In order to master proper dining etiquette, it is important to know the rules and follow them closely. Understanding the expectations that are placed on you is critical in your success of meeting them. The use of good table manners at all times is a necessity at any meal, but especially in fine dining engagements. Good posture, proper use of language, and showing respect are traits that are expected, but other things may also be expected that you might not be aware of. None of these skills are difficult to accomplish but they will require conscience thought and lots of practice so they become second nature. It's important to remain calm and composed at all times to exude confidence and control of the situation, even if things seem to go off course.

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Gloria Starr is the president of Global Success Strategies Inc. and has spent nearly 25 years consulting with business executives and dignitaries on the fine art of proper etiquette. Starr offers these tips on dining etiquette, "No one should sit down before the host or hostess pulls out his or her chair and seats themselves. The guest would then sit. The host or hostess would take the napkin out of the [napkin ring](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm) and set it on his or her lap to indicate that the meal was about to begin. The guests cannot even have a slice of [bread](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm) or drink of water prior to the host or hostess indicating that the meal is starting."   
  
When using cutlery or [silverware](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm) it is important to begin with the outside pieces first and move in as the meal courses progress. It is important to learn each piece of cutlery and what its particular use is. Starr uses the following examples to explain, "If there is a salad fork on the outside, it means your salad is going to be served first. If you are going to have soup, there would be a spoon that is on the outside of the right hand side of the plate. The two pieces of cutlery above the main plate are for desserts." Cutlery items should only be used for their intended purpose and should not be interchanged or used throughout the entire meal.   
  
It is important to compliment the host or hostess when possible in a sincere manner that does not come across as simulated flattery. It is perfectly fine to say "this [wine](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm) is exceptional" or "this is one of my favorite [desserts](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm)" as long as you feel the statement is true. Never lie when giving a compliment; find another way to offer a genuine one later. Honesty is always the best policy.   
  
When eating soup, Starr urges, "Put your soup spoon in the bowl close to you and move the spoon away from you. This helps with any problems of potential spills. This means that you are eating the soup away from you and then you are moving your head and your upper body toward the soup bowl, but not down into the bowl. Your body language is straight across and you are sipping the soup from the [spoon](http://www.essortment.com/articles/proper-dining-etiquette_3639.htm) on the side and not putting the entire spoon in your mouth."   
  
You should not ask for a replacement of your meal once it is served. If you have a special dietary need or concern it should be addressed prior to the meal preparation by inquiring if alternate selections may be served to you. Many people have medical restrictions or other specific preferences associated with their diets and this is becoming more common to address when group meals are being planned. It is recommended that you speak to your host or hostess in advance if you are diabetic, vegetarian, or have a specific food allergy that may present a conflict at the meal. In most cases, if you communicate your concerns, others will respect and honor your difference and do what they can to find a compromise to accommodate all parties suitably. You are not obligated to eat something you cannot or do not like, but you are not allowed to complain about the item that is served to you. It is okay to leave an item on your plate or politely refuse seconds or a dessert.   
  
While the proper way to show that you are finished with a salad or entrée is to place your utensils horizontally across the plate, this is not always the case with other serving dishes such as small bowls or sorbet cups. Starr notes, "There may be sorbet served between the fish dish and the main entree and that's to cleanse the palate. When you have something like a sorbet, whether it's for cleansing the palate or for dessert, you should not leave the spoon sitting in the sorbet glass because of the chance of tipping it over." The proper way to handle the removal of plates and dishes between meal courses is to sit perfectly still. Starr warns, "Do not move from right to left in order to assist them or help them in anyway, because the reality is that moving would actually create a greater chance of spillage."   
  
Starr cites, "The old rule of etiquette was that the hands would only be on the table if you are actually eating. But the new rule in the last few years is that your hands are always seen, so the rule is called 'always, sometimes, and never.' This means that your wrists are always seen, your forearms are sometimes seen in the table area, and your elbows are never seen on the table. It would be rude if you put your elbows on the table, and the hostess or other guests would be equally as rude if they told you to remove them. This rule changed because of our global perspective. People from the Middle East keep their hands on the table, because if hands are under the table it is perceived to be underhanded, and they cannot trust you because they can't see your hands. So it has been changed to accommodate different cultures." There may also be cultural customs you should be aware of if dining abroad. Certain countries have rituals or behavior that is considered expected or unacceptable and these may differ from what is customary in our own country. If you dine with people from other countries you should research the recommended protocol to make the meal flow more smoothly and to avoid any pitfalls you may be oblivious to otherwise.   
  
If you are have initiated the meal or been invited to the meal you should always show respect for your dining companion for making the time and effort to join you. It is important to give your full attention to them and the purpose of the encounter. Try to refrain from interrupting another speaker and pay attention to what he or she is saying. Do not let your thoughts wander to other topics so that you are not able to hear and understand what your companion is saying. The use of cell phones and pagers during a meal is often frowned upon as an interruption and sign that you are not willing to devote your full attention to the meal or conversation at hand. If you repeatedly excuse yourself from the table to attend to other matters your companion may feel slighted and think that you do not value his or her time. Smoking is considered impolite in the modern era as well, unless you are offered the opportunity and others are all in agreement with the act of having a cigar after dinner or a cigarette with drinks. Asking for carryout portions is highly inappropriate when you are a guest.  
  
Starr laments, "There are things that so few people have: the common courtesy with ambassadorship skills and the way that Eastern people are more courteous, more dignified, and show grace and elegance under pressure." American standards have plummeted with regard to using manners and etiquette when dining at home or in public. Dress codes have gone by the wayside. Many families let children eat alone in front of a television or video game and meaningful conversations are hard to come by during mealtime for many folks. Starr encourages, "If the average person just raised their standards by 1% a day, in 70 days they will be twice as good. To raise the standards you personally choose to use social graces; this would escalate your opportunities for success a million times over."

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| [Barbecue Menu](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/barbecue-menu.html) [Gourmet Recipes](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/easy-dinner-recipes.html) [Afternoon Tea](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/afternoon-tea-party.html) [Personal Chefs](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-personal-chef.html) [Hire a Butler](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/hire-a-butler.html) [Cocktail Parties](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/planning-a-cocktail-party.html) [Share a Recipe](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/share-a-recipe.html) Dining Etiquette [Father's Day Menu](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/dinner-menu-idea.html) [Father's Day Gifts](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/fathers-day-chocolates.html) [Carved Buffet Menu](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/new-years-day-menu.html) [Holiday Menu Ideas](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/free-holiday-recipes.html) [Gourmet Food Gifts](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food-gifts.html) [Food & Wine Pairing](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/matching-food-with-wine.html) [Shopping Emporium](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-foods.html) [Recipe for Success!](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/build-a-web-site-business.html) [Free Newsletter](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-newsletter.html) [Useful Links](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/links.html)  Top of Form     |  | | --- | | **Enter your E-mail Address**  **Enter your First Name (optional)**  **Then**  Don't worry -- your e-mail address is totally secure. I promise to use it **only** to send you Gourmet High Life. |   Bottom of Form  [[**?**](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/dinner-table-etiquette.html#RSSExplain)] Subscribe To This Site  [XML RSS](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food.xml) [Add to Google](http://fusion.google.com/add?feedurl=http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food.xml) [Add to My Yahoo!](http://add.my.yahoo.com/rss?url=http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food.xml) [Add to My MSN](http://my.msn.com/addtomymsn.armx?id=rss&ut=http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food.xml) [Subscribe with Bloglines](http://www.bloglines.com/sub/http:/www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/gourmet-food.xml) | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Basic Essentials of Dinner Table Etiquette**  **Simple, Good Manners**   * Always respond to an **invitation** within a week of receiving it. * Dress according to the **recommended (if any) dress code.** NEVER attempt to "out dress" the hostess! * Be **punctual** - never more than 10 minutes late. * If you wish to bring a guest as your partner, **good dinner table etiquette** demands that you should always check with the host first. If you are the one hosting the party and a guest of yours arrives with an unexpected friend, be polite & courteous with them, and speak with your inconsiderate guest at another time! * It is considered polite to take along a [small gift (CLICK HERE for suggestions),](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/chocolate-gift-idea.html" \t "_top) for your host and hostess. Flowers, chocolates or champagne are always appreciated.  |  | | --- | | **Other Pages on Dining Etiquette**  [Table Setting Etiquette Tips](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/table-setting-etiquette.html)  [Etiquette for the 21st Century](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/dinner-party-etiquette.html)  [Your Dinner Etiquette Stories](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/dining-etiquette.html)  [International Etiquette Tips](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/international-etiquette.html)  [Proper Restaurant Etiquette](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/restaurant-etiquette.html)  [Afternoon Tea Etiquette](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/afternoon-tea-party.html#top4) |   **Dinner Table Etiquette - the 10 Do's!**   1. Once seated, **unfold your napkin** and use it for occasionally wiping your lips or fingers. At the end of dinner, leave the napkin tidily on the place setting. 2. It is good dinner table etiquette to **serve the lady sitting to the right** of the host first, then the other ladies in a clockwise direction, and lastly the gentlemen.http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/images/GourmetlDinnerTableEtiquette.jpg 3. **Hold the knife and fork** with the handles in the palm of the hand, forefinger on top, and thumb underneath. 4. Whilst eating, you may if you wish **rest the knife and fork** on either side of the plate between mouthfuls. When you have finished eating, place them side by side in the center of the plate. 5. If the food presented to you **is not to your liking,** it is polite to at least make some attempt to eat a small amount of it. Or at the very least, cut it up a little, and move it around the plate! 6. It is quite acceptable to **leave some food to one side of your plate** if you feel as though you have eaten enough. On the other hand, don't attempt to leave your plate so clean that it looks as though you haven't eaten in days! 7. Desserts may be eaten with **both a spoon and fork,** or alternatively a **fork alone** if it is a cake or pastry style sweet. 8. Should a lady **wish to be excused** for the bathroom, it is polite for the gentlemen to stand up as she leaves the table, sit down again, and then stand once more when she returns. 9. Always make a point of **thanking the host and hostess** for their hospitality before leaving. 10. It is good dinner table etiquette to send a personal **thank you note** to the host and hostess shortly afterwards.  |  | | --- | | **To post your own dinner etiquette story on this site**  [**CLICK HERE**](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/dining-etiquette.html) |   **Dinner Table Etiquette - the 10 Don'ts!**   1. NEVER start eating **before a signal** from the host to do so. 2. Forks should **not be turned over** unless being used for eating peas, sweetcorn kernels, rice or other similar foods. In which case, it should be transferred to the right hand. However, at a [casual buffet,](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/new-years-day-menu.html" \t "_top) or [barbecue](http://www.gourmet-food-revolution.com/barbecue-menu.html" \t "_top) it is quite acceptable to eat with just a fork. 3. It is not generally regarded as good dinner table etiquette to use one's bread for **dipping into soups or mopping up sauces.** 4. **Loud eating noises** such as slurping and burping are very impolite. The number one sin of dinner table etiquette! 5. Talking with one's **mouth full.** is not only unpleasant to watch, but could also lead to choking! Definitely not a good idea! 6. Don't **stretch across the table** crossing other guests to reach food, wine or condiments. Instead ask a guest sitting close to pass the item to you. 7. Good dinner table etiquette sometimes involves a degree of diplomacy when it comes to the host's choice of food and wine! Even if you feel that you can do better, **don't ever offer your criticism.** If you feel unable to pay any compliments, at least remain silent on the subject. 8. **Picking teeth** (unless toothpicks are provided) or **licking fingers** are very unattractive! The only exception to the latter is when eating meat or poultry on the bone (such as chicken legs or ribs). In which case, a finger bowl should be provided. 9. **Drinking too much wine can be very embarrassing!** Where a different wine is served with each course, it is quite acceptable to not finish each glass. 10. Don't forget to make **polite conversation** with those guests around you. Dinner parties are not just about the food, they are intended to be a sociable occasion!      |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  | | |

**Dining Etiquette Guide**

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Table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to professional success. The point of etiquette rules is to make you feel comfortable - not uncomfortable.

**Making Restaurant Reservations:**

Restaurant reservations are like any other appointment. If you make a reservation, stick to it. Call ahead if you’re going to be more than 15 minutes late, and cancel as far in advance as possible if your plans change so that someone else can get a table. Some restaurants take credit card numbers to hold reservations and charge no-show fees.

**How to use napkins:**

**In a restaurant:**

As soon as you are seated, remove the napkin from your place setting, unfold it, and put it in your lap. Do not shake it open. At some very formal restaurants, the waiter may do this for the diners, but it is not inappropriate to place your own napkin in your lap, even when this is the case.  
  
The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal. Don't clean the cutlery or wipe your face with the napkin. NEVER use it to wipe your nose!

If you excuse yourself from the table, loosely fold the napkin and place it to the left or right of your plate. Do not refold your napkin or wad it up on the table either. Never place your napkin on your chair.  
  
At the end of the meal, leave the napkin semi-folded at the left side of the place setting. It should not be crumpled or twisted; nor should it be folded. The napkin must also not be left on the chair.

**At a private dinner party:**

The meal begins when the host or hostess unfolds his or her napkin. This is your signal to do the same. Place your napkin on your lap, completely unfolded if it is a small luncheon napkin or in half, lengthwise, if it is a large dinner napkin. Do not shake it open.  
  
The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal.   
  
The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table. Once the meal is over, you too should place your napkin neatly on the table to the left of your dinner plate. (Do not refold your napkin, but don't wad it up, either.)

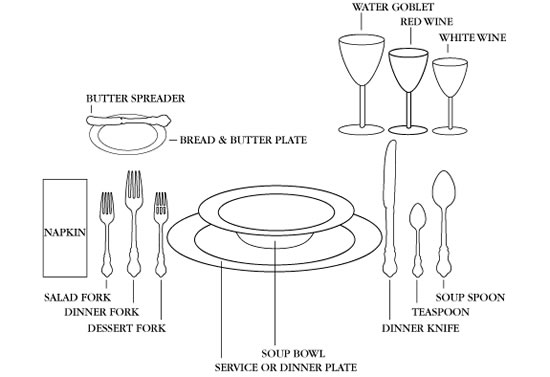
**When to start eating:**

**In a restaurant:**

Wait until all are served at your table before beginning to eat.

**At a private dinner party:**

When your host or hostess picks up their fork to eat, then you may eat. Do not start before this unless the host or hostess insists that you start eating.

**How to use your silverware and dinnerware:**  

*Dinner Setting Photo by* [*Replacement, Ltd.*](http://www.replacements.com/piecetype/formal.htm)

Use the silverware farthest from your plate first.

**Here's the Silverware and dinnerware rule:**

Eat to your left, drink to your right. Any food dish to the left is yours, and any glass to the right is yours.  
  
Starting with the knife, fork, or spoon that is farthest from your plate, work your way in, using one utensil for each course. The salad fork is on your outermost left, followed by your dinner fork. Your soup spoon is on your outermost right, followed by your beverage spoon, salad knife and dinner knife. Your dessert spoon and fork are above your plate or brought out with dessert. If you remember the rule to work from the outside in, you'll be fine.

**Use one of two methods when using the fork and knife:**

**American Style:**  Knife in right hand, fork in left hand holding food. After a few bite-sized pieces of food are cut, place knife on edge of plate with blades facing in. Eat food by switching fork to right hand (unless you are left handed). A left hand, arm or elbow on the table is bad manners.

**Continental/European Style:**  Knife in right hand, fork in left hand. Eat food with fork still in left hand. The difference is that you don't switch hands-you eat with your fork in your left hand, with the prongs curving downward. Both utensils are kept in your hands with the tines pointed down throughout the entire eating process. If you take a drink, you do not just put your knife down, you put both utensils down into the resting position: cross the fork over the knife.

Once used, your utensils, including the handles, must not touch the table again. Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate or in the bowl.

For more formal dinners, from course to course, your [tableware](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) will be taken away and replaced as needed.

To signal that your are done with the course, rest your fork, tines up, and knife blade in, with the handles resting at five o'clock an tips pointing to ten o'clock on your plate.  
  
Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

**General social and dining etiquette rules:**

Follow whatever dress code is requested on the invitation or suggested by the host/hostess.

Arrive at least 10 minutes early unless otherwise specified. Never arrive late!

It is proper to bring a small hostess gift, one that the hostess is not obliged to use that very evening. Gifts such as flowers, candy, wine, or dessert, are not good hostess gifts, as the hostess will feel that it must put it out immediately. You must not never expect your gift to be served at the dinner party.

At a dinner party, wait for the host or hostess sits down before taking your seat. If the host/hostess asks you to sit, then do. At a very formal dinner party, if there are no name cards at the table, wait until the host indicates where you should sit. The seating will typically be man-woman-man-woman with the women seated to the right of the men.

A prayer or 'blessing' may be customary in some households. The dinner guests may join in or be respectfully silent. Most prayers are made by the host before the meal is eaten.

Sometimes a toast is offered instead of a prayer. Always join in with a toast. If the host stands up during the toast, also stand up.

Serving tea or coffee signifies that the formal part of the evening is over. Guests may now feel free to leave, or linger if the host or hostess encourages them to do so.

After a formal dinner party, a thank you note should be sent to the hostess.

**Serving food:**

Food is served from the left. Dishes are removed from the right.

Always say please when asking for something. At a restaurant, be sure to say thank you to your server and bus boy after they have removed any used items.

Butter, spreads, or dips should be transferred from the serving dish to your plate before spreading or eating.

**Passing dishes or food:**

Pass food from the left to the right. Do not stretch across the table, crossing other guests, to reach food or condiments.

If asked for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table mate asks for only one of them. This is so dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers.

Set any passed item, whether it's the salt and pepper shakers, a bread basket, or a butter plate, directly on the table instead of passing hand-to-hand.

Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.

Always use serving utensils to serve yourself, not your personal silverware.

**Eating:**

Do NOT talk with food in your mouth! This is very rude and distasteful to watch! Wait until you have swallowed the food in your mouth.

Always taste your food before seasoning it. Usually the hostess has gone to a lot of work making sure the food served is delicious to her standards. It is very rude to add salt and pepper before tasting the food.

Don't blow on your food to cool it off. If it is too hot to eat, take the hint and wait until it cools.

Always scoop food, using the proper utensil, away from you.

Cut only enough food for the next mouthful (cut no more than two bites of food at a time). Eat in small bites and slowly.

Do eat a little of everything on your plate. If you do not like the food and feel unable to give a compliment, just keep silent. It is acceptable to leave some food on your plate if you are full and have eaten enough.

Do not "play with" your food or utensils. Never wave or point [silverware](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm). Do not hold food on the fork or spoon while talking, nor wave your silverware in the air or point with it.

Try to pace your eating so that you don’t finish before others are halfway through. If you are a slow eater, try to speed up a bit on this occasion so you don’t hold everyone up. Never continue to eat long after others have stopped.

Once used, your utensils, including the handles, must not touch the table again. Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate or in the bowl.

If the food served is not to your liking, it is polite to at least attempt to eat a small amount of it. It is never acceptable to ask a person why they have not eaten all the food. Don't make an issue if you don't like something or can't eat it - keep silence.

Even if you have dietary restrictions, it is inappropriate to request food other than that which is being served by the host at a private function. If you have serious dietary restrictions or allergies, let your host know in advance of the dinner.

**Table Manners:**

Unfold your napkin and place it on your lap. When you are finished, place it loosely on the table, not on the plate

Keep elbows off the table. Keep your left hand in your lap unless you are using it.

Do not talk with your mouth full. Chew with your mouth closed.

Guests should do their best to mingle and make light conversation with everyone. Do not talk excessively loudly. Give others equal opportunities for conversation. Talk about cheerful, pleasant things at the table.

Don't clean up spills with your own napkin and don't touch items that have dropped on the floor. You can use your napkin to protect yourself from spills. Then, simply and politely ask your server to clean up and to bring you a replacement for the soiled napkin or dirty utensil.

Loud eating noises such as slurping and burping are very impolite. The number one sin of dinner table etiquette!

Do not blow your nose at the dinner table. Excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning to the dining room. If you cough, cover your mouth with your napkin to stop the spread of germs and muffle the noise. If your cough becomes unmanageable, excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning to the dining room.

Turn off your cell phone or switch it to silent or vibrate mode before sitting down to eat, and leave it in your pocket or purse. It is impolite to answer a phone during dinner. If you must make or take a call, excuse yourself from the table and step outside of the restaurant.

Do not use a toothpick or apply makeup at the table.

Say "Excuse me," or "I'll be right back," before leaving the table. Do not say that you are going to the restroom.

Whenever a woman leaves the table or returns to sit, all men seated with her should stand up.

Do not push your dishes away from you or stack them for the waiter when you are finished. Leave plates and glasses where they are.

**Wine:**

Never turn a wine glass upside down to decline wine. It is more polite to let the wine be poured and not draw attention. Otherwise, hold your hand over the wine glass to signal that you don't want any wine.

Hold your wine glass by the stem, not the rim. See [How To Successfully Taste Wine - Wine Tasting Basics](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Information/WineTasting.htm).

Where a different wine is served with each course, it is quite acceptable to not finish each glass.

**Dividing or sharing the restaurant bill with others:**

Always assume that if you’re dining in a group of more than 6 people (3 couples), that the check is going to be divided evenly among everyone.

When dining when other couples, If you *know* you’re going to ask for a separate check, tell the server before you order so that the process is simplified later.

Take into account any significant ($15 or more) price differences in orders. If someone only orders soup and everyone else orders 2 to 3 courses, it’s not fair to make them pay the same.

If there are a couple people not drinking alcohol while the rest of the group is, separate the beverage total to take this into account and don’t overcharge the non-drinkers.

**Proper tipping etiquette in a restaurant:**

At a restaurant, always leave a tip. Tips can vary from 15% to 25%.

Waiter: 15% to 20% of the bill; 25% for extraordinary service  
  
Wine steward: 15% of wine bill  
  
Bartender: 10% to 15% of bar bill  
  
Coat check: $1.00 per coat  
  
Car attendant: $2.00 to $5.00

Remember that the amount you tip reflects the **total price before any coupons, gift certificates, etc.** Just because you get a discount, does not mean that your server did not serve up the full order.  
  
If the owner of the restaurant serves you himself, you should still tip him. He will divide the tip among those who work in the kitchen and dining room.

**Specific food type etiquette guide:**

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| Top of Form    Search What's Cooking America web site  Bottom of Form |

**Appetizers, Hors d'oeuvres, Canapes:**

Food that is served at a cocktail party or during a pre-meal cocktail hour is intended to be eaten with the fingers. This includes olives, pickles, nuts, canapes, deviled eggs, and chips.

**Artichokes:**

It is both proper and polite to pluck the leaves with your fingers, leaving fork and knife aside for now.

Pull off a leaf, holding it by the pointed end. Put the other end in your mouth and pull it between your teeth, scraping the length of the leaf (the edible portion of the leaves becomes greater as you get closer to the center of the artichoke).

Just before you get to the very center, leaves will become almost white with purple tips. Be careful of these leaves because their purple ends are prickly. When the leaves are pulled, you will be left with the base, the heart, crowned with a fuzzy patch. You have now reached the best part of all, the very reason for eating artichokes: the heart. Carefully scoop away the fuzzy stuff with your knife or spoon (though a properly prepared artichoke will already have the choke removed). With knife and [fork](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm), cut bites from the heart like pieces of prime fillet.

If you're provided with a dip such as a vinaigrette or mayonnaise, put a small part of the edible portion of the leaf in the dip and scrape with your teeth as directed above. Don't overdo it on the dip or you won't taste the artichoke.

**Asparagus:**

Most etiquette books say that you can eat whole asparagus spears, without a sauce, by picking up with your hand. However, if you do this at a restaurant or dinner party, you will draw strange glances. Be safe and use your knife and fork to cut and eat them. Only pick asparagus up with your hands if the hostess does.

**Avocado:**

If the avocado is served in its shell, it is eaten with a spoon.

If it is sliced on a plate or in a salad, eat it with a fork.

**Bacon:**

Bacon can be consider finger food if it is dry, crisp and served whole.

If bacon is broken into pieces, served in thick slices, or cooked but still limp, it should be eaten with a knife and fork. The rule is simply that bacon with any fat on it should be eaten with a knife and fork.

**Berries:** Generally, eat berries with a spoon, whether they have cream on them or not.

**Bread:**

Use your fingers to remove bread from the serving plate. When a bread and butter plate is on the table, use it appropriately.

Break slices of bread, rolls and muffins in half or in small pieces never larger than one bite. Butter each bite at a time. Small biscuits do not have to be broken. It is never appropriate to cut a roll with a knife.

When the rolls are served in a basket, take one, and always pass the basket to your right. Place the roll on the break plate, which is located on the left side. Never tear your roll in half or into many pieces.

Use your own butter knife and the butter on your plate; buttering should be done on the plate or just above it. Use your butter knife for spreading and not as the butter server. The butter knife remains on the bread and butter plate at the end of the meal.

**Caviar:**

To preserve the full flavor of caviar, scoop it out using mother-of-pearl utensils, and **NEVER**  use a metallic spoon metal oxidizes the eggs), which will create an unwanted (and pretty horrid) metal bite. If necessary use a wood or plastic spoon.

Don’t mush caviar up while you’re serving yourself or other, lift the spoon carefully. Caviar should be scooped from the container vertically from top to bottom to avoid crushing the egg.  
  
If caviar is passed to you in a bowl or crock with its own spoon, serve a teaspoonful onto your plate. As the following accompaniments are offered, use the individual serving spoon in each to take small amount of minced onion and sieved egg whites and yolks, as well as a few lemon slices and a couple of toast points. Assemble a canapé to your taste with a knife, then use your fingers to lift it to your mouth.

If you're at a cocktail party or reception, where prepared caviar canapés are being passed on trays, simply lift one off the plate and pop it into your mouth.

When served caviar as an hors d'oeuvre, no matter how much you might be tempted by its luscious flavor. It's considered bad taste to eat more than an ample serving of about two ounces, or about two spoonfuls.

**Cheese:**

**Informal Meal:** When sliced cheese is served as an accompaniment to a dish, such as [apple pie](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm), it is eaten with a fork.

**Appetizer:** If cheese is served as an appetizer, such as cubes on toothpicks, it is eaten with fingers. If served a wedges of cheese, such as on a cheese plate, a slice of cheese is cut from a wedge, placed on a cracker, and brought to the mouth with the fingers.

**Chicken:**

It once was acceptable to pick up food on a bone, such as chicken, if it could be held with two fingers. I don't recommend that you do this in a public setting.

When dining at the restaurant or in a public place, chicken should always be eaten with a fork and knife.

If you are at an informal barbecue, in the fast food restaurant where you bought the chicken, and/or at your own home, it is perfectly acceptable to eat chicken with your fingers.  

**Clams and oysters in the half shell:**  Hold the shell with the left hand and lift the clam out using your oyster fork.

**Corn on the Cob:** Corn on the Cob is usually not served in a formal setting, but if it is, it is perfectly acceptable to pick it up and eat it.

**Crab, shrimp and** [**lobster**](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) **cocktails:**  These are always eaten with a cocktail fork.

**Crab/lobster claws:**  Crack them with a nutcracker and the meat taken out with an miniature or oyster fork.

**French Fries:**

In a fine dining restaurant, use your knife and forks.

When dining at a dinner party and the setting is very formal, you should use a fork. The best tactic is to watch what your host or hostess does, then do the same.

In the vast majority of eating situations in the United States, French fries are eaten with the hands. It doesn't matter which hand. If served with a hamburger in a casual atmosphere, use your fingers and pick up a whole French Fry. **Exception:** If they are covered with something (like cheese, gravy, chili, etc.), they are considered utensil foods (use your fork).

**Olives:**

Generally, [olives](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) are considered a finger food. It is perfectly acceptable to pick up and eat an olive with your fingers. Remove pit with your fingers. If you prefer not to use the finger method, use a small fork to stab olive and remove olive from your mouth.

Depending on your dining situation, you can either choose to eat olives or leave them on the plate. If you are on a job interview, don’t eat them. Also, in a highly formal dinner, don’t eat them unless you host or hostess does. The best tactic is to watch what your host or hostess does, then do the same.

Emily Post indicates that, where olives are part of a salad, they are treated like the rest of the salad and taken in by fork and the pit deposited on the fork to return.

**Pasta or Spaghetti:**

The perfect method for eating spaghetti or other long stringy pasta is to twirl it around your fork. Use a spoon to help if needed.

It is also acceptable to cut pasta with a knife and fork. You can get some leverage by turning the pasta while holding the tines of your fork against the edge of your plate. It's even correct to neatly cut the [pasta](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) if twirling is too hard.

What is undeniably bad manners is slurping in a mouthful of trailing pasta without benefit of twirl or knife. It's often loud, and it's never pretty.

If possible, serve warm pasta in warm, shallow bowls instead of on dinner plates. The sides of the bowl aids in turning pasta noodles on the fork.

**Pineapple:** Use a knife and fork to eat fresh pineapple slices.

**Potatoes:**

Baked potatoes are most often served already slit. If not, cut across the top with a knife, open the potato wider with your fork, and add butter or [sour cream](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) and chives, salt, and pepper.

You may eat the skin as you go along. Don't take the insides out and put the skin aside (or take the foil off). Eat it by scooping out the insides bite by bite.

**Risotto:**

Using a fork or a spoon, push the grains of cooked rice out slightly toward the edge of the bowl, eating only from the pulled out ring of rice.

Continue spreading from the center and eating around the edges in a circle. This will keep the risotto hot as you enjoy your risotto.

**Salad:**

If you are served large pieces or a whole wedge of lettuce, cut one bite at a time, using the knife provided.

If the salad is served before or after the main course, use the smaller fork. If the salad is considered the main course, use the entrée fork (large fork).

**Sandwich:**

**Small Sandwiches:** Such as tea sandwiches or canapés, may be picked up and eaten with your fingers.

**Large Sandwiches:** If not cut in halve, should be cut with your knife before lifting and eating.

**Hot Sandwiches:** Any hot sandwich  or open-face sandwich that is served with a gravy requires a knife and fork.

**Wraps:**Such as burritos and other sandwiches in which the filling is wrapped in thin flat bread (usually [tortillas](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) or pita bread) are eaten with the hands. Any sandwich filling that falls from the sandwich to the plate is eaten with a fork.

**Shish-kabob:**

**Appetizers:** Shish kebab are eaten directly from the skewer only if they are served as an appetizer.

**Dinner Entree:**  Hold the tip of the shish-kabob in one hand and use the dinner fork to remove the pieces with the other. When all the food has been removed from the stick, place the emptied skewer on the edge of your plate. Always eat the meat with your utensils

**Shrimp:**

**Shrimp Cocktail:**  If large shrimp are served in a stemmed glass, pick them up with an oyster fork or whatever fork is provided and bite off a mouthful at a time, dipping into the sauce before each bite.

**Large Shrimp:**  If large shrimp are served on a platter with sauce and no fork, pick up with your fingers, dip into sauce and put to your mouth. When eating shrimp with the tail still on, hold the shrimp by the tail and dip it into the sauce once. Eat it in one bite if it is not too large. Otherwise, eat it in two bites. Do not dunk the second bite into the sauce! Then discard the tail as you would olive pits or toothpicks.

**Deep-Fried Shrimp:**  Tail-on deep-fried shrimp is meant to be eaten with the fingers.

**Skewered Shrimp:**  If eating shrimp on a skewer, slide the shrimp off onto a plate (even if it is a paper plate at a cook out). Skewered shrimp should never be eaten like a corn dog.

**Oriental Dishes:**  When eating shrimp with the tail  that are part of some orientail dishes or fried foods, remove the tail with a fork and set to the side of your plate or on a separate "discard dish" if one is provided.

**Soup:**

Dip the spoon into the soup, moving it away from the body, until it is about two-thirds full, then sip the liquid (without slurping) from the side of the spoon (without inserting the whole bowl of the spoon into the mouth).

It is perfectly fine to tilt the bowl slightly (again away from the body) to get the last spoonful or two of soup.

To eat bread while eating your soup, don't hold the bread in one hand and your soup spoon in the other. When ready to eat a bite of your bread, place the spoon on the under plate, then use the same hand to take the bread to your mouth.

**Sushi:**

At most [sushi bars](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm), the waitress will offer a hot towel to wash your hands so you can pick up sushi with clean fingers. At home use hot washcloths.

With your Sushi order, you will be served some pickled ginger, a small mound of wasabi, and soy sauce. Eat a slice of pickled [ginger](http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm) after each variety of sushi to cleanse your palate. It is not proper to mix the wasabi with the soy sauce.

Don't rub your chopsticks together to remove any splinters. It is considered rude!

Sushi is meant to be finger food, quick and tasty. It is preferable to eat sushi with ones hands rather than with chopsticks, but both ways are acceptable in America.

Eat the whole sushi roll at once. It is not appropriate to eat part of a piece of sushi and place the other piece back on a plate. Once you have picked something up you should eat all of it. **Exception:** If the sushi is just too big to eat at once, bite the sushi in half and place the remainder back on the plate.

Do not dip the rice portion of the sushi pieces into the Soy sauce as it becomes too moist and can cause sushi to fall apart. Simply dip the topping or the seaweed (Nori) in the soy sauce before eating.

If a piece of fish is on top of your sushi, put the whole portion in your mouth, holding the sushi so the fish part touches your tongue (turn sushi upside down).

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 ***Proper Dining Etiquette***

**Facilitator: Joyce Thomas**

***What is Etiquette****?*

**Etiquette** is respect, good manners, and good behavior.  It is not just each of these things, but it is ***all*** of these things rolled into one.

Whether at home or in a restaurant, it is important to have a complete understanding of how to conduct yourself when entertaining or being entertained.

          ...To help you perform with

        graciousness and poise at the table.

    …Provide you with knowledge, self-confidence and skills needed for a successful social and business life.

    …Teach you how to handle meal situations and make a big difference in your image.

 ***Proper Dress Attire- Ladies***

***Simple is best****……..*

* Basic black or navy suit with white blouse.

    Dress (little black) or blouse with skirt (slacks are acceptable)

* Jewelry (pearls)- No body jewelry (i.e. tongue rings, facial jewelry, etc.)
* Panty Hose?? (skirt) – Knee highs?? (pants)
* Well groomed: hair combed, nails clean, shoes clean, brush teeth, use deodorant .

***Proper Dress Attire- Men***

***Simple is best****……..*

* Basic black or navy suit with white shirt and tie. (jacket, slacks with belt, and shirt with tie - acceptable)
* Well groomed: hair combed, nails clean, shoes clean (no tennis shoes), brush teeth, use deodorant.
* No earrings, body jewelry (tongue rings, facial rings, etc.)

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  Silverware will be arranged precisely in the right order that it is to be used for the meal.  General rule -start with outer utensils and work your way toward the service plate.

\*Tip…..The word “***left***” has four letters, so does the word fork.  The word “***right***” has five letters, so do the words knife & spoon.  This is a great way to remember that the fork is on your left and the knife & spoon are on your right.

**Proper** Posture

* Make sure you sit up straight with your arms near your body.
* **Never, never**, hang your elbows heavily on the table when at a formal dinner.
* Turn off cell phone

 How to use a napkin

* At the beginning of the dinner, place your napkin in your lap after the last person is seated.  Unfold the napkin and put it in your lap…do not shake it open.

***to eat food***

* Eat food in the order it is served.
* Start eating hot food when it is served.
* For cold food or buffets, wait for the host/hostess to announce dinner. (Wait until invocation or bless your food before you start eating.)
* Bring food to your mouth, not your mouth to your food
* Chew with your mouth closed
* Cut your food into small pieces…take small bites so you can carry on a conversation
* ***Do not*** smoke, use a toothpick, chew gum, apply make-up at the table

***er***

* Taste your food before adding salt & pepper.

*Passing the salt & pepper*

* Pick up both (salt & pepper) and place them within reach of the person next to you, do the same until they reach the person who asked for it.
* Do not pass hand to hand…salt & pepper should only be used by the person that ask for it.  Always pass to the right.

***ing Beverages***

* If the glass has a stem, hold the glass by the stem to preserve its chill.
* Tuck empty sugar packs, plastic cup from creamer under the rim of your plate or under the edge of saucer or butter dish
* Take one piece of bread, place it onto the bread plate and pass it counterclockwise.
* Break bread into moderately sized pieces with your fingers – do not cut it.
* Spread enough butter, using the butter knife, onto the piece you have broken right before you eat it.
* Do not butter the whole piece of bread first.
* Do not bite bread

 ***ead cont.***

In the absence of bread plate and butter knife

* Place bread on your service plate
* Use your knife at your place setting to retrieve butter from butter plate.  Place on your plate.
* Butter pats in foil….remove foil, using your knife, slide butter onto your plate.
* Fold foil and place it under the rim of your plate.

***What to do when finished with your meal……and***

* Leave your plate where it is, do not push it away.
* Place knife & fork horizontally or diagonally in the plate. (Indicates to server you are finished)
* Place the napkin to the left or right of your plate, or in the center of your plate.

*And…Whoever extended the invitation to dinner should pay the bill.*

***Important Tips….***

* Always be on time.  If you are late, call the host/hostess.
* If you are uncertain about how or when to use a certain utensil, watch others and do what the majority of them do.
* If a little bowl of water is on the table, or appears with the dessert, wash tips of your fingers in it.  Dry them on your napkin.
* Meat ordered with bones, should be eaten with knife & fork (cornish hen, ribs).  Never use your fingers.

***ore Important Tips….***

* To eat soup, dip the spoon into the soup, then remove it by going away from your body, not toward it.  Sip, (not slurp) the soup off the side of the spoon, instead of placing the whole spoon in your mouth.
* Ordering spaghetti (shell pasta) easier to eat
* Eating peas from a dinner plate use knife to push peas onto plate.  Eating out of a bowl, use spoon.
* Never discuss controversial issues (religion, politics)
* Never chew gum
* Do not talk with mouth full of food
* Do not apply make-up, lipstick at the table

    (May not be able to apply all of these rules to banquet meal)

*rmal Dinner Place Setting*

**Formal Dinner Place Setting**

1. Napkin

2. Fish Fork

3.  Dinner or Main Course Fork

4.  Salad Fork

5.  Soup Bowl & Plate

6. Dinner Plate

7.  Dinner Knife

8.  Fish Knife

9.  Soup Spoon

10.  Bread & Butter Plate

11.  Butter Knife

12.  Dessert Spoon and Cake - Dessert Fork

13. Sterling Water Goblet

14.  Red Wine Goble

15.  White Wine Goblet

Silverware in this example ***is not*** placed on the table in the order in which it will be used for a meal.

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