



# Dining Etiquette & The Business Interview

*Resource materials to accompany the presentation  
of the Expectations program presented at*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction

## Dining Etiquette

- The Invitation
- Table Manners for the Job Interview Meal
- How to Use a Fork, Knife, and Spoon
- Ordering from the Menu
- Number of Courses
- Etiquette for Challenging Foods
- Restaurant Etiquette
- Table Settings
- Dining Etiquette Dos and Don'ts
- The Business Meal
- When You are the Host
- 10 Points of Etiquette for Dinner Interviews

## Alcohol and Dining Etiquette

Appendix 1: Dress and Appearance

Appendix 2: Russian Service & Formal Dining

## References and Acknowledgements





## INTRODUCTION

**aristology** \ar`is\*tol"o\*gy\, n. [Gr. ? dinner + -logy.] The study or science of dining.  
Source: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc

This Guide is a resource and reference for participants in our Protocol: Business Interviews and Dining Etiquette classes. These classes are designed to help prepare you for a professional dining experience -- whether that be in a dining interview or a business meal. The class is intended for college and university students who are embarking on their career search.

Etiquette, in general, and dining etiquette, in particular, are often forgotten today. More and more Colleges and Universities are offering this real world training. At its very core, dining etiquette is the art of making others feel comfortable.

Our overall training goals for this class are for you:

1. To increase your comfort and awareness with the dining experience.
2. To increase your knowledge and familiarity with common and business dining etiquette.
3. To enhance your ability to interact with a diverse group of people in social situations associated with dining.

To help facilitate our training goals, each section is organized into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Key Learning Goals (how the section addresses the training objectives)
- Section Content

Dining is intended to be an enjoyable experience. The experience is enhanced when the food is wonderful, the conversation is vibrant, and the service is attentive. If your experience is wonderful, a successful dining interview will come naturally.

We hope you enjoy your journey in aristology.



## DINING ETIQUETTE

### INTRODUCTION

Who hasn't asked: "What fork do I use?" or "How am I supposed to eat that?" or "Is that my glass?" Dining etiquette is something taken for granted by most people, but if you're interviewing for a job over lunch or dinner, you cannot! This section contains useful information about the experience of dining including the proper etiquette for many common (and some uncommon) dining milieus.

### KEY LEARNING GOALS

In this chapter, you will:

1. Learn the appropriate way to accept (or reject) dining invitations.
2. Be introduced to the appropriate etiquette on ordering from the menu.
3. Learn about different meal courses and how each should be treated.
4. Review appropriate table manners for job interviews.
5. Learn how to use basic table utensils.
6. Gain insight into the proper etiquette for eating challenging foods.
7. Understand how to give and calculate tips.

### DINING ETIQUETTE

#### The Invitation

Invitations may take the form of a formal, written card or a simple verbal query. Either way, the invitation should be issued in such a way that it plainly informs one as to whether your company is requested or if you may bring a guest. If a formal invitation is addressed to you and does not indicate that you may bring a guest, you should assume the invitation is for one. Contacting the host and hinting for approval to bring a guest is in poor taste. Often when the invitation is for a small party or a large food function there will be space or price considerations and limitations must be imposed by the host. Your request may put the inviting party in an awkward situation. Likewise in interview situations, your prospective employers may ask to meet with you alone to focus on the interview process.

#### R.S.V.P. (or Répondez s'il vous plaît [French]):

"Respond if you please" or "Kindly give an answer" or "The favor of a reply is requested". No matter how you interpret the message please respond. You will realize how important a response is the first time you throw a party and need to know in advance how many guests to anticipate.



### **Time of the Invitation**

It is preferable for the host to extend an invitation three to five days ahead of time. The guest should not keep the host waiting for his response, but call him back within the same day and not later than 24 hours.

### **Confirmation**

Confirmation of the date for the luncheon, etc. can help avoid possible confusion. The host should call his guest or the guest's secretary the morning before a lunch or dinner or the evening before breakfast in order to avoid confusion. If the guest has not heard from his host, he should likewise call him or his secretary for confirmation.

### **Time**

The host should be on time or a few minutes early in order to greet his guests. The guest should be on time. If he is unavoidably late, he should let his host know and join his host and the other guests in the course they are on. Do not order a previous course missed due to tardiness.

### **Arrival**

Whether the host or guest is the first to arrive and is seated at the table, the table should be immaculate and nothing should be touched.

### **Lateness**

If your guest is late, it is recommended you wait 15 minutes and call his office. If no one knows why he is late, wait 40 minutes and then order or tell the waitperson your predicament and leave. It is recommended you give him a \$5 to \$10 tip for having tied up his table if you leave.

### **Seating**

The host should not be seated until all his guests have been. As a guest, you should wait for your host to point out the seating arrangement before sitting down.

### **Canceling or Changing the Date**

Don't cancel or change the date unless it is very urgent. If you cancel, try to arrange the date within the next couple of days. If you must cancel, call your host yourself, do not have your assistant do so for you.

Social engagements, which require the purchase of tickets or other form of reservations, should be taken seriously. If illness or an emergency should arise give as much notice as possible to the party with which you were attending the event. If you purchased the tickets, offer them to your guest.



In the matter of dinner engagements, the following may not be broken under any circumstance short of dire emergency:

- Seated dinner for ten people or less (because your absence will be keenly felt by all who attend this small gathering).
- Dinners at which you have been requested by the host to help with a difficult guest.
- Restaurant meals when you have promised to meet one other person and cannot notify him or her that you will not be there.
- Theater engagements when tickets are especially hard to obtain.

### **Arrival**

It is very poor manners to arrive early. If the host needs your help they will ask prior to the date of the engagement. There is no such rule in proper etiquette as fashionably late. Eight minutes after the starting time is the limit.

### **Cocktails and Alcohol**

Have a drink or two. Have a good time. The secret word to remember is moderation. Cocktails are never a drinking contest. Please keep this thought uppermost in your mind when attending cocktail parties. If you have had too much to drink and someone offers to get you a cab, accept gracefully. This topic is so important today that we've devoted an entire section to it later on in this **Guide**.

### **Thank You**

A nice note thanking the host for a wonderful time sent 1-2 days after the event is proper. If you didn't have a wonderful time at least acknowledge something positive about the evening: the food, the company, etc.

### **Table Manners for the Job Interview Meal**

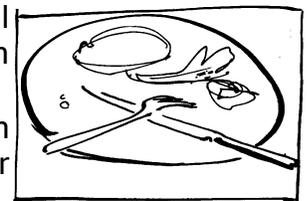
Table manners in America have seemed to go the way of the typewriter. Many families eat on the run and don't get the opportunity to gather for nightly meals except for holiday dinners. However, there are times in one's life in which the proper display of table manners is a must. The job interview meal is one of those times.

Many second and third interviews are arranged during lunch or dinner at a restaurant. This may not only be a convenience for the interviewer, but a chance for them to see you in a different setting. A lot can be said by the way you conduct yourself at a meal. Many jobs have been lost due to poor table manners.



Some important details to remember:

- Arrive on time and wait for your host in the restaurant lobby.
- When introduced to someone, always stand during greetings and introductions. Say your name and extend your hand at a slight angle with your thumb up. Give a firm handshake, but not a bone-crushing one.
- Once everyone is seated at the table, place your dinner napkin in your lap.
- Keep personal items such as keys, cellular phones, and beepers off of the table. Brief cases or purses may be kept on the floor. Remember to turn off electronic devices like cellular phones and pagers that may distract you or others during the interview or meal.
- Proper posture at the table is important. Sit up straight with your arms held near your body. Keep your elbows off the table. One hand should be in your lap and the other may be slightly touching or resting on the table.
- Use the restroom before or after the meal. You should never leave the table after the meal has begun. If you must leave the table, excuse yourself, fold your napkin and leave it in your chair. Push the chair back to the table before you leave.
- If a woman excuses herself, a man stands when she returns to the table unless it is inconvenient. In this case, the man should partially rise in his chair to acknowledge the courtesy. If a group is large, only the men sitting on either side of the woman partially rise when she returns to the table. If a woman says, "Please sit down," a man may be seated and there is no need for him to rise again the next time she returns to the table.
- Do not wipe off your silverware before eating. If it is necessary, ask the server to replace it.
- Do not reach in front of someone to get something from the table. Ask to have it passed. Salt and pepper should be passed as a pair.
- Wait until all are served and the host has initiated the meal before beginning to eat. If your host insists that you begin eating before the food gets cold, do so.
- Once you pick up a utensil it should never be placed back on the table. Place it in the "rest" or "finished" position on your plate.
- Do not hold food that is ready to be eaten on your fork or spoon. Once you pick something up, eat it promptly and completely.
- Never chew with your mouth open or speak with food in your mouth. It is also improper to put liquid in your mouth with food. The only exception to this would be when testing hot liquids. If you taste a hot soup or beverage and it



*The rest position*



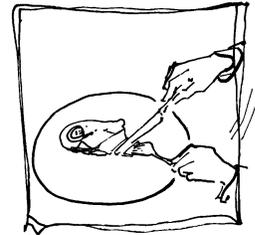
- is too hot, quickly take a sip of water. Never blow on food to cool it. Allow it to cool naturally before continuing to eat or drink.
- Do not bow down over your plate. Sit straight as the food is brought to your mouth.
  - Cut only one or two pieces of meat at a time. To do otherwise makes you look greedy or childish.
  - Use a pusher to capture contrary foods such as peas. In Europe, the knife is used for this purpose, but in America, a small piece of bread is more often used.
  - Taste foods before seasoning them with salt and pepper. To do otherwise will make you look hasty or impulsive. The interviewer could get the impression that you would make business decisions the same way.
  - Take a small piece of butter from the butter dish and put it on your bread and butter plate. Use that supply to butter your bread. Break and butter one small portion of bread at a time. After you eat that piece, you may break and butter another.
  - If olive oil is used in lieu of butter, break off a small portion of bread and dip it into the olive oil. Remember not to "double dip" a piece of bread that has touched your mouth in the oil.
  - Individual side dishes may accompany your meal. You may eat from these directly or remove the contents to the dinner plate and have the waitperson remove the empty dishes.
  - In general, the rule for removing food from your mouth is that it should go out the way it went in. The exception to this rule is fish bones. These may be removed with the fingers. If what you have to remove is particularly ugly, carefully spit it into your napkin so that you can keep it out of sight.
  - Slow down if you are a noisy eater, or are way out ahead in speed of finishing your meal. The eat-on-the-run routine has no place in mannerly dining.
  - Always be polite to service people. The interviewer will get an indication of how you may treat co-workers.



## How to Use a Fork, Knife, and Spoon

### Holding the Utensils

The rules for handling eating utensils have developed over the past centuries. They are intended to prevent the utensils from appearing hostile or threatening. Therefore, flatware is held very delicately and guided with the fingertips. The fork and spoon should be held by balancing them horizontally between the first knuckle of the middle finger and the tip of the index finger. The thumb would steady the handle. The knife is held gently with the tip of the forefinger out over the top of the blade.



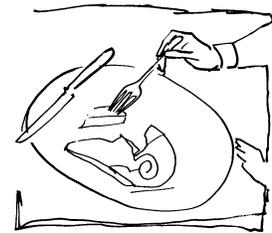
### American vs. European Style

In America, the fork is held in the left hand with the tines facing downward while the knife is used with the right hand. After cutting a bite of food, the knife would then be put down on the plate and the fork transferred to the right hand. The fork is then used to carry the food from the plate to the mouth. This is commonly known as the “zig-zag” method.

In Europe, the fork is held in the left hand for cutting and eating. The tines of the fork are held downward, as the food is cut and when the bite is brought to the mouth.

### Rest and Finished Positions

Remember that flatware, once used, should never be allowed to touch the table again. Even allowing the clean handle to rest on the table while the dirty end is on a plate is improper. When pausing between bites, flatware should always be placed on the plate. If the pause is very brief, then there is no certain rule. However, if the pause is longer, the utensils should be placed so that they cross over the center of the plate. The fork would be on the left and the knife on the right. This is called the “rest” position. After finishing a course, the fork and knife should be placed horizontally across the center of the plate with the handles facing right and the knife blade facing the diner. The tines of the fork should face down.



*American style with  
knife resting*

### Using the Napkin

Spread your napkin in your lap when everyone has been seated. If the napkin is very large, it should be left-hand folded on the lap. If it is small, it may be opened up to full size.



At a formal affair, the napkin is only meant to be dabbed at the lips and should not be dirtied. If one is practicing good table manners, this should not be a problem.

At the end of a meal, but not until you are ready to leave, place your napkin loosely on the left side of your plate. It should never be folded or twisted. It should also not be left on the chair. This could make you appear to be hiding an inappropriately dirty napkin.

### Ordering From the Menu

One of the more distressing decisions when being asked out to a lunch, dinner or a special occasion is “What do I order?” If you do not know your host well, the best rule of thumb is to be conservative when ordering.

When dining out, you may encounter two different types of menus.

1. “*Table d’ hote*” means the meal will usually include salad, breads, vegetables and beverages and many times dessert.
2. “*A la carte*” means that each item is usually ordered separately.
3. “*Prix fixe*” means that there is one price for the multi-course meal. Traditionally, you may choose menu items within a course, but you may not choose courses (the price includes all courses).

In some places, menus may not have the prices listed. This is very rare and most restaurants usually list the costs by the items. This will help you when ordering.

When ordering, do not linger long over your decision and avoid the habit of changing your mind after you have placed your order. When dining out, be adventurous and try some food with which you are not familiar. Be careful, however. Avoid ordering “sweetbreads” and expecting muffins or pastries.

Following, you will find general guidelines on ordering from the menu:

- Cocktails are usually ordered as guests arrive. Each guest is offered a cocktail and the non-drinker may order a soft drink or a non-alcoholic cocktail. Pre-dinner cocktails may include: Martini, Manhattan, Sours, Bourbon, Scotch, Gin and Tonic, or Vodka and Tonic.
- Many times the host may be familiar with the restaurant and may make recommendations. When ordering, if there is terminology you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask the waitperson.
- In years past, the guests usually relayed their requests to the host. The host was considered “perfect” if he could remember all the requests and place the order. The only questions asked by the waitperson would be as to the type of salad dressing or how they would prefer their entrée to be cooked. However, in this day and age, people are more vocal and it is proper for the individuals



to give their order to the waitperson when asked. In a large group, the waitperson will ask each woman for her order and then the men.

Usually, wine is ordered by the host after all the individuals have placed orders. Many times the wine is not served until the main course. However, if you are in a large party, the wine may be ordered and opened beforehand. If you do not want wine, touch the rim of the glass with your fingertips, as the waitperson is about to pour the wine into the glass. Just remember that it is not polite to order a cocktail or beer as a substitute.

### **Number of Courses**

The host may suggest that the table (or the group) order a certain number of courses. If done, this is a polite and elegant way to ensure everyone orders the same amount of courses.

Courses in a restaurant may vary. However, when part of a group has ordered a first course, you should too. A light salad or fruit can be ordered in place of heavy soups or appetizers.

It is not impolite to refrain from ordering dessert in a restaurant. However, in someone's home it is different. One should sample the item at the very least.

### **Service during the Meal**

When summoning your waitperson, call him "Waiter/tress", not "Sir/Madam". The captain should be referred to as "Captain", and maitre d' as "Monsieur", providing you do not know his name. If you do, then he becomes "Monsieur Charles" (or George or whatever his name is). Always be polite to service people, but remember that you do not have to include them in any conversation except that related to the food being served.

- If the food served is not what you ordered or is not prepared properly, it can be sent back. Simply attract the attention of the waitperson and explain the situation as unobtrusively as possible.
- If you or any member of your party drops a piece of flatware, attract the waitperson's attention and request a replacement.
- If members of the party wish to share their food, they may do so, but never with a used fork. The food may be shared, or one person may taste another's leftovers.



### **Etiquette for Challenging Foods**

While you may not dine on frog legs or rock Cornish game hens regularly, the following list of challenging foods encourages you to use common-sense when experiencing a difficult situation. Remember, if in doubt simply watch your host as to their style and follow accordingly.

#### ***Asparagus***

If it is full of sauce, asparagus is easier to eat cut into manageable portions with a fork. Sans sauce, asparagus stalks may also be eaten one by one with the fingers. Hold the stalks in your right hand, dip it in the sauce and eat it up to the tough part. Then lay the latter part down neatly on your plate. While this is acceptable, please be judicious in your use of such a casual dining method.



#### ***Bacon***

Very crisp bacon may be eaten with the fingers if breaking it with a fork would cause it to crumble. Bacon should be eaten with a knife and fork when possible.

#### ***Frog Legs and Small Birds***

Frog legs and small birds, such as quail and squab may be picked up and eaten with the fingers. However, if possible, you should attempt to use your knife and fork to maintain a modicum of decorum. If you encounter small bones, simply remove them from your mouth with your fork (or fingers if necessary) and place them on your plate.

#### ***Cake***

Cake is eaten with a fork or with a fork and spoon. If you are offered to cut your own piece of cake, you may use your fingers to steady the piece when transferring it to your plate.

#### ***Caviar***

Caviar is usually served in a small crystal bowl over ice, with a spoon tucked in among the salty sturgeon roe. A plate of small round or square pieces of crustless toast accompanies it. If someone passes you a platter of caviar, take some in addition to one or two pieces of toast. Remember to never take more than a teaspoonful or everyone will be glaring at you. Caviar is usually served with several garnishes such as crumbled hard boiled egg yolk, chopped onions, or a piece of lemon.

#### ***Celery, Radishes and Olives***

Celery, radishes, and olives are often already on the table as you sit down to dinner or a waitperson may pass them. These are usually an hors d'oeuvre and should be placed on the butter plate. These items may be eaten with your fingers unless they are on a salad.



### ***Chicken***

Fried chicken should only be eaten with the fingers on such occasions as a picnic, barbecue and other informal outdoor gatherings. Chicken, however it is cooked, should be cut with a fork and knife. Cut a piece of chicken off the bone and place it in the mouth. Never cut several pieces or the whole chicken and then begin to eat. Never gnaw at the bones. Whatever meat cannot be removed with the fork and knife should be left on the bones and discarded.

### ***Chops***

Pork, veal and lamb chops should always be eaten with a fork and knife. If frill paper has been used it is simply for decoration. You may hold on to the frill paper firmly to help with cutting the chop as long as it remains on the plate at all times.

### ***Corn on the Cob***

Corn on the cob should only be served during informal gatherings, as it is very messy and difficult to eat. If for any reason the corn needs to be cut off the cob, the host should send it to the kitchen, as this is a slippery maneuver to handle at the table.

### ***Crepes***

Dessert crepes should be eaten with a fork and/or spoon. There are other types of crepes, however, which may be eaten with the fingers. When in doubt follow the lead of the host.

### ***Soft Boiled Eggs***

You may be presented with a soft-boiled egg, small end up, in an eggcup on a service plate. The proper way to eat an egg like this is to crack the shell with the blade of the knife in a sharp horizontal stroke. You behead the egg, so to speak, and then you may season it in the shell and spoon out the contents.

### ***Fish***

Fish may be served with the head and tail attached. The head may be removed and a cut from head to tail done to remove the bone. The entire backbone can be removed and placed on the edge of the plate. If any tiny bones make it to your mouth, you may remove them with your thumb and index finger and place them on the side of your plate.

### ***Garnishes***

Most garnishes may be cut and eaten. Citrus slices or wedges may be squeezed over the food they accompany. To keep from squirting the people around you, first poke the juice cells with the tines of your fork, and then gently squeeze the fruit over the food, shielding your neighbors with your other hand behind the fruit.

### ***Meat***

Meat should always be cut with a fork and knife.



### ***Pizza***

Pizza is very informal food and may be eaten with the fingers. In a more formal setting a knife and fork may be used.

### ***Potatoes***

French fries may be eaten with the fingers or utensils. As for the baked potato, you should cut a cross on the top of the potato, in order to place butter and sour cream inside the potato. Using your fork and knife cut pieces as you go. You may eat the jacket if you desire. Potato chips and sticks may be eaten with the fingers.

### ***Rock Cornish Hen, Duck and Pheasant***

All birds are eaten with a fork and knife. If the birds are extremely small the legs may be eaten with the fingers.

### ***Salad***

Salad, which is not cut into bite size pieces prior to service, may be cut on your plate using a fork and/or knife. It is also correct to use a bit of bread as a pusher in eating salad.

### ***Salt and Pepper***

Salt and pepper shakers should always be passed as a set, unless a large pepper mill is present. The pepper mill should be passed around the table from guest to guest.

### ***Sandwiches***

Small tea or finger sandwiches are to be eaten with the fingers. Double or triple-decker sandwiches should be cut into quarters before they are eaten with the fingers. If a large sandwich is too messy, it may be eaten with a fork and knife.

### ***Snails or Escargot***

Snails are usually served on a hot metal plate. A special hinged holder allows you to grip the shell while removing the body with an oyster fork. If the holder is not present, you may grip the shell with one hand and remove the body with the oyster fork. Snails should be eaten whole. It is acceptable to tilt the shells into the mouth to consume the juices.

### ***Spaghetti***

Spaghetti is twirled on the fork with the help of a spoon to steady it and keep the spaghetti on the fork. A knife is not used and pasta is generally not cut, unless it is large such as manicotti. It is perfectly acceptable to use a bit of bread and go after the last remnants of the sauce on the plate.



### ***Toast and Bread***

You may butter your whole piece of toast and then cut it in half before eating it. Rolls, English muffins, brioches, scones, and muffins may be cut in half or slit with a knife, before buttering. Bread may be eaten whole and either buttered or dipped into the pat of butter on the bread and butter plate. Remember always take a small portion of butter from the butter bowl and place it on your own plate. Never spread butter directly onto your bread from the butter bowl.

If flavored oil is used in lieu of bread, you should break off a small piece of the bread and dip it directly into the oil. Never dip the entire piece of bread in the oil.

### ***Tortillas***

These are laid flat either in the hand or on the plate, filled, rolled, and eaten as a sandwich, with the fingers.

### **Fruit**

#### ***Apples and Pears***

Whole pears should be peeled, cored and cut at a formal dinner party before eating. Use your fork and knife and cut wedges.

#### ***Avocados***

Avocado halves are eaten right in their shells with a spoon. If they are sliced, they may be eaten with a fork.

#### ***Bananas***

Informally, bananas may be peeled and eaten without utensils. In a more formal setting, bananas should be peeled, cut with a dessert knife and eaten with a dessert fork.

#### ***Berries***

Berries are always eaten with a spoon with the exception of large strawberries. Large strawberries may be eaten whole with their stems on, in one or two bites, and held by the stem.

#### ***Grapefruit***

A grapefruit half is best eaten with a pointed fruit spoon. The grapefruit sections should first be loosened with a fruit knife. Care should be taken when squeezing the juice out of the grapefruit. Squirting the juice into someone's eye accidentally could be very painful.

#### ***Grapes***

Grapes should be taken by the bunch. A small bunch can be cut or pulled from a larger bunch. To remove seeds from grapes, simply remove them with either a spoon or your fingers and place them on your plate.



### ***Mangoes***

Mangoes are very messy and should only be served if they are already peeled and quartered. If you must clean your own be extremely careful as the juice stains badly. Mangoes should be eaten with a dessert fork and knife.

### ***Melons***

Melons are often served halved or in quarters with the seeds removed. A fork or spoon is required to cut or scrape the fruit out. Melon balls in syrup should be eaten with a spoon.

### ***Oranges***

Oranges need to be peeled, preferably with a sharp knife in a spiral. Each section is then pulled apart and eaten, either with the fingers or a fork and knife. Oranges should be offered already peeled and sectioned.

### ***Papaya***

Papaya is one fruit that is occasionally served with its black seeds. Don't eat the seeds. It is halved, chilled and eaten with a spoon like melon.

### ***Peaches***

A peach should be halved then quartered with a fruit knife. Lift the skin of each quarter at an edge and pull it off. Cut each section in to small pieces and eat with a fork and fruit knife. Peach juice stains table linens, so care should be taken in eating them.

### ***Whole Pears or Peaches in Wine Syrup***

Whole pears or peaches in wine syrup should be eaten with a fork and dessert spoon. Hold the dessert in place with the fork and scoop at the flesh with the spoon. The syrup may be spooned and eaten from the dish.

### ***Persimmons***

Grasp the persimmon with the left thumb and index finger, scoop out and eat a spoonful at a time while keeping the shell intact. Avoid the skin. The large pits are cleaned in the mouth, dropped into the spoon and then deposited on the side of the plate.

### ***Fresh Pineapple***

Fresh pineapple is served peeled and cut into thin strips. One should use a fruit knife and fork to cut and eat it.

### ***Pomegranates***

Pomegranates should be served halved. Hold the half with your index finger and thumb. Extract the seeds carefully with a spoon and eat one or two of the seeds as you go along.



### *Watermelon*

Large pieces of watermelon are served on a plate and eaten with a fork and knife. To remove seeds from watermelon, simply remove them with either a spoon or your fingers and place them on your plate.



### **Restaurant Etiquette**

Dining out should be an adventure, but remember that your behavior in restaurants during a social gathering or a business meeting or interview is equally important. Dining out is a bit different than dining in someone's home, but etiquette must still be observed:

- Everyone should dress appropriately in the restaurant. The dress code is the restaurant owner's decision, not the guest's. If shirt, jacket and tie are required, wear them.
- When inviting out a group or party, the host should have the seating already planned so as not to block aisles or hold up traffic.
- It is the host responsibility to control the noise level. If there is no host, an individual should take charge of bringing the noise level down and controlling it.
- **Hors d'oeuvres** - Some may require the use of a knife. If none is provided, use your dinner knife, then leave it on the hors d'oeuvre plate. Ask for a fresh one when your entrée arrives.



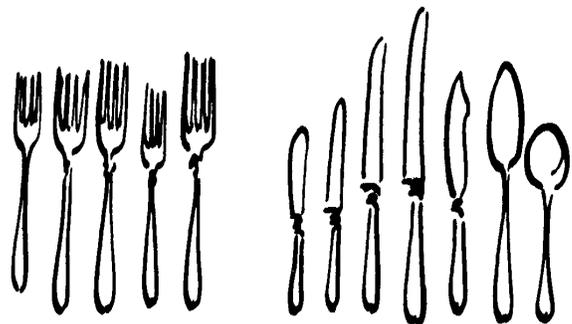
- **Cocktail Additives** - Olives, cherries, or onions served in cocktails may be eaten. If they are served on a toothpick or a cocktail pick, simply remove them from the drink and enjoy them. If fruit or vegetables (celery, carrots, oranges, etc.) are present in your cocktail glass, remove them before taking a sip from your glass and either eat them or put them on your bread and butter plate.
- **Table-hopping** - Table-hopping is not considered appropriate in restaurants. Upon arriving, if you see friends at another table you may acknowledge them with a smile, but do not block traffic. It is very aggravating for both customers and service personnel. If when leaving there is enough room in the aisle, you may stop and say “hello” and a brief introduction may be made.
- **Sharing or tasting someone else’s food** - This should be done only with a close friend or relative. A clean utensil should be used and a piece of food may be put directly on the utensil and passed back or the plate may be passed and food placed directly on the individual’s plate.
- When dining in a group, it is permissible for two or three people to order one dessert and divide it among themselves.
- **Individual side dishes** - Vegetables and potatoes are placed by the waitperson around the dinner plate. You may eat directly from these or remove the contents to your dinner plate and ask the waitperson to remove the empty dishes.
- **Paper containers** - Accompaniments are served in paper wrappers or plastic containers in all types of restaurants. In utilizing these items, the tops should always be put back on the containers and placed on an empty plate or in the ashtray if it is not being used. If this is not possible, they should be placed under the rim of one’s plate.
- **Bread** - When a loaf of bread is placed on the table, you should cut or break off a piece for yourself and ask the person next to you if they would pass like some as well. Remember to take a small portion of butter from the butter bowl and place it on your bread and butter plate to use. Never spread butter directly onto your bread from the butter bowl. If flavored oil is used in lieu of butter, you should break off a small piece of the bread and dip it directly into the oil. Never dip the entire piece of bread in the oil.
- **Iced Tea and Iced Tea Spoons** - Iced tea is usually served in a glass with a saucer and an iced tea spoon. One question usually asked is “Where do I place the spoon after it has been used?” If no saucer is available, the spoon



- should be placed on top of a paper napkin or with the bowl upside down on the edge of your bread and butter plate or dinner plate if necessary. A used piece of silverware should never be placed on the table or tablecloth.
- **Smoking** - Most restaurants now have smoking and non-smoking sections. Some states have mandated non-smoking restaurants. If no one else is smoking, you should ask your host if you may smoke a cigarette. Also, watch where your smoke goes. If someone is sitting down wind from your smoke, this creates little enjoyment for him or her. If smoking is allowed, make sure your ashes hit the ashtray, not the table. Ask the waitperson to remove a dirty ashtray prior to dining.
  - When the host is making arrangements, consideration may be made for both smokers and non-smokers. However, these people should take each other into consideration. An event spent in a smoke filled environment can be as discomforting as a smoker spending an evening without a cigarette can.

### Table Settings

Flatware (a.k.a. silverware or utensils) is lined up in the order in which the food is eaten, with the utensils for the first course located the furthest away from the main plate. Although the prongs (tines) of the forks are usually placed in an upward position on the table, they may be seen in a downward position in some luxury restaurants. The blade of the knife faces toward the main plate. In more formal settings, teaspoons are omitted from the setting and are placed on the saucer of the coffee cup.



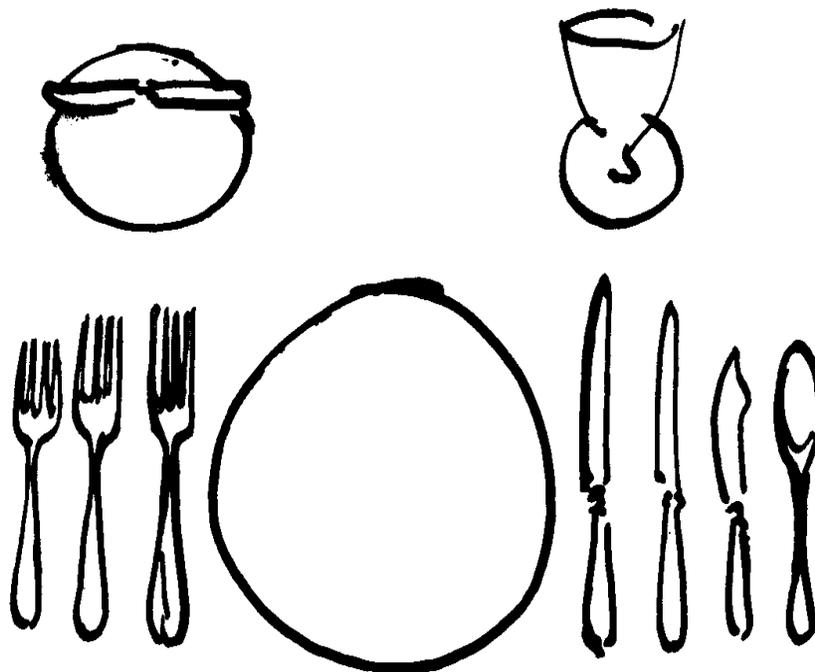
Many people are confused about what to do with the flatware, which sometimes appears above the main plate. It is important to remember that the dessert fork and spoon may occupy this position, with the fork placed below the spoon, prongs pointing to the right. The bowl of the spoon (located just above the dessert fork), points to the left.

The napkin may be placed in the center of the main plate or, as often seen, to the left of the flatware. The folded edge should rest next to the flatware, with the open ends located at the bottom left of the napkin.



The salad plate is positioned to the left of the main plate, just above (and a bit to the left) of the napkin. The bread and butter plate is also placed on the left of the main plate, above the forks. The blade of the butter knife points down, toward the main plate.

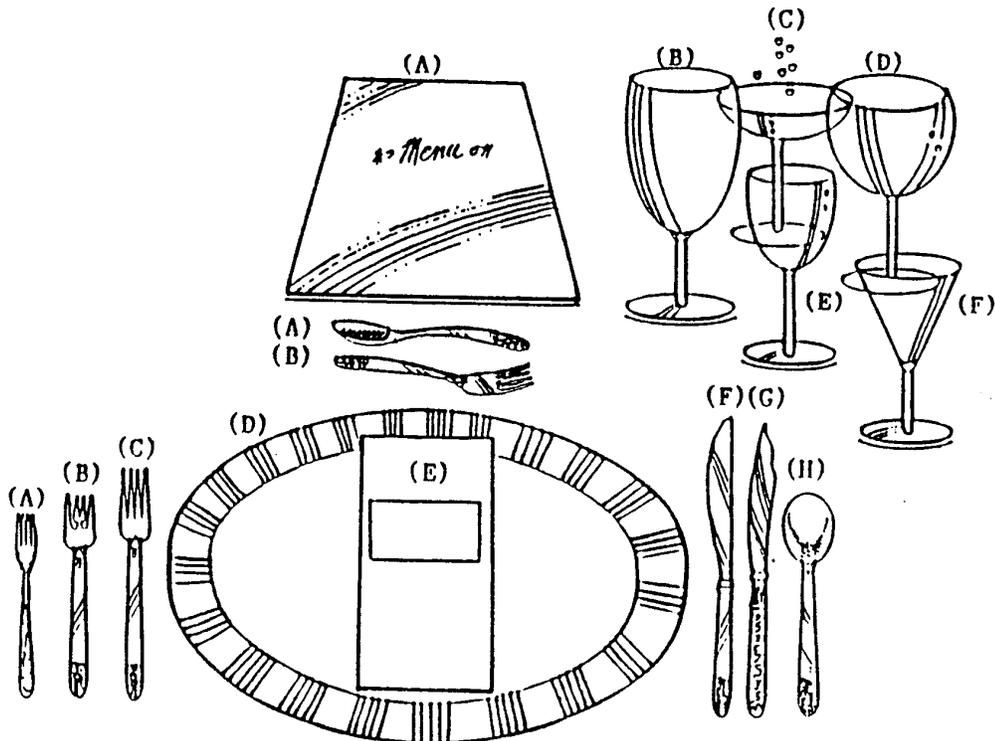
All beverages (including the range of water to champagne) are placed to the right of the main plate, just above the flatware.



*Basic Table Setting for a mid-price-to-expensive restaurant*

**NOTE:** In many fine restaurants today the waitstaff will bring the flatware to the table for each course. Watch for this type of service while waiting to be seated, so that you won't need to ask the staff for utensils if you know that they will be provided to you.

## FORMAL PLACE SETTING



TOP LEFT TO RIGHT:

- A. Menu
- B. Water Goblet
- C. Champagne
- D. White Wine
- E. Red Wine
- F. Sherry

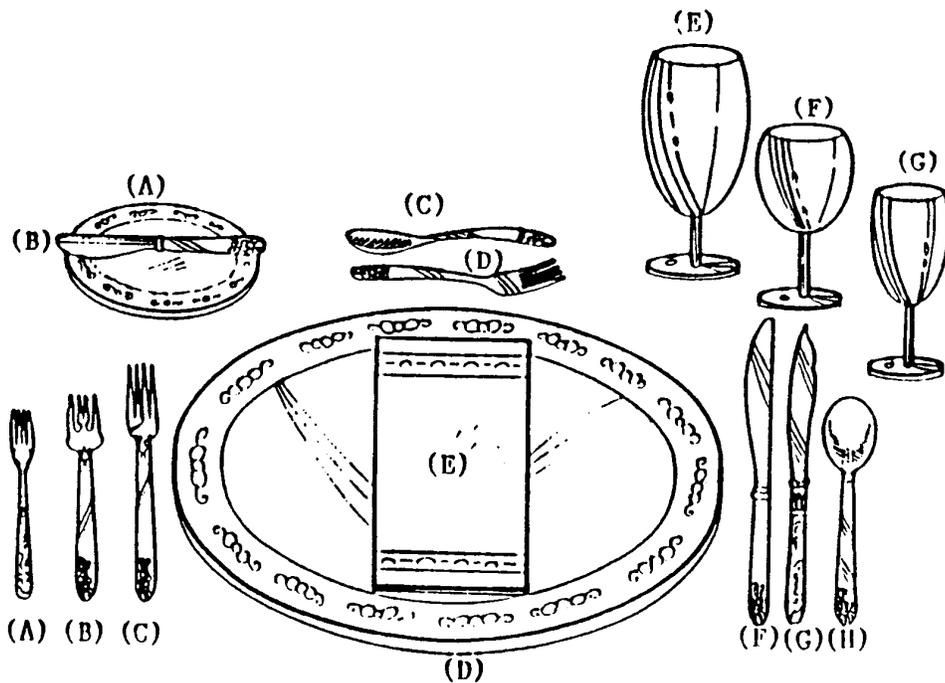
MIDDLE: TOP TO BOTTOM

- A. Dessert Spoon
- B. Dessert Fork

BOTTOM: LEFT TO RIGHT

- A. Cocktail Fork
- B. Salad Fork
- C. Dinner Fork
- D. Dinner Plate
- E. Dinner Napkin
- F. Dinner Knife
- G. Fish Knife
- H. Soup Spoon

## INFORMAL PLACE SETTING



### Top Left to Right:

- A. Bread And Butter Plate
- B. Butter Knife
- C. Dessert Spoon
- D. Dessert Fork
- E. Water Goblet
- F. Red Wine
- G. White Wine

### Bottom Left to Right:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Cocktail Fork</li> <li>B. Salad Fork</li> <li>C. Dinner Fork</li> <li>D. Dinner Plate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. Dinner Napkin</li> <li>F. Dinner Knife</li> <li>G. Fish Knife</li> <li>H. Soup Spoon</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



### Additional Points to Remember:

- Avoid asking for ketchup for a quality entrée. The chef will consider it an insult to the cuisine.
- If you must leave the table, excuse yourself, fold your napkin and leave it in your chair. Push your chair back to the table before you leave.
- A woman should never leave her handbag on the table. It is unsanitary and looks bad.
- A briefcase and files are not to be left on the table.
- If the host invites a group of ten or more, it is very nice if he/she chooses the menu beforehand. Since many people do not eat meat, he/she may ask this when everyone has been seated and substitute a vegetarian dish for those who are vegetarian.

### Who Pays

The host should make it clear beforehand that s/he will be paying the bill. On the guests' part, if s/he has clearly been invited, s/he should not argue over the bill but may always reciprocate at another time.

### Tipping

Tipping is based on the level of service received. For some, tipping can become a trial. Concerning a modest restaurant with appropriate service, consider the following:

- Tip the waitperson 15% of the total bill.
- Tip the coatroom \$.50 to \$.75 per coat.
- Tip the garage attendant \$1.00 - \$2.00.

Concerning the expensive restaurant with appropriate service.

- Tip 20% of the total bill - 75% to the waitperson and 25% for the captain.
- Tip the wine steward \$3 to \$5 per bottle, or in a very expensive restaurant, 15% of the wine bill.
- Tip the bathroom attendant \$1.00 per guest using the facilities.
- Tip the coatroom attendant \$1.00 per coat.
- Tip the doorman \$2.00 for summoning the taxi. Garage attendant \$1.00 to \$2.00 for bringing your car to the front.

### Calculating the Tip

Remember these simple rules when calculating a tip:

- For 10% tips, simply move the decimal point one place to the left, *i.e.*, a \$25.00 bill becomes a \$2.50 tip



- For 15% tips, calculate 10%, divide in half, and add the two together, *i.e.*, a \$25.00 bill becomes a \$3.75 tip ( $\$2.50 + \$2.50/2$  or  $\$1.25$ ).
- For 20% tips, simply double the 10% tip, *i.e.*, a \$25.00 bill becomes a \$5.00 tip.

Some Dining Etiquette Do's and Don'ts	
Etiquette Do's	Etiquette Don'ts
When finished, do place your fork upside down on your plate along with your dinner knife at 4:00.	When finished don't push your plate away.
Cut your entrée one bite at a time.	Cut your entrée all at once.
Break your bread into bite size pieces and butter it, as you are ready to eat it.	Butter your bread all at once and eat it before the first course is served.
Take one bite or beverage at a time.	Put liquid in your mouth when it's already filled with food.
Moderate your drinking, especially in a business setting. If at lunch, do not order a cocktail.	Order more than one cocktail before dinner.
If your silverware is soiled or spotted, call it to the attention of your host or waitperson.	Wipe off soiled silverware.
Wait until everyone is served before serving yourself. However, remember to give guests cues.	If you're hosting dinner, don't serve yourself first.
Place the condiment on the edge of your plate and dip your food into it.	Smear your food with condiments.
Sit straight, but not too stiff. Lean slightly against the back of the chair when not eating. Your hands may be in your lap.	Slouch, put your elbows on the table or tip your chair.

## The Business Meal



Many a job or contract has been lost because of inappropriate table manners. Here are nine dining blunders which may hurt your career.

1. Holding up the order because you can't decide. Decide quickly or least by the time everyone else is ready. Don't ask the waitperson to explain everything on the menu. You'll come across as indecisive and annoying.
2. Ordering messy meals. Don't even think about that big, juicy hamburger. There isn't a person alive who can look professional when wrestling with one. Stick to manageable meals you can eat with your fork. Some pasta dishes, such as linguine or angel hair are also bad choices. They have a "splash" potential. And, if you don't know how to eat something, don't order it.
3. Taking someone else's bread or drinking out of another person's glass. In most place settings, your bread plate is on the left and your water glass is on the right. Remember the rule this way: food has four letters and so does the word left. Drink has five letters and so does the word right.
4. Putting your napkin inside your shirt or belt. Remember you're not at a family picnic! Your napkin goes on your lap when everyone has been seated. Etiquette dictates that you wait for your host to do so first. When leaving the table temporarily put it on your seat. When you're finished eating, place the napkin to the left of your plate.
5. Holding your fork as if it were a pitchfork. You'll look like you just came out of a cave. Also, when you're speaking, keep your utensils down. Don't wave your fork or knife or spoon in the air.
6. Licking your utensils or fingers. Never use your hand to clear crumbs off the table, either.
7. Drinking too much alcohol. It's always safer to abstain. If you do choose to drink alcohol, limit yourself to one glass.
8. Fighting over the check. The host is the person who did the inviting, and that person pays the bill - regardless of gender. Be gracious. Do not fight about the bill or offer to pay the tip.
9. Not sending a written thank you note to your host within two days of the meal.



## When You Are the Host

The Nine Key Rules for Business Dining: It May Look Like Lunch, but it's Still Business:

1. When inviting a client to lunch, remember that the restaurant you select is subconsciously perceived as an extension of your office.
2. Familiarity breeds success. By frequenting the same restaurant, you can expect to be recognized and called by name. Request an area of the restaurant that is conducive to doing business.
3. When escorted to a table by a maitre'd, allow your guest(s) to walk behind the person. When finding a table on your own, take the lead.
4. Be sure to extend the "power" seat to your client. Seat yourself in the seat with your back facing the door/main body of the room.
5. Once everyone is seated, place your napkin on your lap. The gesture serves as a cue that the meal is about to begin.
6. When making a food recommendation, recognize that most guests also take your suggestion as the price range to stay within.
7. When the server asks for your meal order before your guests, it's the perfect time to say, "I'd like my guest(s) to order first." Besides being appropriate, it's a cue to let the server know that the check should be left with you at the end of the meal.
8. When reaching for the breadbasket, salad dressing, etc., offer them to your guest(s) before using them yourself.
9. Finally, tip adequately. Treat the server as one of your employees. It's a small price to pay for good service, personal attention and hopefully, the goals you set for yourself at the luncheon.

## 10 Points of Etiquette for Dinner Interviews

1. Place your napkin in your lap when you are first seated.
2. Do not order an alcoholic beverage unless the host does so first; even then consider carefully before you do.
3. If ordering a drink, follow the suit of your host. If the host orders Chablis, order wine or beer, not scotch on the rocks.
4. Order neat, easy food to eat; avoid spaghetti and salad bar (you're going to be talking).
5. Avoid ordering the most or least expensive items on the menu.
6. Follow your host's lead when deciding which or how many courses to order.
7. Never season food without tasting it, this shows a closed mind.
8. If you tend to talk with your hands, be careful not wave silverware around.
9. Keep unused elbows and wrists off the table to avoid appearing slovenly.
10. Conversation Tips:



## Expectations Participant Study Guide

- Let your host lead the conversation and never bring up subjects that might ruin someone's appetite (i.e., food poisoning, the way chickens and veal are farmed).
- Never use political, ethnic, or off color humor.



## ALCOHOL AND DINING ETIQUETTE

### INTRODUCTION

Dining and the consumption of alcohol are often perceived as mutually inclusive. Many people cannot imagine sitting down to a fine meal (or any meal, for that matter) and not enjoying a glass of wine or beer. In many European countries, wine and beer are served more casually than water.

### KEY LEARNING GOALS

In this chapter, you will:

1. Understand the role alcohol has in the professional dining experience.
2. Learn what kinds of alcohol are appropriate to consume during a dining interview.
3. Learn the nuances about wine and its service.

### ALCOHOL AND DINING ETIQUETTE

While alcohol certainly does enhance one's meal, it must be used judiciously in professional situations. Remember, in these situations, it is better to indulge politely or not at all. There is nothing wrong with a glass of wine, a mixed drink, or a beer. However, it is never appropriate to drink excessively no matter how well you believe your body processes alcohol. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine what is excessive, and caution must be applied whenever alcohol is consumed.

As a general rule, if your host orders an alcoholic drink, you should feel comfortable to do so, if you are inclined to drink alcohol. If you are asked to order first, it is perfectly appropriate to order a non-alcoholic drink. If your host asks if you're sure, feel comfortable in your choice. Likewise, if your host's invitation to join her in a drink is pleasing to you, you should feel comfortable in changing your order. Please be sure to thank her for her suggestion.

Now the difficult decision of what type of beverage to order. A safe decision is to order what your host orders. However, you should feel free to order according to your personal tastes within reason. Be conservative. Here are some general considerations to mind:

- Do not order exotic mixed drinks (i.e. "sex on the beach", lemon drop, Bahama mama, Hurricane, etc.) or common, inexpensive beers.
- Avoid canned beer. Draft or bottled beer is presented with more elegance. Be familiar with beers of greater distinction common to your area.



- Be familiar with what you order. (i.e. don't order a glass of merlot or cabernet, if you don't like red wine).
- Refrain from ordering your liquor neat (straight up or without ice). While your host may order their drink in this fashion, you should refrain from doing so because of the potential risks involved with drinking liquor undiluted.
- Consider ordering a simple glass of chardonnay. It's a safe, socially appropriate, and palatable beverage for most receptions or dining occasions.

**A note on consuming your beverage:** Remember etiquette dictates that you make your host and dining partners your focus of attention. Your drink or food should not detract from that primary purpose. Consume your beverage slowly and with grace. Avoid quick consumption of your drink in anticipation of the next one being brought by your waitperson. Likewise, do not allow your drink or food to command your attention. To do so, risks rudeness.

### Wine Service

Wine connotes mystery, elegance, and knowledge. There are certainly people who have definitive opinions about what constitutes a "good" or a "great" wine.

Rest assured, "good" or "great" wine may truly be defined by one's own palate. *Wine Spectator* magazine may rank wines on a scale of 100, but your own tastes are the only real indicator of what is a "good" or "great" wine for YOU.

If your host asks if you'd like to share a bottle of wine with your meal, you should indicate your preference. Never feel obliged to drink. Likewise, you should not discourage your host from doing so if she so chooses.



If your host asks you to select the wine, it is appropriate to graciously thank her but ask that she do the honor. If, however, you are comfortable ordering the wine, afford your host the courtesy of not choosing the most expensive wine. If you divide the wine list into thirds (most expensive, least expensive, and average expense), you should select a varietal from the middle. (As restaurant prices vary so dramatically, it is not appropriate to dictate a certain dollar value as a guide. If your host has invited you to dine in an elegant restaurant, they will expect to pay accordingly for that pleasure.)

After determining whether to choose white or red, pick a varietal (type of grape) that is familiar. For most cases, a chardonnay or sauvignon blanc are good white grapes, and



merlot and pinot noir are favorable reds. While cabernet sauvignon is a very common and delicious varietal, it is sometimes too “strong” for some palates.

When the wine arrives, the waitperson (or sommelier, if the restaurant employs a person specifically to serve the wine) should follow these steps:

1. **Present the wine bottle to you.** You should check to make sure the vineyard, varietal, and vintage you ordered is what is being presented.
2. **Open it tableside** (or it may be opened in the cellar prior to bringing it to the table). At this point an older wine may be decanted into a clear crystal decanter. The waitperson or sommelier should show you the amount of wine and sediment remaining in the bottle.
3. **Present the cork to you.** You should examine the cork for moisture (dry, crumbling corks may indicate poor storage and handling) and for any visible signs of mold. Some advocate a subtle sniff of the cork to determine if the wine has turned, however many feel this is superfluous as you will quickly determine a wine’s character in the next step.
4. **Pour a taste of your selection.** You should take a deep waft of the wine’s aroma and taste your selection boldly.
5. **Pour for the others at the table** with you being the last one to be served.

In some restaurants, the sommelier will taste the wine for you. This tradition dates back to European cultures in which the King’s food was tested for poisoning.

If you find the wine unacceptable (in taste), you should request a new bottle. Be cautious, however, to ensure that any odd taste is not a remnant of aging and once the wine breathes (exposed to oxygen) the oddity may disappear.

Pairing wine with food is probably the most overstated part of the dining experience. The general rule, “red meats go with red wines, and white wines go with everything else”, is certainly appropriate and a good guide. When in doubt, you should follow it. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with drinking red wine with fish or chicken. Nor is there any issue matching white wine with beef. You are the best wine expert for yourself. You should feel comfortable and assured that your tastes are appropriate.

## SUMMARY

In summary, use alcohol in professional situations with care. If you choose to indulge, do so moderately and with confidence.



## APPENDIX 1: DRESS AND APPEARANCE

### INTRODUCTION

Success for either a male or female does not necessarily depend on how we dress, however, being overdressed or underdressed may play an integral big part in a successful interview with a prospective employer.

### KEY LEARNING GOALS

In this chapter, you will:

1. Learn how your appearance affects your confidence and comfort with others in social and business situations.
2. Understand acceptable forms of dress for different occasions.
3. Gain insight into what is the recommended attire for business interview dining occasions.

### DRESS AND APPEARANCE

#### Business Dress for Men

People make judgments within the first five minutes of an interview. If you appear clean, and neat and polished, you will make a good first impression.

A well-tailored solid gray or navy suit is good investment. However, if your budget doesn't allow you to buy a suit, a navy blazer and gray trousers is acceptable. In general, dress above what the job requires. Consider clothes you look good in.

A white cotton undershirt with a dress shirt (even in hot weather) enhances the brightness of any white shirt. A crisp, freshly laundered and pressed shirt is recommended when in professional situations. Taking your shirts to a commercial laundry or dry cleaner and asking for starch is much better than trying to press a shirt at home. Check your shirt (before the interview) to see if it needs pressing and keep your shoes freshly shined.

If suspenders or braces are a part of your attire, don't wear a belt. Suspenders attach onto trousers with small clips while braces attach by way of buttons on the inside of the trouser waist. Traditionally braces are more appropriate business attire. The braces should match or complement your tie. It is easier to coordinate braces and ties if the braces are solid or striped (burgundy/navy or red/navy).

As for the tie, silk is recommended. The pattern of the tie should be conservative and understated. It should never be distracting. Avoid large, elaborate patterns or ties with too many colors. Consult the following chart for recommended combinations:



	Navy Blue Suit	Gray Suit
Shirt Color	White Light Blue Blue Striped*	White
Shirt Type	Cotton or Cotton/Polyester Blend	Cotton or Cotton/Polyester Blend
Tie Color	Red Burgundy Yellow	Red Burgundy Navy
Shoe Type	Oxfords Wingtips	Oxfords Wingtips
Shoe Color	Brown Black Cordovan	Black
Sock Color	Navy or Black with Brown Shoes Navy with Black Shoes Navy with Cordovan Shoes	Black
Belt	Match Shoe Color No belt with braces	Match Shoe Color No belt with braces

\*A striped shirt is best with a solid suit.

### Business Dress for Women

It is estimated that a woman wearing the most conservative, businesslike dress will be seen as a professional by *only 40 percent* of the businesspeople she meets for the first time. If she slips on a jacket over the dress, the number of businesspeople who will assume she has power, authority, or potential will more than double.

A classic suit in navy, gray or black (khaki in summer or warmer climates) is always appropriate. A conservative dress with a jacket is also appropriate. Although a suit or dress is preferable, a navy blue jacket and classic gray skirt (wool in winter, linen in summer) can be worn. Today, suits are also appropriate.

The skirt length of a women's suit or dress should be of an appropriate and acceptable length. In the professional arena, a skirt length meeting the top of the knee is considered acceptable. Be prudent in choice of skirt length.

Remember that one's dress and grooming send out powerful messages to a prospective employer.



- Avoid loud colors and provocative attire for an interview. Such distractions in dress will take the focus off the purpose at hand.
- Maintain your hair in a neat and well groomed fashion.
- Accessorizing and wearing of jewelry should be in moderation.
- Nail polish should be understated and well maintained. Avoid garish colors.
- Avoid the color red during the initial interview.

Always wear nylon stockings in a professional, business setting. It is inappropriate to go without in this environment. It's not a bad idea to carry a spare pair in your briefcase or handbag.

Briefcases are optional, and they are always a good choice. Avoid carrying a tote or shopping bag into the interview. If you need to wear athletic shoes en route to the interview, carry a briefcase large enough to conceal them. Change into your dress shoes from your athletic shoes **outside** the building.

	Gray Suit	Black Suit	Khaki Suit	Navy Suit
Shirt Color	White Light Blue	White	Light Blue Ivory	White Light Blue
Shirt Type	Cotton Cotton/Poly Blend Silk or Polyester That looks like Silk			
Shoe Color	Black (patent or leather) Gray	Black (patent or leather) Burgundy	Beige	Navy Blue
Shoe Type	Dress Shoes*	Dress Shoes*	Dress Shoes*	Dress Shoes*

\*Please see the note below in the Things to Remember section about dress shoes

### Things To Remember

- Sweaters are not appropriate for a business interview.
- The executive shoe for a businesswoman remains a traditional closed heel, closed toe pump in a conservative color with one-and-a-half to two-inch heels. Conservative dress shoes in navy, black, or brown are recommended. Like men, women need to make sure their shoes are clean and polished.



- The best look for interviewing is conservative.
- Business Dress is always acceptable.
- Avoid loose articles of clothing that may be distracting and bothersome to you during the interview (i.e. loose scarves).
- Wear comfortable, not constricting clothes to avoid distractions (you don't want to squirm by the end of the meal).
- Avoid wearing loose jewelry that may get the attention of the interviewer (i.e. bracelets or loose watches). The focus must be on you and not your accessories.
- Be aware of the length of your skirt. What might be fine standing up, might not be fine sitting down.
- Fine department stores can help select your wardrobe. Use their knowledge if you're unsure.

### **Dress For Luncheon or Dinner Meetings**

Most successful individuals dress in the same style as they do in the office. If you are a conservative, neat dresser, you need not change. However, most would be wise to wear a version of their everyday office wear on those days when they know they are going to be having lunch with their bosses or important clients.

First, they will remember what you wear. Second, being well dressed will get you a better table at most restaurants, while a poor outfit may get you seated by the kitchen door. You are not there to party, but to see and be seen.

### **OCCASION SUMMARY**

Dressing for the occasion need not be a daunting task. If unsure of the attire to be worn at an event a few discreet questions to the host should answer your questions. It is always advisable to overdress rather than under-dress. Keep in mind:

#### **Formal**

- Gentlemen - tuxedo, tuxedo shirt, black or white tie, braces or cummerbund, black shoes and socks.
- Ladies - long or middle length evening dresses with matching or coordinating shoes, evening bag and jewelry.

#### **Semiformal**

- Gentlemen - dark business suit, white dress shirt, dark tie, dark shoes, white dinner jackets are also acceptable.
- Ladies - knee length or middle length evening dress or gown, tea length gown or evening suit.



## Expectations Participant Study Guide

### Informal or Business Casual

- Gentleman - polo type shirts, golf shirts, patterned shirts, buttoned down oxfords, casual sports coats, dress slacks, golf slacks, dress blue jeans.
- Ladies - slacks, sports coordinates, buttoned down oxfords, sports coats, dress blue jeans.

### Casual

- Gentlemen and ladies may wear seasonal clothing such as shorts and blue jeans or other tactful, trendy clothes.

### Optional

- Gentlemen and ladies may dress according to personal preference. This is usually a combination of formal and semiformal dress.



## APPENDIX 2: FORMAL DINING & RUSSIAN SERVICE

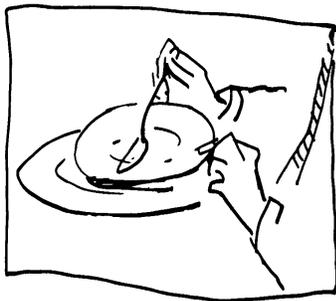
### Formal Dining: “The Five Course Meal”

If you can handle a formal five-course meal with ease, you can basically handle any type of dinner or formal occasion, which you may be required to attend. This section will describe a formal dining experience with an elegant, lesser known service style: Russian Service. Russian Service describes a meal served to you on platters by wait staff.



### First Course:

Soup or fish cocktail will be served for your first course. Depending on what is served, the soup spoon will be on the far right of your place setting. The cocktail fork will be on the far left of your place setting.



When eating soup, dip your spoon away from you. Do not blow on the soup to cool it. The soup is sipped from the side of the spoon.

Upon finishing the course, place the eating utensil in the finished position.

### Second Course:

The second course will be fish or soup depending on what was served for the first course. Do not break crackers into your soup.

If the fish is served, hold the fish fork in your left hand with the tines down while cutting. The fish knife is held differently from the dinner knife. Hold the fish knife as you would a pencil.



*Holding a fish knife*

### Third Course:

The host may choose to serve the salad before or after the entrée. Either is correct. If a salad is served before the entrée, the salad fork should be placed to the left of the dinner fork. Salad served after the entrée means you will find the salad fork positioned



to the right of the dinner fork. The “rule of thumb” is to always take utensils from outside to inside.

If a tossed salad is served prior to the entrée, try to avoid cutting the larger bits of salad with your dinner knife. If they are too large to be eaten delicately in one bite or cut with your fork, leave them on the plate. Otherwise, when the entrée is served you will not have your dinner knife. If, however, you need to use your dinner knife for your salad course, simply ask your wait staff for a replacement if one is not automatically provided.

#### Fourth Course:

If the salad is served before the entrée, a sorbet (an ice or sherbet; also called an intermezzo) is served between the two courses to cleanse the palate and to remove the vinegar taste left from the salad.



An empty entrée plate is served to each person. The entire meal is then presented to the guests. The serving platters are positioned on the table and the server presents the dish to the host. The host inspects the dish to make sure that it has been properly prepared and displayed. Then the dishes are served in order around the table, starting with the guest seated to the left of the host. After the entrée course, all platters are removed from the table.

With your entrée, use basic good table manners, cutting only one bite of your meat at a time. Fried chicken and other foods sometimes eaten with the fingers usually are not served at formal dinners, but if one appears, follow the lead of your host. It is impolite to ask for condiments not served with the entrée.

#### Fifth Course:

After all the previous courses have been served, you are now ready for dessert. The silverware used for the dessert course can be placed in two different ways. A dessert fork and spoon can be present throughout the dinner at the top of your place setting. The fork is placed below the spoon with the tines to the right.

The dessert plate, with a finger bowl, is served to each dinner guest. Lift the bowl to the upper left corner of the place setting on the table. If the host has chosen to place the dessert silverware on the plate, remove the fork and spoon to either side of the plate, placing it on the table. Dessert is passed. When eating a dessert with a spoon and a



fork, hold the fork in the left hand and use it to hold food in place and push the bite onto the spoon. The spoon is used to cut the dessert and bring each bite to your mouth.

Upon completion of the dessert course, dip your fingers lightly in the finger bowl, one hand at a time. Dry your hands lightly on your napkin.

### **Finger Bowl:**

Finger bowls are half filled with warm water and a flower petal is placed in each bowl. A little dash of perfume may be used in the water.

Black coffee is never served at the table during a formal dinner, but is brought afterwards with port (or some other after dinner drink) into the living room (this is why the teaspoon did not appear in the place setting).

Fruit, sometimes with dessert cheese, is often served after dessert or may take the place of dessert. Large fruits, such as apples, pears, etc., should be cut into pieces with the fruit knife before being eaten. Grapes, cherries, and small fruits should be placed whole in the mouth, then the pit removed.

### **Napkins:**

At formal dinners, the napkin is placed in the center of the service plate. Upon being seated, wait until the host unfolds his napkin and places it on his lap before placing your napkin on your lap. At the end of the meal, place your napkin on the left side of your place setting neatly, never refold or place it in a chair.

### **Miscellaneous Dishes:**

Sometimes dishes show up on the table at a formal dinner with which you are not familiar, such as a finger bowl, individual salt cellars, etc. Be on the alert for them, then use them as if they were on the table next to your cereal every morning. You may comment on their design, color, etc, but do not blurt out, "I've never seen one of these before." If you are totally baffled, follow the lead of the host.

### **Conversation:**

To feel comfortable at formal occasions, remember the following guidelines:

- Avoid news that involves blood, gore, or distasteful subjects.
- Avoid discussion of politics and religion.
- Do not gossip at the table.

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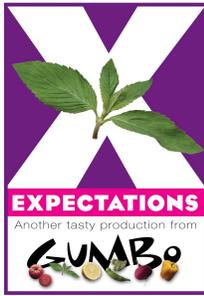
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