

CRISPS, SWEETS

AND

WHITE KITTENS?



Jennifer Lopez

When musicians go on tour, they have a contract with each of the venues that they play at. A 'rider' is part of that contract. It's a list of requests that a singer or band make before they agree to perform. ¹ _____ However, the more interesting ones are backstage riders – things that musicians specially request backstage during their performances.

Bands often tour for months, visiting numerous cities. At each venue, the stars need to get ready for their show in a dressing room. They want to be comfortable as they prepare themselves for the performance ahead, so it's natural they need some things. ² _____ Beyoncé's rider once specified that it must be exactly 28.5°C backstage. And Jennifer Lopez once demanded that all her dressing rooms were white, with white flowers, white candles and white sofas.

Live performances are hard work, so musicians need feeding, too. Some of them make their own arrangements. One young Canadian singer sometimes has his own personal chef while on tour. ³ _____ Others are easier to satisfy, but there are more clues about their working lifestyles in these areas of a rider.

Rihanna seems to love snacks: her rider asks for a wide range of crisps, sweets and fruit to be on offer. Lady Gaga used to ask for a whole roast chicken and ten different types of soft drink. She's obviously eating more healthily nowadays:

her more recent riders have included soup, fruit juice and tea. And remember to feed her 150-person team exactly on time at 5 pm or the concert will be cancelled!



Rihanna

Some performers are aware that large tours can have a significant environmental impact. Maroon 5 have a 'green' section in their rider, encouraging venues to recycle and to use locally grown food where possible. They even set up stalls for fans attending the concert so they can learn about trying to reduce their carbon footprint. Let's hope a certain former member of The Beatles is seeing them live soon. ⁴ _____

A few requests reveal a generous and thoughtful side to performers' personalities. Since she started touring, Adele has insisted that people with free tickets to her concerts must make a donation to charity. ⁵ _____ And even massive bands like Coldplay clearly never stop thinking about their friends and family while they are away. Their rider once asked for eight local postcards and stamps.

On the whole, most musicians' requests are reasonable, but some can be outrageous. One promoter remembers receiving a demand from an extremely famous female singer for 20 white kittens! Another male singer stated that no one at the venue could talk to or even look at the star directly. ⁶ _____ They would only play on condition that they were given a large bowl of M&M sweets, but without any brown ones. Furthermore, if just one of these sweets were found anywhere backstage, the band would not play. It turned out that there was a good reason behind their bizarre request. The safety section of the band's rider was long and complicated, so they hid the request about sweets among these details to make sure it was being read carefully!



TALKING POINTS

Why do you think some singers/bands make unreasonable demands in their riders?
What's the typical price of a ticket to a concert by an internationally famous band?
Do you think concert tickets are good value in general? Why? / Why not?



Coldplay



Adam Levine from Maroon 5



Adele

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