

Americans don't like to be direct with the names they give the place they often call "the bathroom." They'll do anything to come up with other names for it. In fact, the list of polite terms is so long that practically any sentence spoken by people as they take their leave could mean that they're going to the restroom.

We've never seen anyone resting in there, though. Indeed, if you had to rest, wouldn't there be a thousand

chachas." Which door is which? Not all of us took Spanish in school.

Out west, your choices might be "Squaws" and "Braves", which is a reference to what Americans used to call Native American women (squaws) and men (braves). Today, these terms are considered politically incorrect, though if you look into a few men's rooms, you'd agree with us that you would have to be pretty brave to want to enter.

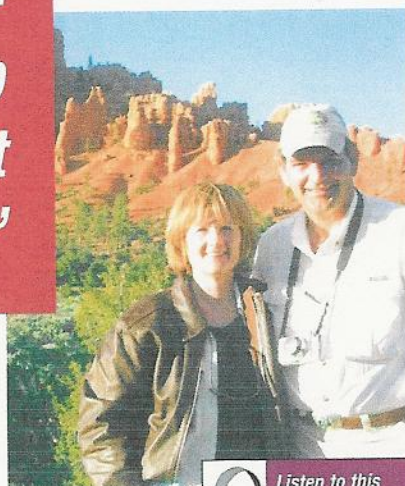
Our favorite is the restaurant in a small town in the Adirondack Mountains. When searching for the restroom, you come upon a door with the word "Does" on it. "Of course I do," you

may think to yourself. "That's why I'm here." But you'll probably wonder — is it the man who does or the lady? Not until you see the other door — labeled "Bucks" — will it become clear that the ladies are the "does".

Speaking of bucks, you'll be glad to know that you won't need money for restrooms here in the U.S. — well, at least not in most cases. Recently we discovered a futuristic public bathroom in Boston that charges 25 cents to get in. Although this might be normal in some European cities, it's unusual in America. When you drop your coin into the slot, the doors open, revealing clean and spacious surroundings. The door closes automatically, and music begins to play softly. To get the full experience, though, you have to stick around for act two, which happens when the toilet self-cleans after you leave.

Our advice? Simply climb up on the sink to make the restroom think you've left. The doors open and then close, the floor sinks, and water begins spraying everywhere. The toilet rotates 90 degrees, and a brush slides out of the wall to clean it. It's like Disney's *Fantasia*. Now if only we could find out how to install that kind of system at home.

*"We'll do anything to come up with different names for 'toilet'"*



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other places you would prefer? Many people simply say, "I have to go. I'll be right back." But others like to be more specific. For example, a woman might say that she is going to powder her nose, while men might tell you that they have to see a man about a horse. What's that all about? Most men have never even ridden a horse and have certainly never seen a man about one. What would they do with the horse anyway if they did see a man about one?

To make things even more complicated, many restaurants put signs on their restrooms that can leave even native speakers wondering which door is the right one for them. For example, at a restaurant near the sea, you might see signs such as "Gulls" and "Buoys" — for girls and boys; or Mexican restaurants might use the words "Caballeros" and "Mu-

<b>bathroom</b> ['bæθru:m] US	hier: Toilette
<b>buck</b> [bʌk]	Rehbock; auch: <i>ifml.</i> Dollar
<b>buoy</b> ['bu:ɪ]	Boje (hier: Wortspiel auf "boy")
<b>caballero</b> [kæbə'jɛroʊ]	Mann
<b>doe</b> [dou]	Hirschkuh
<b>gull</b> [gʌl]	Möwe (hier: Wortspiel auf "girl")
<b>muchacha</b> [mu:'tʃɑ:tʃɑ:]	Frau
<b>Native American</b> [ˌneɪtɪv ə'merɪkən]	Ureinwohner Nordamerikas
<b>restroom</b> ['restru:m] US	Toilette
<b>reveal sth.</b> [rɪ'veɪəl]	den Blick auf etw. freigeben
<b>rotate</b> ['rəʊteɪt]	sich drehen
<b>see sb. about sth.</b> ['si: ə,baut]	jmdn. in einer Angelegenheit aufsuchen
<b>self-clean</b> [ˌself 'kli:ɪn]	sich selbst reinigen
<b>sink</b> [sɪŋk]	Waschbecken
<b>slot</b> [slɑ:t]	Schlitz
<b>spacious</b> ['speɪʃəs]	geräumig
<b>stick around</b> [ˌstɪk ə'raʊnd] <i>ifml.</i>	dableiben
<b>take one's leave</b> [ˌteɪk wʌnz 'li:v]	sich verabschieden

**plus** For exercises on the language in this article, see *Spotlight plus* 9-10/2005