the entire event.
- **DO represent your service member well.** You don't need to be fake, but smile and shake hands as your service member introduces you to people. Don't drink too much. Don't dance inappropriately.
- **DO have fun.** Enjoy your time and seeing your service member dressed up in his/her finest. Take pictures, absorb the traditions of the evening, laugh and dance your heart out. Most importantly, remember to be yourself.
- **DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!**

Posted by Priscilla Marie & Sarah Peachey

1775 Fortitude Rum Punch

This traditional beverage was supposedly served to potential Marine Corps recruits at Tun Tavern, Philadelphia, during the American Revolution.

- *One part dark Jamaican Rum*
 - *Four parts lime juice*
- *Maple sugar and grenadine to taste*
- *Pour over cracked ice in a glass punch bowl*