

ETIQUETTE FOR TODAY

Delaware Technical & Community College

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You are enjoying a dinner party when you are suddenly called away from the table. What should you do with your napkin?

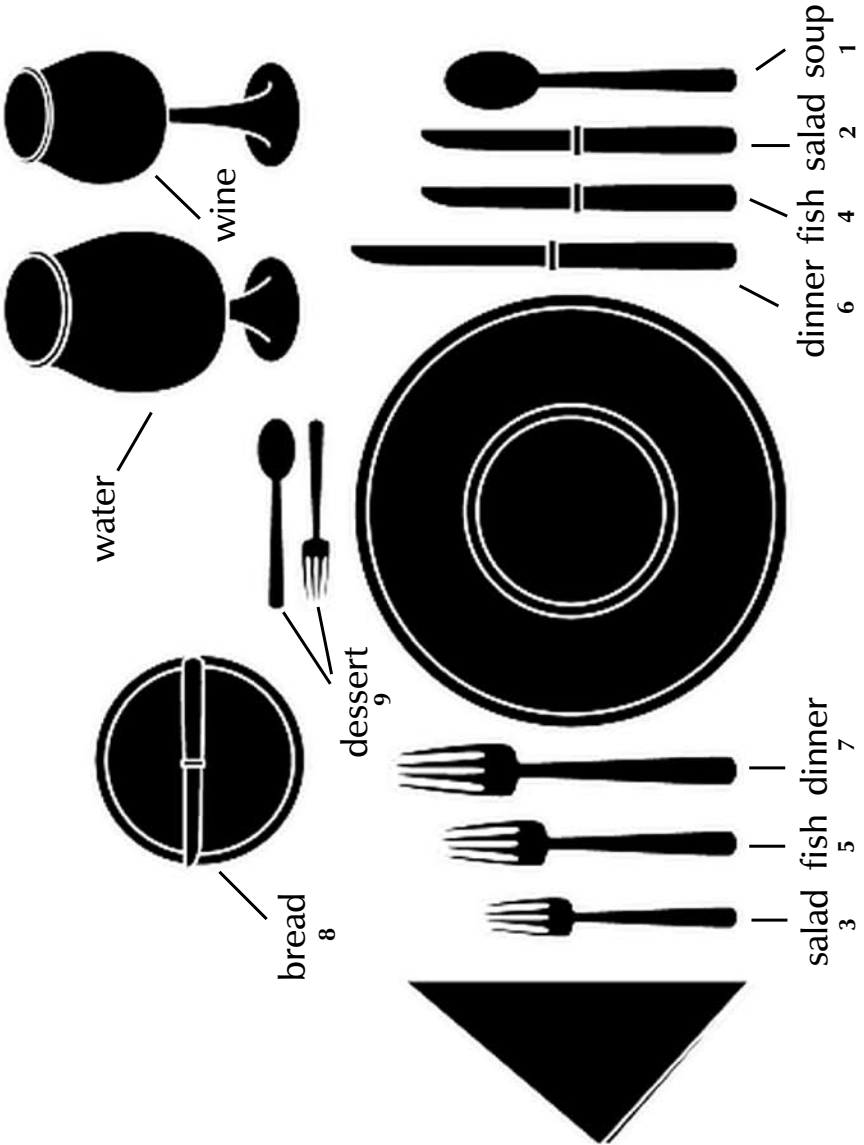
- A. Take it with you
- B. Place it on your chair
- C. Put it lightly folded to the left of your dinner plate.
- D. Ask your neighbor to hold it for you until you return.

If you know the answer sit back and relax. You are already an etiquette whiz. If you don't know the answer, by the end of the evening you will.

Relax and enjoy. We hope this experience will be entertaining, as well as informative.

The Anatomy of the Formal Dinner

The formal place setting with flatware, numbered in order of use.





The Seven Course Dinner

- First Course: *Soup*

When eating soup, tilt the spoon away from you.

Tilt the soup plate away from you to get the last bit.

If the soup is too hot, do not blow on it. Let it cool on its own.

Resume eating when the soup has reached an edible temperature.

Leave your spoon on the soup plate. If, however, the soup is served in a two - handled or bullion cup, leave the spoon on the underlying saucer.

- Second Course: *Salad*

Be sure to use the salad fork and knife for this course. Leave the knife on the table if you don't need to cut anything.

If cheese is served with the salad, place a small portion on your plate with the crackers or bread. Use the salad knife to spread the cheese.

*In America, the salad maybe served as a first course. In very formal meals, the salad may be served after the meat.

• Third Course: ***Fish***

If a fish knife and fork are available, they are held in the Continental-style with the knife (held like a pencil) being used to break the meat apart.

• Fourth Course: ***Sorbet***

This icy confection is served between the fish and meat courses; its purpose is to clear the palate.

If the sorbet is served with a garnish, you may eat the mint leaves, fresh herbs, or flower petals.

• Fifth Course: ***Meat & Fowl***

Enjoy the main course. Remember to use your knife and fork properly, Continental- or American-style.

It's okay to put a small amount of potatoes and vegetables on the fork along with the meat.

• Sixth Course: ***Dessert***

If both a fork and spoon are set for the dessert course, use the fork as a pusher and eat with the spoon.

Pie and cake require only a fork; ice cream and pudding require a spoon. Leave the unused utensil on the table.

• Seventh Course: ***Coffee***

Avoid swirling your coffee around too much, making a splash and puddle in your saucer.

Don't slurp; sip gently.

If your coffee is too hot, don't blow on it – let it cool to a comfortable temperature.

Don't leave your spoon in the cup; place it on your saucer.

American vs. Continental

Both are perfectly correct, and neither is preferable to the other. It is important, however, to be consistent.

American Style

The knife is used for cutting only. It is held in the right hand to help control the object being cut. The knife is then put down on the edge of the plate (blade facing in), and the fork is switched to the right hand to lift the cut piece to the mouth. The tines of the fork face upward when bringing food to the mouth.

Hands are in the lap when not being used.

Americans are the only people in the world who use this basically inefficient style of dining.

Continental Style

The knife remains in the right hand and the fork in the left hand. After the food is cut, the knife is used to push it onto the fork. The prongs of the fork face downward when the cut food is lifted to the mouth unless the type of food – peas or creamed food, for example – requires a different tactic. The hands remain above the table from the wrist up when they are not in use.





The Least You Need To Know

Before sitting down, at the table, remember that a lipstick trail is very discourteous. This is the time to visit the powder room to make finishing touches. Greet those at your table before sitting down. Gentlemen must rise to greet latecomers. They may also rise when ladies leave or return to the table. But, today's woman should not expect this courtesy. If a server draws the chair, please enter from your left.

Appearance is as important as performance. Sit up straight. Keep your elbows off the table. Don't wave your flatware or flap your napkin.

Don't hurry or dawdle. Keep pace with the others at the table.

Never chew with your mouth open or try to speak with food in your mouth. If you use the wrong piece of flatware, don't panic. Continue using it. Ask the server for a replacement when you need it.

After you pick up a piece of flatware, it should never touch the table again. Put it on your dish, rather than leaning the used item half on and half off the plate.

Signifying the Best and the End



The resting position is used when you want to pause during a course. In this case, the knife and fork are crossed on the plate, with the fork over the knife and the prongs pointing down. The knife should be in the 10:20 position, and fork (prongs down and over the knife) should be at the 2:40 position.



Try to finish each course at about the same time as others around you. When you are finished with a course, you should indicate that. Here's how: Visualize a clock face on your plate. Place both the knife and fork in about the 10:20 position with the points at 10 and the handles at 20. The prongs of the fork should be down and the blade of the knife should face you.



When Wine is Served

If you don't want wine, just place your fingertips lightly on the rim of the glass when the server approaches. Never turn the glass upside down. You should say something like "I'm not having any tonight." This lets others know that you do not necessarily disapprove of wine, and the others should feel free to enjoy their wine.

Wine is served throughout the dinner and will be poured from the right. Red wine and brandy glasses are held by the bowl as the warmth of your hand releases the bouquet (aroma). If you prefer, you may hold red wine glasses by the stem. White wine and champagne glasses are always held by the stem, since the heat from the hand will diminish the chill.

Bibliography

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Etiquette, Second Edition, Mary Mitchell, 314 pages, Alpha Books. \$16.95

The Saturday Evening Post, September/October 2000, Manners For Beginners.

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