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Dining out Restaurants more receptive to children on Mother's Day

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Mother's Day is more like Family Day in most restaurants, and in the restaurant industry, it's known as "the most forgiving day of the year," says Jaleh Bisharat, vice president of marketing for OpenTable, an online reservation service.

"Even the finest white tablecloth restaurants welcome children on Mother's Day -- or Thanksgiving -- but they wouldn't be welcome on Valentine's Day," she adds.

Many restaurants accommodate younger diners on Mother's Day by offering special menus with their palate in mind.

For example, children at The Terrace restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton in San Francisco get an oversized placemat -- so they can color in the Golden Gate Bridge -- and a choice of kid-friendly meals.

Or at the Napa Valley Grille in Yountville, Calif., a complimentary flower shop is set up within the restaurant so kids can make bouquets for their mothers.

These perks don't mean, however, that children have complete run of the restaurants. They are expected to use proper manners, Bisharat says.

Some ideas to encourage good behavior:

- Don't have the children arrive at the restaurant too hungry. Either give them a snack beforehand or come a little earlier than your usual mealtime.
- Make sure you can occupy them while you're there. Bring books, stickers or coloring books.
- It's not necessarily the time to keep them to their strict diet. Make going to a restaurant a treat, allow them to have a special drink such as a Shirley Temple or allow them to have fries or dessert.