

Dining Etiquette Tips

1. Turn your cell phone off. The candidate who receives a call during the meal doesn't receive one after.
2. Be courteous to the wait staff.
3. Relax, have good posture, and no elbows on the table.
4. Place napkin on your lap.
5. Do not smoke while dining out.
6. Stand when someone approaches the table or enters the room.
7. If you or someone you are dining with is left-handed, it is best for the left-handed person to sit at the left end of the table or at the head of the table.
8. Do not order alcoholic beverages. Water is always a safe choice.
9. Order simple entrees, avoid expensive or extravagant items. It is best to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Finger foods can be messy and are best left for informal dining.
10. Engage in table conversation that is pleasant but entirely free of controversial subjects.
11. Once used, utensils should never touch the table again.
12. Beverages are on your right. Bread and salad are on your left.
13. When you are not eating, keep your hands on your lap or resting on the table (with wrists on the edge of the table). Elbows on the table are acceptable only between courses, not while you are eating.
14. Never chew with your mouth open or make loud noises when you eat.
15. Do not slurp soup from a spoon. Spoon the soup away from you when you take it out of the bowl and sip it from the side of the spoon. If your soup is too hot to eat, let it sit until it cools; do not blow on it.
16. If food gets caught between your teeth and you can't remove it with your tongue, leave the table and go to a mirror where you can remove the food from your teeth in private.
17. Eat rolls or bread by tearing off small bite size pieces and buttering only the piece you are preparing to eat. When ready for another piece, repeat the same process.
18. You should not leave the table during the meal except in an emergency. If you must go to the bathroom or if you suddenly become sick, simply excuse yourself.
19. Do not season your food before you have tasted it.
20. If you need something that you cannot reach, politely ask the person closest to the item you need to pass it to you. For example, "After you have used them yourself, would you please pass me the salt and pepper?"
21. If a piece of your silverware falls onto the floor, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need a clean one. If you cannot reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of your silverware and ask for a clean one.
22. If food spills off your plate, you may pick it up with a piece of your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
23. Never spit a piece of bad food or tough gristle into your napkin. Remove the food from your mouth using the same utensil it went in with. Place the piece of food on the edge of your plate. If possible, cover it with some other food from your plate.
24. It is inappropriate to ask for a doggy bag when you are a guest. Try and eat your entire meal if possible.
25. When finished do not push your plate away from you. 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. 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. Place napkin on right hand side of table when finished.
26. Don't offer payment, you are not obligated to pay. Thank them and obtain business cards.