

# Etiquette

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## **Etiquette is a combination of:**

1. Manners and Principles
2. Life Lessons and Rules
3. Traditions and History
4. Social Class and Money

## **How to Greet in Business Etiquette**

### **Step One**

Stand up when you are getting ready to greet someone or as someone is approaching you to greet you. If you are seated at a desk or table, move out from behind it and walk toward the person you are greeting so that you don't have to lean over anything to greet him.

### **Step Two**

Make eye contact with the person and smile. Say "hello" and introduce yourself. Always provide your full name--both first and last--when introducing yourself in a business setting.

### **Step Three**

Extend your hand with your fingers together and your thumb up and give the person a firm handshake. Make sure you touch the web of your hand to the other person's web and give it one or two pumps. The handshake should be firm but not too much of a squeeze. It should last about three seconds.

### **Step Four**

Say, "It's very nice to meet you" or something to that effect as you are shaking hands. Be sure to use your body language and facial expressions to convey enthusiasm to the person you are meeting.

## **Tips & Warnings**

Keep a tissue handy if you tend to have sweaty palms. Wipe your hand dry before shaking hands to avoid giving a sweaty handshake.

## **Dining Etiquette**

Table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to professional success. Regardless of whether we are having lunch with a prospective employer or dinner with a business associate, our manners can speak volumes about us as professionals.

## **Restaurant Reservations**

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

## **Napkin Use**

The meal begins when the host unfolds his or her napkin. This is your signal to do the same. Place your napkin on your lap, completely unfolded if it is a small luncheon napkin or in half, lengthwise, if it is a large dinner napkin. Typically, you want to put your napkin on your lap soon after sitting down at the table (but follow your host's lead). The napkin remains on your lap throughout the entire meal and should be used to gently blot your mouth when needed. If you need to leave the table during the meal, place your napkin on your chair as a signal to your server that you will be returning. The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table. Once the meal is over, you too should place your napkin neatly on the table to the right of your dinner plate. (Do not refold your napkin, but don't wad it up, either.)

## **At a Private Dinner Party:**

The meal begins when the host or hostess unfolds his or her napkin. This is your signal to do the same. Place your napkin on your lap, completely unfolded if it is a small luncheon napkin or in half, lengthwise, if it is a large dinner napkin. Do not shake it open.

The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal. Place the napkin in loose folds to the left of your plate.

The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table. Once the meal is over, you too should place your napkin neatly on the table to the left of your dinner plate. (Do not refold your napkin, but don't wad it up, either.)

## **Ordering**

If, after looking over the menu, there are items you are uncertain about, ask your server any questions you may have. Answering your questions is part of the server's job. It is better to find out before you order that a dish is prepared with something you do not like or are allergic to than to spend the entire meal picking tentatively at your food.

An employer will generally suggest that your order be taken first; his or her order will be taken last. Sometimes, however, the server will decide how the ordering will proceed. Often, women's orders are taken before men's.

As a guest, you should not order one of the most expensive items on the menu or more than two courses unless your host indicates that it is all right. If the host says, "I'm going to try this delicious sounding cheesecake; why don't you try dessert too," or "The prime rib is the specialty here; I think you'd enjoy it," then it is all right to order that item if you would like.

## **"Reading" the Table Setting**

Should you be attending a formal dinner or banquet with pre-set place settings, it is possible to gain clues about what may be served by "reading" the place setting. Start by drawing an imaginary line through the center of the serving plate (the plate will be placed in the center of your dining space). To the right of this imaginary line all of the following will be placed; glassware, cup and saucer, knives, and spoons, as well as a seafood fork if the meal includes seafood. It is important to place the glassware or cup back in the same position after its use in order to maintain the visual presence of the table. To the left of this imaginary line all of the

following will be placed; bread and butter plate (including small butter knife placed horizontally across the top of the plate), salad plate, napkin, and forks. Remembering the rule of "liquids on your right" and "solids on your left" will help in allowing you to quickly become familiar with the place setting.

### **Use of Silverware**

Choosing the correct silverware from the variety in front of you is not as difficult as it may first appear. Starting with the knife, fork, or spoon that is farthest from your plate, work your way in, using one utensil for each course. The salad fork is on your outermost left, followed by your dinner fork. Your soup spoon is on your outermost right, followed by your beverage spoon, salad knife and dinner knife. Your dessert spoon and fork are above your plate or brought out with dessert. If you remember the rule to work from the outside in, you'll be fine.

There are two ways to use a knife and fork to cut and eat your food. They are the American style and the European or Continental style. Either style is considered appropriate. In the American style, one cuts the food by holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand with the fork tines piercing the food to secure it on the plate. Cut a few bite-size pieces of food, then lay your knife across the top edge of your plate with the sharp edge of the blade facing in. Change your fork from your left to your right hand to eat, fork tines facing up. (If you are left-handed, keep your fork in your left hand, tines facing up.) The European or Continental style is the same as the American style in that you cut your meat by holding your knife in your right hand while securing your food with your fork in your left hand. The difference is your fork remains in your left hand, tines facing down, and the knife in your right hand. Simply eat the cut pieces of food by picking them up with your fork still in your left hand.

### **Use the silverware farthest from your plate first.**

Here's the rule: Eat to your left, drink to your right. Any food dish to the left is yours, and any glass to the right is yours.

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

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

**Continental/European Style:** Knife in right hand, fork in left hand. Eat food with fork still in left hand. The difference is that you don't switch hands-you eat with your fork in your left hand, with the prongs curving downward.

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

For more formal dinners, from course to course, your tableware will be taken away and replaced as needed.

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

**When to eat in a restaurant:**

Wait until all are served before beginning to eat.

**At a private dinner party:**

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

**When You Have Finished**

Do not push your plate away from you when you have finished eating. Leave your plate where it is in the place setting. The common way to show that you have finished your meal is to lay your fork and knife diagonally across your plate. Place your knife and fork side by side, with the sharp side of the knife blade facing inward and the fork, tines down, to the left of the knife. The knife and fork should be placed as if they are pointing to the numbers 10 and 4 on a clock face. Make sure they are placed in such a way that they do not slide off the plate as it is being removed. Once you have used a piece of silverware, never place it back on the table. Do not leave a used spoon in a cup, either; place it on the saucer. You can leave a soup spoon in a soup plate. Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

**General Etiquette Rules:**

- Arrive at least 10 minutes early unless otherwise specified.
- Pass food from the left to the right.
- Always say please when asking for something. Be sure to say thank you to your server and bus boy after they have removed any used items.
- If asked for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table mate asks for only one of them. This is so dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers. Set any passed item, whether it's the salt and pepper shakers, a bread basket, or a butter plate, directly on the table instead of passing hand-to-hand. Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.
- Food is served from the left. Dishes are removed from the right.
- Butter, spreads, or dips should be transferred from the serving dish to your plate before spreading or eating.
- Never turn a wine glass upside down to decline wine. It is more polite to let the wine be poured and not draw attention. Otherwise, hold your hand over the wine glass to signal that you don't want any wine.
- Always scoop food away from you.
- Taste your food before seasoning it.
- Do try a little of everything on your plate.
- Don't blow on your food to cool it off. If it is too hot to eat, take the hint and wait.
- Keep elbows off the table. Keep your left hand in your lap unless you are using it.
- Do not talk with your mouth full. Chew with your mouth closed.
- Cut only enough food for the next mouthful. Eat in small bites and slowly.

- Don't clean up spills with your own napkin and don't touch items that have dropped on the floor. You can use your napkin to protect yourself from spills. Then, simply and politely ask your server to clean up and to bring you a replacement for the soiled napkin or dirty utensil..
- Do not blow your nose at the dinner table. Excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning to the dining room. If you cough, cover your mouth with your napkin to stop the spread of germs and muffle the noise. If your cough becomes unmanageable, excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning to the dining room.
- Turn off your cell phone or switch it to silent or vibrate mode before sitting down to eat, and leave it in your pocket or purse. It is impolite to answer a phone during dinner. If you must make or take a call, excuse yourself from the table and step outside of the restaurant.
- Do not use a toothpick or apply makeup at the table.
- Whenever a woman leaves the table or returns to sit, all men seated with her should stand up.
- Do not push your dishes away from you or stack them for the waiter when you are finished. Leave plates and glasses where they are.

### **Proper Tipping Etiquette:**

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

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

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

### **Specific Food Etiquette Guide:**

**Artichokes:** It is both proper and polite to pluck the leaves with your fingers, leaving fork and knife aside for now. Pull off a leaf, holding it by the pointed end. Put the other end in your mouth and pull it between your teeth, scraping the length of the leaf (the edible portion of the leaves becomes greater as you get closer to the center of the artichoke). Just before you get to the very center, leaves will become almost white with purple tips. Be careful of these leaves because their purple ends are prickly. When the leaves are pulled, you will be left with the base, the heart, crowned with a fuzzy patch. You have now reached the best part of all, the very reason for eating artichokes: the heart. Carefully scoop away the fuzzy stuff with your knife or spoon (though a properly prepared artichoke will already have the choke removed). With knife and fork, cut bites from the heart like pieces of prime fillet. If you're provided with a dip such as a vinaigrette or mayonnaise, put a small part of the edible portion of the leaf in the dip and scrape with your teeth as directed above. Don't overdo it on the dip or you won't taste the artichoke.

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

**Avocado:** If the avocado is served in its shell, it is eaten with a spoon. If it is sliced on a plate or in a salad, eat it with a fork.

**Bacon:** The rule is simply that bacon with any fat on it should be eaten with a knife and fork. If it is very crisp, crumble it with a fork and eat it with your fingers.

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

**Bread:** Break slices of bread, rolls and muffins in half or in small pieces never larger than one bite. Butter each bite at a time. Small biscuits do not have to be broken. It is never appropriate to cut a roll with a knife. When the rolls are served in a basket, take one, and always pass the basket to your right. Place the roll on the break plate, which is located on the left side. Never tear your roll in half or into many pieces. Use your own butter knife and the butter on your plate; buttering should be done on the plate or just above it.

**Caviar:** To preserve the full flavor of caviar, scoop it out using mother-of-pearl utensils, and NEVER use a metallic spoon (metal oxidizes the eggs), which will create an unwanted (and pretty horrid) metal bite. If necessary use a wood or plastic spoon. Don't mush caviar up while you're serving yourself or other, lift the spoon carefully. Caviar should be scooped from the container vertically from top to bottom to avoid crushing the egg. If caviar is passed to you in a bowl or crock with its own spoon, serve a teaspoonful onto your plate. As the following accompaniments are offered, use the individual serving spoon in each to take small amount of minced onion and sieved egg whites and yolks, as well as a few lemon slices and a couple of toast points. Assemble a canapé to your taste with a knife, then use your fingers to lift it to your mouth. If you're at a cocktail party or reception, where prepared caviar canapés are being passed on trays, simply lift one off the plate and pop it into your mouth. When served caviar as an hors d'oeuvre, no matter how much you might be tempted by its luscious flavor. It's considered bad taste to eat more than an ample serving of about two ounces, or about two spoonfuls.

**Chicken:** Chicken is eaten with a fork and knife.

**Chips and French Fries:** Chips are eaten with the fingers and French fries with a fork. Never pick up the whole piece and bite part of it off.

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

**Crab, shrimp and lobster cocktails:** These are eaten with a cocktail fork.

Crab/lobster claws: Cracked with a nutcracker, broken with the fingers and the meat taken out with an oyster fork.

**Fried Fantail Shrimp:** Picked up by the tail and eaten with the fingers.

**Olives:** Generally, olives are considered a finger food. It is perfectly acceptable to pick up and eat an olive with your fingers. Remove pit with your fingers. If you prefer not to use the finger method, use a small fork to stab olive and remove olive from your mouth. Depending on your dining situation, you can either choose to eat olives or leave them on the plate. If you are on a job interview, don't eat them. Also, in a highly formal dinner, don't eat them. Emily Post indicates that, where olives are part of a salad, they are treated like the rest of the salad and taken in by fork and the pit deposited on the fork to return.

**Pasta or Spaghetti:** The perfect method for eating spaghetti or other long stringy pasta is to twirl it around your fork. Use a spoon to help if needed. It is also acceptable to cut pasta with a knife and fork.

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

**Potatoes:** Baked potatoes are most often served already slit. If not, cut across the top with a knife, open the potato wider with your fork, and add butter or sour cream and chives, salt, and pepper. You may eat the skin as you go along. Don't take the insides out and put the skin aside (or take the foil off). Eat it by scooping out the insides bite by bite.

**Risotto:** Using a fork or a spoon, push the grains of cooked rice out slightly toward the edge of the bowl, eating only from the pulled out ring of rice. Continue spreading from the center and eating around the edges in a circle. This will keep the risotto hot as you enjoy your risotto.

**Salad:** If you are served large pieces or a whole wedge of lettuce, cut one bite at a time, using the knife provided. If the salad is served before or after the main course, use the smaller fork. If the salad is considered the main course, use the entrée fork.

**Sandwich:** Small sandwiches, such as tea sandwiches or canapés, may be picked up and eaten with your fingers. Large sandwiches, if not cut in half, should be cut with your knife before lifting and eating. Any hot sandwich served with a gravy requires a knife and fork.

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

**Soup:** Dip the spoon into the soup, moving it away from the body, until it is about two-thirds full, then sip the liquid (without slurping) from the side of the spoon (without inserting the whole bowl of the spoon into the mouth). It is perfectly fine to tilt the bowl slightly (again away from the body) to get the last spoonful or two of soup.

**Sushi:** Sushi is served in bite size pieces. You can eat sushi using your fingers, chopsticks or a fork. Never bite pieces in half as they are meant to be eaten whole. Sushi is usually enjoyed by dipping into soy sauce or other condiments in your own small saucer.

## **5 Ways to Combat Rudeness**

1. Don't take it personally. Perhaps the offender is having a bad day.
2. Size up your annoyances. Is it worth to make a fuss over something small, or is it a waste of your emotional time?
3. Set a good example. Rudeness begets rudeness. If you speak sharply to the bank teller, don't be surprised if you get the same treatment in return.
4. Count to ten. When someone's behavior makes you angry, take a few deep breaths and ask yourself, "is it really worth bowling my stack over this?"
5. Laugh it off. If you can't come up with a friendly joke, just chuckle and change the subject.

## **A Great Handshake – at home or abroad**

In North America and Europe, a firm handshake is an appropriate form of greeting. In Asia and the Middle East, where hand shaking is still relatively new, the customary grip is gentler, a too-hearty grip could be interpreted as aggressive. In Islamic countries, offering your hand to a woman is highly offensive. At the other extreme, it's said that you can never shake hands too much in France, where women shake hands freely and as often as men.

## **The Finer Points of Courtesy—Gender Neutral**

**Holding the door:** Whoever gets to the door first holds it for others.

**Getting off an elevator:** The person closest to the door exits first.

**Helping to put on a coat:** Anyone having trouble putting on a coat or sweater should receive some help, regardless of gender.

**Paying for a meal:** Whoever does the inviting does the paying.

**Standing:** Getting up to greet someone is always polite—and this is especially important when the person is elderly or is a business superior or client. It's also the thing to do when you are being introduced to someone.

**Walking on the outside:** The custom of a man walking between his female companion and the street was the custom in the days when carriages splashed mud and ladies' finery needed shielding. These days, it doesn't matter who is walking on the street side of the sidewalk.