



Dining Etiquette

Preparation

Think of some conversation topics to use at dinner. Stay away from controversial topics, such as religion or politics; you do not want to inadvertently offend your host with viewpoints that may be different from his/hers. Plan ahead to make sure you arrive 15 minutes early.

Being Seated

Everyone should rise when a person of higher rank is standing. Wait until these people sit before you do. Once the host unfolds his/her napkin, you may do the same. Fold it into a triangle and place the longest side toward you. Fold your napkin neatly to the right or left of your plate when everyone at your table is through with dessert. During the meal, the napkin should always be placed in your lap. If you must excuse yourself, the napkin should be left on the arm or seat of your chair. Be comfortable; do not sit rigidly or slouch. Remember to keep your hands in your lap when not in use; no arms or elbows on the table.

Drinks

Do not stir drinks loudly. Never chew ice cubes. Stay away from alcoholic drinks. However, if your host chooses to have one and you wish to join him/her, HAVE ONLY ONE! At a cocktail hour, you will be shaking hands with many individuals, so keep your drink in your left hand to keep your right hand dry.

Silverware

Start from the outside and work your way inward. Use whichever fork, knife, spoon, etc. is on the immediate outside. After the course, a waiter will remove whatever silverware is no longer needed. If you are confused, watch what your host is using.

Ordering

If you are ordering food from the menu, select a medium-priced item. It is a good idea to ask the host for recommendations. Follow the lead of the host. Avoid messy or perhaps offensive foods like pasta or garlic-laden dishes.

Passing

When passing items such as bread, butter, and salad dressing, the person closest to the item gets it, offers it to the person on his/her left, and then passes it to the person on his/her right. If you would like some water, first ask the rest of the table if anyone would like some. If anybody accepts, pass the water around the table before you serve yourself.

Entrée

When your meal arrives, do not start eating until everyone at your table has been served. Cut three or four small pieces of meat at a time, not all at once. When cutting meat, fork prongs should be pointed down. Take small bites. Never speak with food in your mouth and avoid saying you are "full" or "stuffed". As soon as your dinner plate is removed, slide your dessert spoon or fork down to the left side of your place setting.

The Check & Gratuity

It is usually assumed that whoever initiates the dinner will pay for it. Gratuities are meant to be given for service above and beyond what is normally expected. 15% is the norm, with 20% given when dining in fine restaurants or when the service is exceptional.

Thank You

This is VERY, VERY IMPORTANT. Send a short, sincere thank you note on plain or personal stationery to the individual(s) within 48 hours of the meal. Corporate employers typically expect a typed or clean handwritten note. It is also necessary to extend a brief, but gracious thank you to your host at the end of the meal as you are leaving the restaurant.

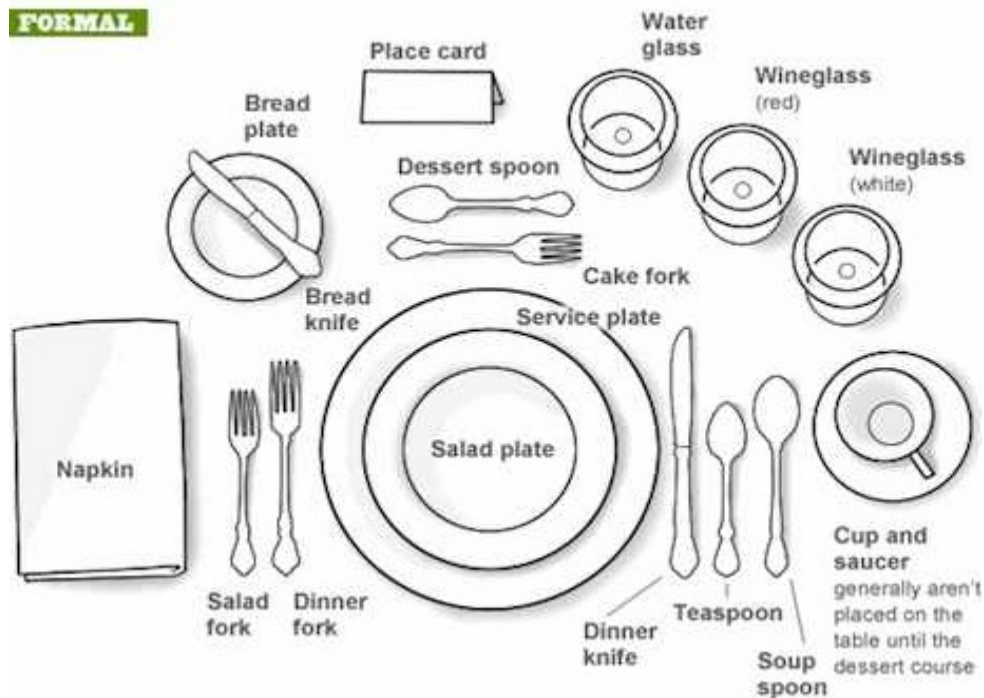
Dining Etiquette

DO

- Focus on the event, not the meal
- Make eye contact throughout the meal
- Think about what you are saying
- Actively listen to others
- Ask questions
- Be confident!

DON'T

- Use your cell phone at the table
- Interrupt, complain, or gossip
- Talk with your mouth full
- Apply makeup or pick your teeth at the table
- Reach across someone to get something
- Push your plates away from you when finished



For help with your etiquette or any other career-related issue, come see us in the Career Center!

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