

# ETIQUETTE

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## *essentials*



## Dining Etiquette & Table Manners

The question constantly arises, “*Why are table etiquette and table manners so important?*” Simply put, understanding proper table etiquette and practicing good table manners are in part what makes us civil human beings. Eating is not only a necessity, it is a ritual of sharing our well-being and extending respect and courtesy toward our fellow man. With our family, friends and business associates dining is a major event that demonstrates our civility and our education.

We all observe how other people act and we make judgments, whether positive or negative, on their behavior. Our practice of table etiquette is a reflection of our “*breeding*”, not in the sense of genetics, but in how we have been educated. It is no coincidence that every society on earth, both ancient and modern, has observed a specific ritual of dining. Violation of this etiquette has always held a negative connotation, for nowhere is the measure of our humanity more clearly displayed than at the table.

*“Table Manners are as old as human society itself, the reason being that no human society can exist without them. The active sharing of food – not consuming all of the food we find on the spot, but carrying some back home and then doling it systematically out – is believed to lie at the root of what makes us different from animals.”* **The Rituals of Dinner (1991) – Margaret Visser**



## ***TRUE or FALSE***

# Tall Tales for the **Table**

1. If your place setting includes only one knife, which you use to cut your salad, you should place it on the tablecloth to use with your entrée.
2. A place plate or charger is used to protect the tablecloth from food droppings.
3. At a formal event if you are served French fries as your side dish, you should use your fork and knife to eat them.
4. Both hands should be used to squeeze a lemon into your tea.
5. Sugar packages should be placed on the table or under your bread plate.
6. You should excuse yourself from the table to remove a bone from your mouth.
7. You should discreetly tell others if they have food between their teeth.
8. If you have a piece of food stuck between your teeth, you should request a tooth pick from the server.
9. It is acceptable to burp or sneeze at the table, as long as you cover your mouth.
10. When finished eating, it is fine to excuse yourself from the table.
11. You should alert your host/hostess as soon as you arrive at the party to any food allergies you may have.
12. If you find a fly or hair in your food, you should immediately tell your server and request a new meal.
13. If you are unhappy with your server, you should tell them right away so they can fix the problem.
14. If you drop your fork under the table, you should retrieve it discreetly.
15. You should point out breaches of etiquette by others for the good of everyone.
16. It is acceptable to rearrange place cards if you are not sitting with your friends.

*See answer key on Page 7*

# Dining Etiquette & Table Manners

*“Manners are the **happy** way of doing things; **each one a stroke of genius**, or of love, now repeated and hardened into usage.”* Ralph Waldo Emerson

**COMMON PLACE SETTINGS** The modern table setting is attributed to Charles I of England who in 1633 declared, *“It is decent to use a fork,”* a statement that heralded the beginning of civilized table manners.

## WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?



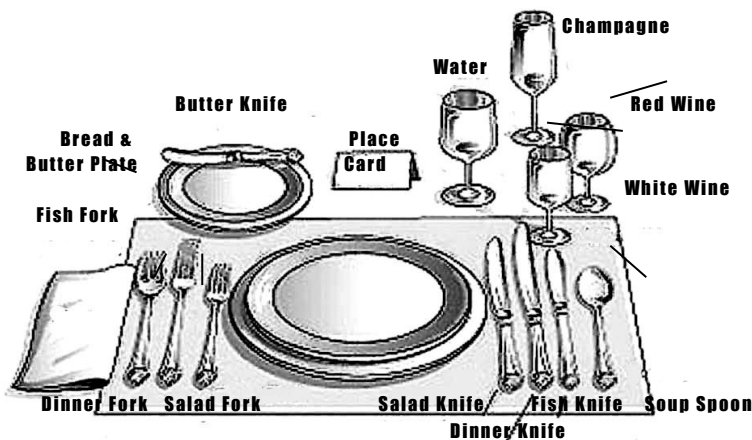
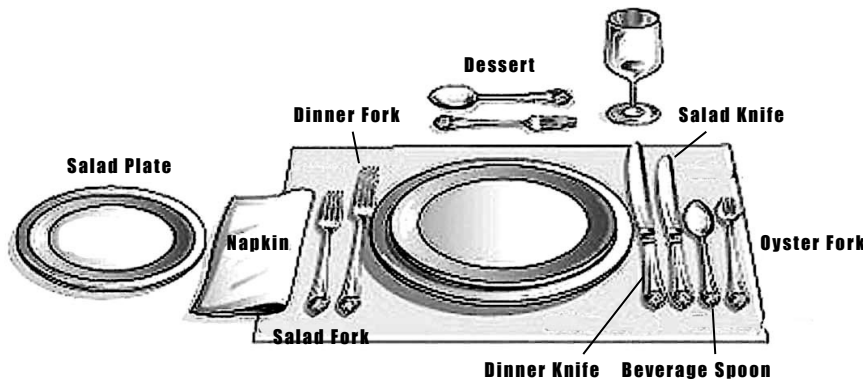
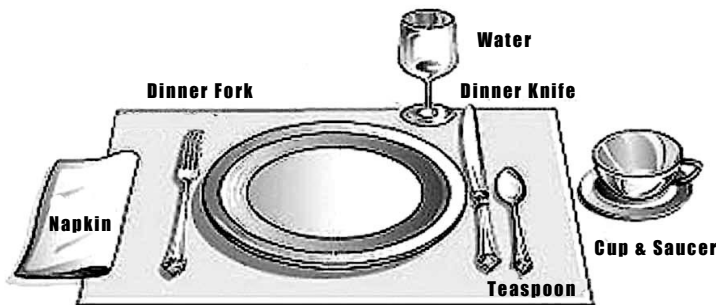
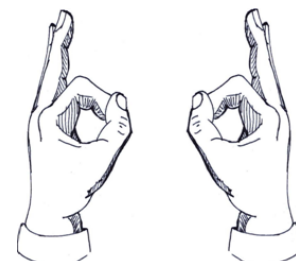
**Start from the outside and work your way in.** When faced with a full setting of silverware, feel confident by starting with the outermost utensils and work your way in through each course.



In the United States the salad fork is traditionally the outermost utensil on the left side. This is because you start from the outside and work your way in and salad is typically one of the first courses. Sometimes the salad fork is the innermost utensil (as seen in the last diagram) because in some European traditions, salad is one of the final courses in the meal.

## BREAD & DRINKS

**Try this clever tip to remember where your bread plate and drink are located.** With your thumb and forefingers create a “b” for bread with your left hand, and a “d” for drink in your right hand.



# Dining Etiquette Essential Rules of the Table

## IT'S ABOUT BEING COMFORTABLE, AND MAKING OTHERS COMFORTABLE

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### RULES FOR NAPKINS



**Placing the napkin in your lap is the first thing you do when seated at a table.** It is respectful to wait for the host or hostess to place their napkin on their lap first. We recommend folding the napkin into a large triangle or rectangle, giving yourself several clean surfaces to work with in case you soil one side. Never crumple your napkin into a ball or wear your napkin as a bib. Whenever you leave the table in an informal setting, you may place your neatly folded napkin to the left of your place setting. In a formal setting or restaurant, you may place your napkin on your chair. It is important to remember not to sit on your napkin when you return to the table. Sometimes at nice restaurants the server will pick up your napkin while you are away and give it back to you when you return.

### BREAKING BREAD



**When eating bread, muffins or rolls, break off and eat one small piece at a time.** If there is a community butter dish, take just enough for yourself and place it on your bread plate. You do not want to continually dip your bread knife into the community butter dish. Breaking bread stems from many different historical and religious origins. Breaking bread was referenced as far back as the Talmud. During Medieval times, all the scraps from court were collected at the end of the meal and given to the poor.

### SALT & PEPPER



**Salt and pepper should never be separated from one another.** Salt and pepper are like penguins—black and white and together for life. Even if an individual only asks for just one, always give them both. Salt and pepper shakers should be held at the base, making sure your fingers are not anywhere near the tops. When passing the salt and pepper, set them down between you and the person to your right.

### RULES FOR SOUP



Soup should always be ladled away from you in a small scooping motion. You may not pick up and drink your soup unless it meets both of the following criteria:

1. The soup is served in a small cup without a large lip around the outside.
2. All of the solids (vegetables, chicken, etc.) must be gone with only the broth left.

When finished, your soup spoon should be placed on the plate that the soup was served on as illustrated to the left. Never leave your spoon sitting in the empty bowl.

**AS LONG AS SHIPS SAIL OUT TO SEA,**

**I'LL SPOON MY SOUP AWAY FROM ME.**



# Dining Etiquette Essential Rules of the Table

**HOLDING YOUR SILVERWARE** There are only **TWO** correct ways to hold, and **TWO** ways to use your silverware. Using your knife and fork, practice the two different methods described below and determine which one is most comfortable. If you are a slow eater, we recommend the European method to speed up the process. If you are a fast eater, we recommend the American method to slow down the process.

## PENCIL METHOD

Hold the utensil like you would a pencil. It should be resting between the tips of your pointer finger and middle finger with your thumb on top to hold it in place. The end of the utensil should be resting on the webbing of your hand.



## SCALPEL METHOD

Hold the utensil like you would a surgeon's scalpel. The tines of the utensil should face downward. Your pointer finger will press on the back of the neck and the end of the handle should be touching the center of your palm. Your remaining fingers grasp the utensil to hold it in place.



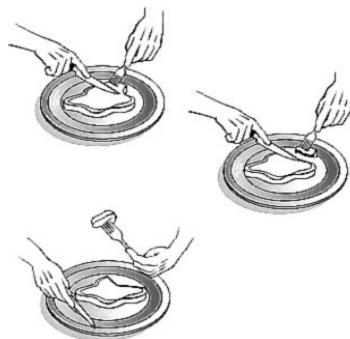
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## DETERMINE YOUR DINING STYLE

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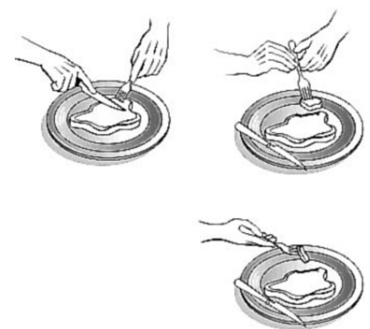
### CONTINENTAL / EUROPEAN STYLE

- Cut your food
- Do not switch hands
- Continue to hold both utensils while taking a bite with the tines of the fork down
- Use your knife as a tool to position food on your fork



### AMERICAN STYLE

- Cut your food
- Place your knife down (blade facing toward you)
- Switch your fork to the other hand
- Eat with the tines facing up



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### → PASS TO THE RIGHT, PLEASE

Pass condiments, serving trays, and salt and pepper to the right. The only exception is if the person who is asking for an item is to your immediate left.



**U.F.O.** An “Unidentified Food Object” should be removed from your mouth using the same utensil you used to put it in your mouth. Once discreetly removed, the object may be placed on the side of your plate. Never place a U.F.O. in your napkin.



# Dining Etiquette Essential Rules of the Table

## RESTING POSITIONS



### CONTINENTAL / EUROPEAN STYLE

To show your server that you are **NOT** finished eating in the continental style of dining, utensils should be perpendicular to one another with each handle on opposite sides of the plate and the blade of the knife facing towards you. Make sure the tines of the fork are facing **DOWN** towards the plate in the Continental Style.



### AMERICAN STYLE

To show your server that you are **NOT** finished eating in the American style of dining, utensils should be slightly perpendicular to one another with each handle on the same side of the plate. The knife is placed on the edge of the plate with the blade of the knife facing towards you— the same place you rest your knife when dining. Make sure the tines of the fork are facing **UP** in the American Style.



### FINISHED EATING for both styles of dining

When finished eating, utensils should be placed parallel to each other at 4:25 as if your plate were a clock. By placing your utensils in this manner, you are not only helping the server, you are helping yourself. The server can now easily place his or her thumb over the top of the utensils—securing them in place. Make sure the blade of your knife is facing toward you and the tines of the fork face **UPWARD**.

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*“The world was my oyster, but I used the wrong fork.”*

*Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Irish wit, poet & dramatist*

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## THANK YOU NOTES

It takes only a minute to write a quick note, but the reward is much greater than a verbal “thank you” or phone call. As a general rule, if someone spends more than 15-20 minutes doing something for you, a handwritten thank you note is appropriate. Your note should be sent in a timely fashion, however better late than never.

### YOUR NOTE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A formal greeting and salutation
- A display of gratitude
- Something unique, special or memorable about the event, gift or gesture
- Details that show you remember the party and had a good time

# Tall Tales for the Table

**1. If your place setting includes only one knife, which you use to cut your salad, you should return it to the table to use with your entree. False.** You should never put dirty utensils back on to the tablecloth. It stains the cloth and ruins the look of the table. If you have used a knife for your salad, place it on the right side of your salad plate, with the blade facing toward you. If the server asks you to keep your knife, they may place it on the tablecloth or the bread plate. If the server takes your knife, they will provide you with another one. Do not try to eat your main course without a knife.

**2. A place plate or charger is used to protect the tablecloth from food droppings. True.** The place plate or charger is a decorative plate. One of its uses is to catch food and prevent it from staining the tablecloth.

**3. At a formal event if you are served French fries as a side dish, you should use your knife and fork to eat them. True.** French fries are considered a side dish that may be eaten with the fingers. However, if you are served fries at a formal function, you should use your utensils to eat them. Finger foods that are messy will be accompanied by a finger bowl. This is used for rinsing the tips of the fingers only. You would then dry your fingers with your napkin.

**4. Both hands should be used to squeeze lemon into your tea. True.** You use one hand to squeeze a lemon and the other hand to cover the lemon, so that you do not accidentally squirt lemon juice into someone's eye.

**5. Sugar packages should be placed on the table or under your bread plate. False.** You always want to keep the table looking as attractive as possible, but it is not necessary to hide your sugar packets. We suggest you place them on the edge of your coffee saucer, if you have one, or on the edge of your bread plate.

**6. You should excuse yourself from the table to remove a bone from your mouth. False.** A bone is removed from your mouth with the same utensil used to eat it. If you used your fork to eat a piece of chicken or fish, for example, then you would roll the bone off your tongue onto your fork and set the bone on the side of your plate. Lifting your fork to your mouth is a normal action at the table and should not call attention to you while you are removing an object. If you are eating finger foods, such as chicken wings, you would remove the bone with your fingers and place it on the side of your plate. As with anything at the table, if there are food particles still attached to the bone you wish to remove, you should consider if others might find it unappetizing. In this case you would excuse yourself and remove it in privacy of the restroom.

**7. You should tell others in a discreet manner if they have food between their teeth. True.** While it would not be polite to tell someone if something is in their teeth in front of the whole table, causing them further embarrassment, it is appropriate to tell someone quietly. They would probably appreciate knowing, instead of going through the entire meal completely unaware. If you found out later that you had food in your teeth through the whole meal, you would be more embarrassed than if you were notified immediately.

# Tall Tales for the Table

**8. If you have a piece of food stuck between your teeth, you should request a toothpick from the server. False.** You should NEVER remove food from your teeth at the table. You may ask for a toothpick on your way to the restroom, if necessary, but you would not want to pick your teeth or call attention to your problem at the dining table.

**9. It is acceptable to burp or sneeze at the table as long as you cover your mouth. True.** Burping and sneezing are normal body functions and it is considered bad for your digestion to hold in a burp. These things often catch you by surprise as well, and cannot always be avoided. The important thing is to burp or sneeze as quietly as possible with your napkin over your mouth, and away from the table. If someone at your table accidentally burps loudly, ignore it and continue on with the conversation. It is impolite to point out others' breach of etiquette. If you are going to have a sneezing fit, you should excuse yourself, so you do not disturb the meal. NEVER blow your nose at the table.

**10. When finished eating, it is fine to excuse yourself from the table. False.** You should wait until the host or hostess has indicated an end to the meal and all the people at your table have finished eating.

**11. You should alert your host/hostess as soon as you arrive at the party to any food allergies you may have. False.** You should have notified your host or hostess when you responded to the invitation, at least a week in advance. This gives your host or hostess time to plan something special for you that you would enjoy. If you fail to mention it before the party, it is too late. You should eat what you can of what is served to you.

**12. If you find a fly or hair in your food, you should immediately tell your server and request a new meal. True.** If you have been served food with a foreign object in it, you are entitled to a brand new plate of food and a restaurant is obligated to provide that to you. You do not, however, want to make a scene at the table. You should tell your server quietly and without a lot of fuss.

**13. If you are unhappy with your server, you should tell them right away so they can fix the problem. False.** If you are unhappy with the service at a restaurant, you should talk to the manager. It could be that your food was delayed due to a problem in the kitchen. In any case, you will get the fastest and best response from the manager.

**14. If you drop your fork under the table, you should retrieve it discreetly. False.** If a utensil falls on the floor you should leave it there. Especially if it has gone under the table, you do not want to crawl under the table to get it. Ask your server for a clean utensil.

**15. You should point out breaches of etiquette by others for the good of everyone. False.** It is bad etiquette to point out others' mistakes at the table. Simply continue to behave in the correct manner. Hopefully others will learn by your good example.

**16. It is acceptable to rearrange place cards if you are not sitting with your friends. False.** Your host or hostess has gone to the trouble of arranging the seating to be the most comfortable for everyone. This takes time and planning. You would not want to disregard this effort by changing the arrangements.