

# a **Cosplay** *Etiquette* •Primer•

*Important information you should know about approaching, photographing and providing media coverage of Cosplayers*



*Cheetara (Thundercats)*

## **What is Cosplay?**



*Batwoman at San Diego Comic Con*

Cosplay is short for “costumed play”. It is a form of performance art dating back to 1970s Japan.

It is not modeling. The art is in recreating a fictional character in the flesh, and embodying the character.



*Power Girl Cosplay with kids.*

It is a fan tradition, not usually done for profit. It is an often misunderstood subculture.

Women who dress in tight clothes are not “attention whores”, or “sluts”. Those who dress as characters of the opposite gender – a practice called “Crossplay” – are not automatically gay. In fact, many people use Cosplay to play a character that is completely the opposite of their own personalities.



*Makeup for Kratos (God of War)*

Furthermore, Cosplayers are not attempting to look “hot.” They are attempting to re-create a character. Anime heroes and Superheroes tend to be idealized, and therefore there are many very attractive people who Cosplay successfully, however, the true goal is the re-creation. The costume is the Cosplayer’s way of creating a dialogue with the creators. They are sending a signal that they care about a character enough to spend time, money and effort producing and wearing a costume.

## Etiquette Tips



3D Premiere of Alice in Wonderland

Some tips:

- 1) Don't photo snipe! Photo sniping is the practice of photographing someone without their permission.
- 2) Don't act like you're at a frat party! If you wouldn't say something to your mother or your sister, don't say it to a Cosplayer.
- 3) Don't treat a Cosplayer like "the hot girl" or "the naked guy". If you don't know who a character is, but like a detail, politely ask them about it.
- 4) Don't take pictures in the middle of high traffic areas, or in doorways. Step off to the side so people can get by.
- 5) Don't assume that some bystander will take a decent photo of you with a Cosplayer; if you want to be in the shots, prearrange this with a friend.

## Suggestions for Asking for Photos

An example of an appropriate request is: "Hello, Princess Leia. You look great. May I please take your photo?"



Slave Leia

If you are media, identify the outlet you work for. The vast majority of the time, the Cosplayer will say yes. If they say no, it's because of a practical reason (broken costume, makeup that needs touching up, time constraints, etc)

Most conventions have codes of conduct that enforce "no means no". If a cosplayer asks you not to take their picture, respect that. If you ask, they will be more than happy to suggest another time and location where you can get your photo.



**Thank you for reading this, have a fun con experience!**

Read more from Liana at  
[www.edthesock.com](http://www.edthesock.com)

Photo credits:  
Cheetara – Susan Read  
Princess Leia – Beau Monde Photography