

Discussion Questions

Table Appointments and Meal Service

Background

Compare ways in which meals are served in your homes. For example, is there an emphasis on formality or informality? To what extent were your attitudes regarding meal service formed by the way in which meals were served at home. What other influences shaped your ideas regarding meal services, hostessing, and aesthetic aspects of meals? How do you think other parts of the country and other countries differ from Southern California in modes of entertaining and meal service?

Table Appointments

How important is accruing table appointments to you? To most young people? Do you think owning a set of china, crystal, and/ or silver flatware as a necessity, desirable, investment, or luxury? How are individuals likely to acquire table appointments? How much planning should be involved in obtaining these items? How does one decide upon an appropriate level of spending on these items?

Hostessing

Do you enjoy entertaining? How often do you entertain? What benefits can be derived from inviting others to share a meal? Give reasons why people either enjoy or are reluctant to entertain? Describe the perfect host and hostess. How can individuals gain hostessing skills and confidence?

Meal Service

What is the philosophy behind the different styles of meal service? Which styles of meal service are most commonly used in Southern California? Why? How is style of meal service related to facilitating servicing of the meal? Why does one select one style of meal service over another? What is the overall goal of setting the cover and actually serving the meal?

Aesthetics

What elements combine to create an aesthetically pleasing meal? What does garnishing food involved? When should Garnishes be used? What roles do table decorations, linen, appointments, ect. Play in creating an aesthetical pleasing meal?

How much attention should be given to the aesthetic aspects of presenting and serving meals? How important is a theme in meals?

Table Appointments, Table Settings, Meals Services,

Hostessing And Related Matters

Self Study Unit

A meal normally cannot be executed unless attention is given to utensils from which the food is served, such as dinnerware, serving pieces, and flatware. We follow certain procedures for distributing food to each person when serving meals and these procedures are referred to as styles of meal service. No discussion of serving meals is complete without attention to the role of hostess and guest. This self-study unit is intended to capsule information related to table appointments, table settings, meal service, and hostessing.

References:

Readings contained in this unit: Fonosch & Lisagor Meal Management- Concepts and Applications. Sears. Fashions in Dining. Kinder. "Waiting on the Table."

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

- Define cover, table appointment, table linen, flatware, and dinnerware.
- Identify and give characteristics of various types of table appointments.
- Set a table correctly and relate reasons why this is important.
- Distinguish among various styles of table service.
- Identify procedures for waiting on the table.
- Describe the role of hostess and guest.
- Provide suggestions for eating gracefully.

Module 1

Table Appointment:

The term “table appointment” refers to all those items used in table setting.

This would include flatware, glassware, linens, accessories, and decorations.

Read the reference information contained in this unit.

The Cover

Each person’s place setting, consisting of linens, flatware, glassware, and dinnerware is referred to as a cover. In other words a cover includes all the equipment required by any individual diner. Too much space allowed for each cover can be as awkward as not enough space. Strive for a comfortable, relaxing, balanced arrangement as the covers are spaced around the table.

Linens

The term linens refer to all types of table covering and napkin, regardless of the actual fiber content. Modern table linens are available in a variety of fabrics, styles, shapes, and colors. Meal managers may choose from linen fabric, cotton lace, plastic, straw, polyesters and other synthetic materials.

Linen fabric makes an excellent table covering because it washes easily, has a hard, smooth finish that resists soil, and wears well. Its disadvantages are that it requires ironing and is often more expensive than other fabrics.

Lace makes an attractive table covering over wood surfaces and is especially appropriate when used with delicate dinnerware for teas or luncheons. Ironing is usually not required.

Many interesting table coverings are made of cotton or cotton combined with other fibers. When combined with a synthetic such as polyester, cotton can be easily washed by machine and requires little or no ironing. Synthetic fabrics such as polyester, with a permanent press finish, either alone or with blends, are attractive and easy to care for.

For practical, everyday use, plastic table covers or place mats are easy to clean and inexpensive. They are available in many color, textures, and designs, and are well suited to informal meals.

Paper table covers and napkins, useful for casual parties or picnics, come in a variety of designs suitable for birthdays and holidays. Since they do not need to be washed, they simplify the meal manager's work. They are available in sizes and levels of quality suitable for family and informal service.

Many modern table tops, including glass, Formica tile, and special wood finishes, are impervious to heat and moisture, eliminating the need for table covers. The cover is often set directly set on these attractive practical surfaces.

Tablecloths

A tablecloth adds warmth and comfort to the dining room table, by providing a soft background for dining utensils. You can achieve differing degrees of familiarity by your choice of fabric or colors. For example, white or light-pastel damask cloths tend to be formal while prints or darker colors are more informal.

Inexpensive tablecloths can be made from a variety of fabrics. Brightly colored permanent-press sheets can be easily converted to attractive tablecloths.

The size of a tablecloth is determined by the size of the table it covers. A large table should have an overhang or “drop” of 10 – 15 inches. A smaller table requires a shorter drop, usually 5-10 inches.

Placemats

Beautiful woods, sparkling glass, and other interesting table surfaces can be shown to best advantage with the use of placemats. These versatile table covers can be found in a variety of colors, designs, materials, and shapes except for very formal dinners, placemats are acceptable and attractive.

Placemats range in size from 12x16 inches to 14x18 inches. They should be large enough to hold the necessary utensils but not so large as to overlap to placemats by the creative homemaker. Adding a coat of soil-resistant spray to placemats will help keep them looking new and minimize laundering.

Table Runners

For a dramatic effect, table runners are an excellent choice. Table runners are strips of fabric approximately 12 inches wide that cover the entire width or length of a dining table with a drop at each end. They are available in a wide range of fabrics, colors, and designs, and like placemats, they can be homemade as well. Runners may be placed on either side of the table to hold two rows of place settings, or they may be placed along all four sides of a small table for four place settings. A runner down the center of the table with matching placemats at each setting is an attractive arrangement combining two types of covering.

Napkins

Napkins, available in a variety of sizes, may match or contrast with the other liner on the table. The largest dinner napkins are approximately 18x 24 inches, and luncheon napkins are 17 inches square. Smaller napkins maybe used for breakfast or for cocktails. Paper napkins remain popular for everyday meals and informal entertaining. Cloth napkins are easiest to care for when they are made of permanent-press fabric.

Care of Linens

Any type of table linen looks it's very best when it is sparkling clean. Stains should be removed before laundering or they may become permanently set. Many food stains can easily be removed by soaking them in cool water. Meat juices, tea, coffee, lipstick, and fruit stains may be more persistent, requiring special handling. Refer to a stain removal chart and follow the directions for the particular stain and fabric. Remember, the fresher the stain, the easier it is to remove.

Tablecloths should be stored with as few crease as possible. By carefully rolling them, creases can be avoided. Placemats should be stored flat and unfolded in drawers or shelves convenient to the dining area. Table runners may be hung on hangers to avoid creases, and napkins may be folded before storing, ready to be placed on the table.

Flatware

The term flatware is used for knives, folks, spoons, as well as some serving pieces, such as ladles. Choices of metals include sterling silver, silver plate, gold

electroplate, dirilyte, stainless steel, and pewter. Hollowware refers to all metal dishes, bowls, platters, tea service, pitchers and other pieces used for table service or decoration. Hollowware is available in the same choice of metals as flatware.

Sterling silver

The derivation of the term sterling remains uncertain, but the following story provides a possible clue. Many years ago a group of Eastern traders frequently came to England to transact business and buy English goods. They paid for these goods with special silver coins that were highly valued by the English. The coins became know as “Easterlings”, and as the story foes, the word sterling, derived from the name of this coin, came to denote a silver standard.

In the United States today, according to law, sterling silver must contain 92.5 percent pure silver. The other 7.5 percent is cooper, since pure silver would be too soft and copper adds strength and durability. The hallmark, the mark, or the official stamp placed on a piece of sterling indicates its purity. Usually the word sterling and marker’s name or trademarks are included in the stamp. Sterling silver is very durable, and many families pass their sterling heirlooms on from generation to generation.

With use, sterling develops tiny scratches that create a soft, desirable finish known as a patina. Since it becomes more beautiful with sue, sterling should be enjoyed on a daily basis rather than stored away to be brought out only on special occasions.

Silver plate

Silver Plate is less costly than sterling silver because it contains less silver. Through the process of electroplating, utensils made of a base metal are placed with pure silver. The base metal often used in nickel silver an alloy of cooper, nickel and zinc. Good quality silver plate is reinforced at the points that receive the most wear, such as the backs of spoon bowls and the tines of forks.

Good-quality silver plate, when properly cared for, can last a lifetime, and like sterling, it develops patins with time.

Gold Electroplate

Gold electroplate is manufactured by a process similar to that used to silver plate, except that 24-carat gold is used instead of silver. The result is a very formal flatware that coordinates elegantly with gold-trimmed china. Needless to say, gold plating is very costly

Dirilyte

The golden color in dirilute flatware and holloware is produced by combining several metals in alloy-aluminum, copper, and nickel. Dirilyte is less expensive than gold electroplate and provides an alternative to silver flatware.

Stainless Steel

The most widely used type of flatware, stainless steel, is made of molten steel and chromium. Better-quality stainless steel contains a small amount of nickel for a bright finish. The addition of chromium makes the steel hard and resistant to heat, stain, and corrosion. Therefore, stainless steel wears extremely well even when it is in constant use. It is relatively inexpensive and easy to care for, since it never requires polishing.

Pewter

In colonial days, pewter was considered the metal of the lower classes. Today, however, the lowly pewter tankard, plate, or bowl from colonial times is an expensive collector's item.

Colonial pewter was usually made from a blend of tin, lead, and zinc. Modern pewter, made without lead, is safer to use with food and available in a variety of finishes and patterns. Pewter is a comparatively carefree metal since it requires polishing only once or twice a year.

Care of Flatware

Sterling silver or silver plate tarnish from the sulphur in the air or from contact with foods containing sulphur, such as eggs and mayonnaise. Tarnish is a deposit of sulphide. Salt can spot and corrode silver also, especially when moist. To remove tarnish, use a special polish made for this purpose. It should be nonabrasive, so that it will not scratch the surface or remove any silver.

Apply silver polish with a soft cloth, using lengthwise strokes, avoid circular or scrubbing motions. Cotton swabs are helpful for cleaning indentations, but avoid using stiff brushes that might scratch the silver. Continue rubbing gently until the tarnish is removed, and then wash the silver in hot, soapy water. Rinse with clean water and dry it immediately with a clean, soft towel.

Storing silver properly keeps air out to prevent tarnish and also keeps the silver from getting scratched. Storage chest and specially treated flannel cloths are available for this purpose.

Silver plate and sterling silver flatware may be washed either by hand or in an automatic dishwasher. Care should be taken to rinse off egg or food containing egg as soon after use as possible.

The other metals used for flatware do not tarnish like silver and therefore require little or no polishing. Special polishing is very infrequent. Dirilyte and stainless steel require only routine washing, either by hand or in the automatic dishwasher.

DINNERWARE

The term dinnerware encompasses plates, cups, saucers, serving bowls, and the like, so long as they are not made from metal.

So many different types of dinnerware are available today that the consumer must develop some criteria before making a choice. The intended use, durability, care, price, and esthetic appeal are all factors to consider. Most dinnerware is sold in sets consisting of service for 6, 8, or 12. Place settings, which may often be purchased individually, usually consist of five matched pieces: a dinner plate, salad plate, bread-and-butter plate, cup, and saucer. The term *open stock* refers to a sales arrangement whereby dinnerware is sold by the individual piece or in small groups of pieces rather than by the complete set. Open stock sales are a convenient way to fill in extra items or replace broken pieces.

Nowadays the word *china* is used loosely to include not only porcelain and bone china but stoneware, pottery, and other products that should properly be

termed ceramics. The qualities of each vary greatly, depending on the raw material, design, degree of firing, and quality of workmanship.

China or Porcelain

China or porcelain is made of white clay fired at exceptionally high temperatures. The durability of china is determined by the materials used and by the firing temperatures. Long before the Christian era, the art of making fine porcelain was being practiced by the Chinese, who produced pieces of great beauty. Hence the name *china* has been used interchangeably with *porcelain*, which is the more correct term.

Fine china, thin and translucent (you can see your hand through it when held up to the light), appears delicate but is actually quite durable. Top quality clay is fired at high temperatures, causing them to fuse into a solid, vitrified, nonporous material. Bone china contains animal bone ash for added translucency and whiteness, a process first developed in England. Today other countries also produce bone china. Casual china is thicker and less translucent than fine china, but it is very durable.

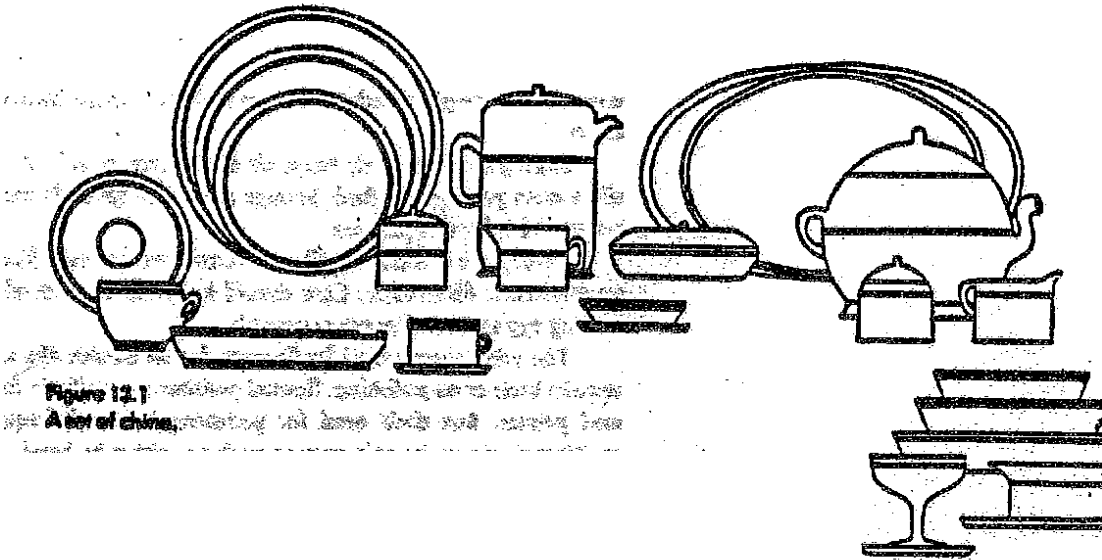


Figure 12.1
A set of china.

Stoneware

Stoneware is made from natural hard-firing clays, which are darker in color and fuse into a solid vitrified, nonporous material when fired at high temperature. The imperfections in the clay result in an interesting brown or light gray color after firing. Stoneware has an earthy, casual look, making it a fine choice for informal table settings. It is less expensive than fine china.

Ironstone

Ironstone organically developed in England, originally contained powdered iron slag, the source of its name. Because it is fired at a lower temperature than stoneware, it can be decorated more elaborately and in greater detail. This moderately priced dinnerware features bright colors, a variety of vivid designs, and reasonable durability.

Earthenware

Earthenware is made from relatively unrefined clays fired at a relatively low temperature. The technique produces a thick, opaque dinnerware, more porous

than other dinnerware and easily chipped, cracked, and broken. Earthenware is inexpensive, but its low price must be weighed against its lack of durability.

Plastic ware

Several companies produce dinnerware made of thermosetting plastic, which resists breaking, chipping, and cracking under normal use. Families with young children appreciate the durable qualities of plastic ware in setting a casual table.

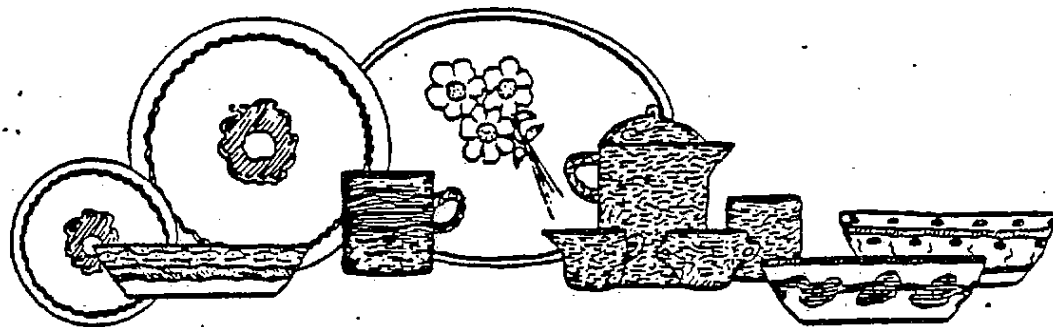


Figure 13.2
An informal pottery service.

Heat- Resistant Dinnerware

The combinations of special formula and unique heating schedules results in a remarkable new type of cookware and dinnerware that goes from the freezer, to the oven, to the dining table, to the dishwasher. This material is durable as well as attractive. Because of its ability to withstand extreme temperatures, it was used for the nose cone of a space missile! Heat resistant dinnerware is safe for use in both conventional and microwave ovens. In other words, it can be used as the cooking vessel, then placed in the freezer for storage, then put into the oven for reheating, and finally taken directly to the dinner table. Sustainable time and energy are saved by eliminating the need to transfer the food to other utensils.

Care of Dinnerware

- All dinnerware careful handling to ensure maximum wear.

Fine china should be stored with protective pads between each plate or in special quilted cases to avoid scratching the glaze.

Some glazes will craze (develop fine cracks) if the dishes are heated in a hot oven or left too long in the refrigerator or freezer. Rapid changes in temperature many cause china to crack or the glaze to craze.

Protect dishes during washing and rinsing with rubber mats in the sink and on the drain board. Most china manufactured within the last 20 years can safely be washed in an automatic dishwasher when carefully stacked. Avoid safely be washed In an automatic dishwasher when carefully stacked. Avoid using too much dishwasher detergents. Since it can be abrasive and will remove the glaze or pattern. Antique china should be washed by hand to protect any color or decoration that may have been applied without an over glaze for protection.

Avoid wiping china decorated with gold or platinum until it is cool, since these metals may soften slightly when hot. Scouring pads, strong cleansers, and silver polished must never be used on china.

Many of the same points apply to other types of dinnerware. Do not use harsh abrasives, metal scouring pads, or nylon scouring pads when washing dishes. To remove metal marks that many occasionally appear from contact with knives or metal pans, lightly rub on household cleanser using a damp cloth.

Follow the directions provide by the manufactures. They will usually recommend a specific automatic dishwasher detergent as well as give other suggestions to increase the durability of their dinnerware.

Glassware

Flare-ware may last a lifetime and dinnerware may last many years, but glassware usually must be replaced from time to time. Fortunately inexpensive varieties are available that are both functional and attractive.

Two main types of table glassware manufactured: tumblers, which have no stems, and stemware, which may have either short or long stems. Both types are available in a myriad of sizes, shapes, styles, and price ranges. The final choice must depend on many criteria, including available budget, lifestyle, style of furnishings and other dinnerware, and available storage space.

Some households have more than one set of glassware, perhaps a casual set for informal, everyday meals in the kitchen or patio, and a more elegant set for serving cocktails or for formal meals in the dining room.

Glass is produced by fusing silica (sand) with other ingredients, which vary according to the type of glass being produced.

Lime Glass Lime glass is used for making moderately priced glassware and decorative glass. It contains sand, soda, and limestone.

Lead Glass A fusion of silica, soda, and lead oxide, lead glass is used for top-quality glassware and decorative pieces of exceptional brilliance. The lead oxide adds luster and weight, and makes this type of glass expensive. Lead glass gives off a bell-like tone when tapped. It is interesting to note that in Europe, glassware containing lead is called *crystal*, but in the United States, crystal refers to glassware without any color. Colored glass can be produced by adding various metallic oxides to the glass.

Borosilicate Glass This type of glass may be used for cooking, since it contains boric oxide, which makes it resistant to thermal shock. Glass cookware made for use in the oven or on top of the stove, as well as measuring cups and mixing bowls, are made from borosilicate glass.

Opaque Glass The opacity of this glass is produced by the addition of fluorides, aluminum compounds, titanium oxides, and other substances. One example is white milk glass.

Care of Glassware Both moderately priced glassware and fine crystals deserve special care to ensure long life.

To wash glassware by hand, use moderately hot water and a mild detergent. Adding a few drops of bluing to the water improves the luster of the glass. Glassware decorated with gold or platinum should never come into contact with scalding water or strong soap, since the decoration might loosen. To prevent chipping, place a rubber mat or a thick towel in the sink or dishpan. Drain the glassware on a rubber-coated rack or towel, and dry it quickly to avoid water spotting.

When using an automatic dishwasher, be sure to arrange the glassware so that individual pieces do not touch each other. Check the racks to be sure they are coated with rubber or plastic. Use only the recommended amount of a mild detergent and water at a temperature below 180°F. Special additives can be used with dishwasher detergent to prevent water spotting.

Glassware should be at room temperature before coming into contact with either very hot or ice-cold ingredients, since a rapid change in temperature might cause it to crack.

Store glassware with the rims up to permit air to circulate and prevent the rough grain on some shelves from nicking the rim. Leave space between each glass, and never stack cups or glassware. If a piece of glassware becomes chipped, it is dangerous to use and should be discarded.

CASE STUDY

Sarah and Len Porter both work and attend college. They have a modest budget for purchasing table appointments and need some guidelines. They wish to spend their money wisely, but they also value an attractively set table. What suggestions would you make to help them choose their flatware, dinnerware and glassware?

Setting the Table

An attractively set table helps create the mood for enjoying good food and pleasant conversation. Think of the table setting as an artistic expression of your personality. A careful arrangement of table appointments imparts a sense of order and balance, and it can also make serving and dining more efficient and comfortable.

Cover of approximately 24 inches should be prepared for each person and spaced evenly around the table. With meat service becoming more and more casual, strict rules of placement are not necessarily followed. The rules that follow should be regarded as merely suggestions that in the past have been

found to promote comfort and ease in dining. How each person chooses to dine depends on many factors such as time, lifestyle, and equipment, since modern mealtime customs are flexible and casual.

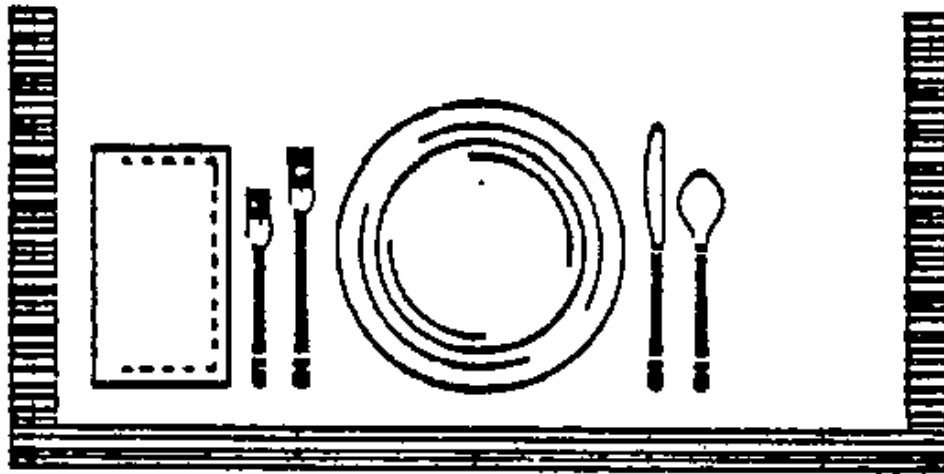
Generally speaking, comfort and convenience offer the best guidelines for setting a table. For an attractive table, keep the lines clean and balanced. For example, flatware, plates, and napkins should all be placed along on imaginary line running parallel with edge of the table and about one inch away from it.

Placing Flatware

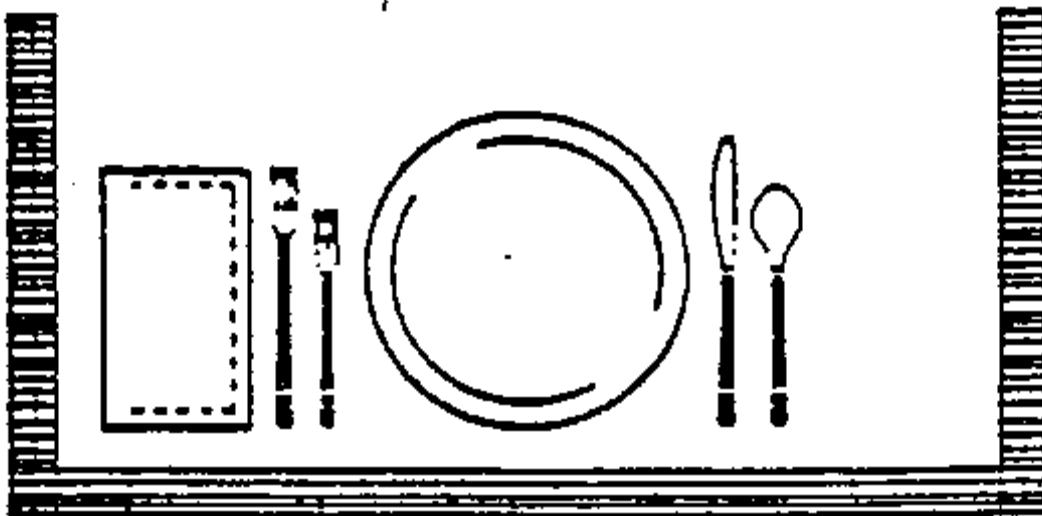
When setting out flatware, consider the menu and use only those utensils necessary for the meal. All pieces of the flatware should be placed parallel to one another and at the right angles to the table edge. Generally, the knife, cutting edge toward the plate, and the spoon, bowl up belong to the right of the plate, since they are used with the right hand. The fork, tines up, is placed to the left when used with a knife. If more than one fork is required, place them in order of use, starting at the outside and working toward the plate. The salad fork is placed to the left of the dinner fork when the salad is served first. If the salad is served after the main course, then the salad fork is placed between the dinner fork and the plate.

The placing of the dessert fork can be handled in several ways. It can be placed between the dinner fork and the plate or above the plate, parallel to the edge of the table. If more convenient, the dessert fork can be placed to the right just before dessert is served.

For informal meals when a knife is not used, forks may be placed to the right of the plate. The only time a fork is placed on the right along with a knife is in the case of a cocktail fork. For example, if the first course is a seafood cocktail, the cocktail fork is placed to the right.



Salad Before Main Course



Salad After Main Course

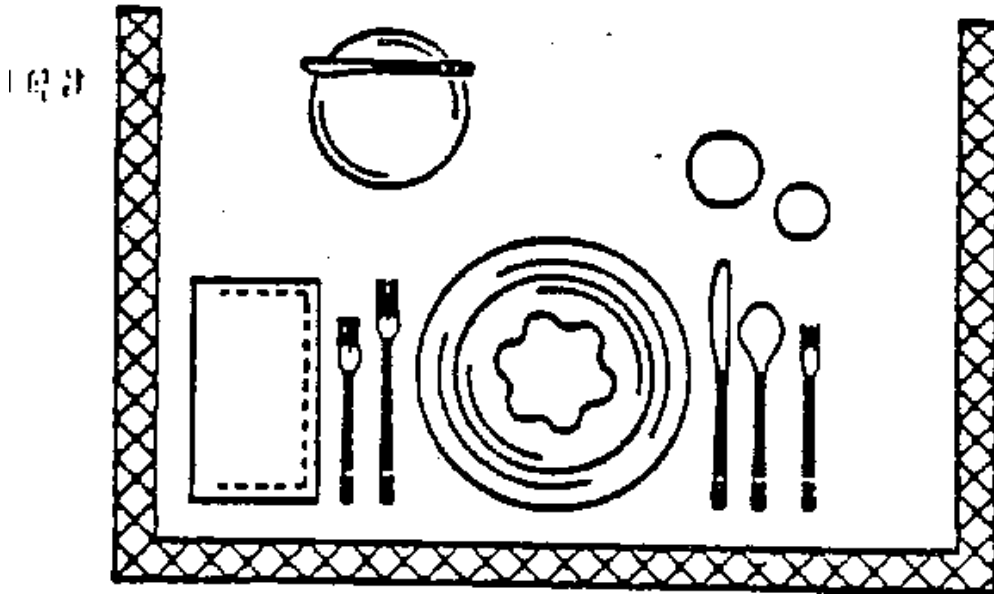


Figure 13.4
The cocktail fork is placed on the right when the first course is a seafood cocktail.

Placing the Napkin

The napkin is usually folded in a square or rectangle and placed to the left of the forks. For a formal setting the napkin may be placed on the service plate (a large ornate base plate that holds other plates or bowls) in the center of the cover.

Placing Glassware

The water glass is placed above the tip of the knife, and any other glasses are placed to the right of the water glass and slightly forward, forming a diagonal line. A maximum of three glasses is recommended to avoid confusion and a cluttered appearance. If a cold beverage is being served that may cause moisture to form on the outside of the glass provide a coaster. Iced Tea or Iced coffee is more

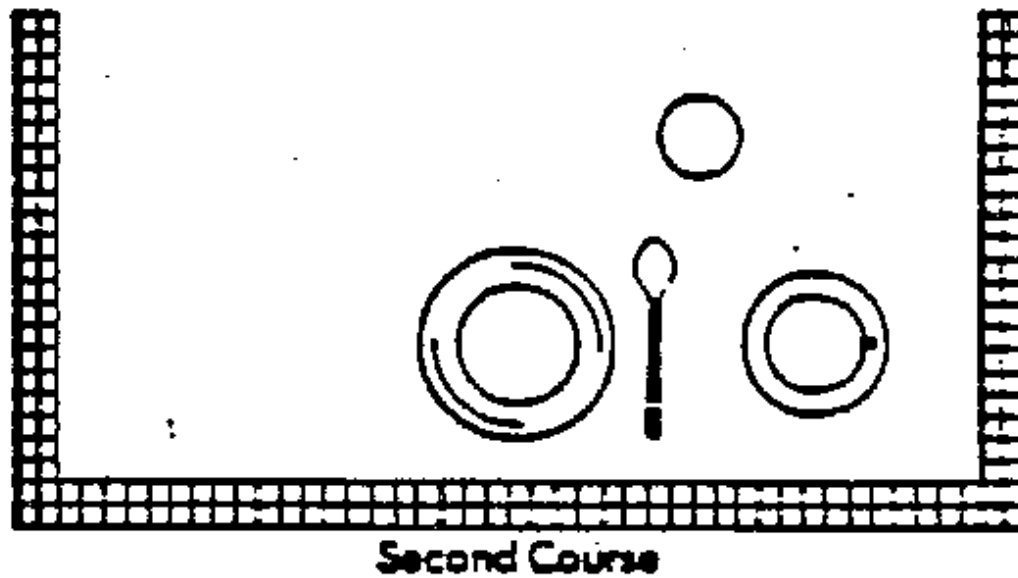
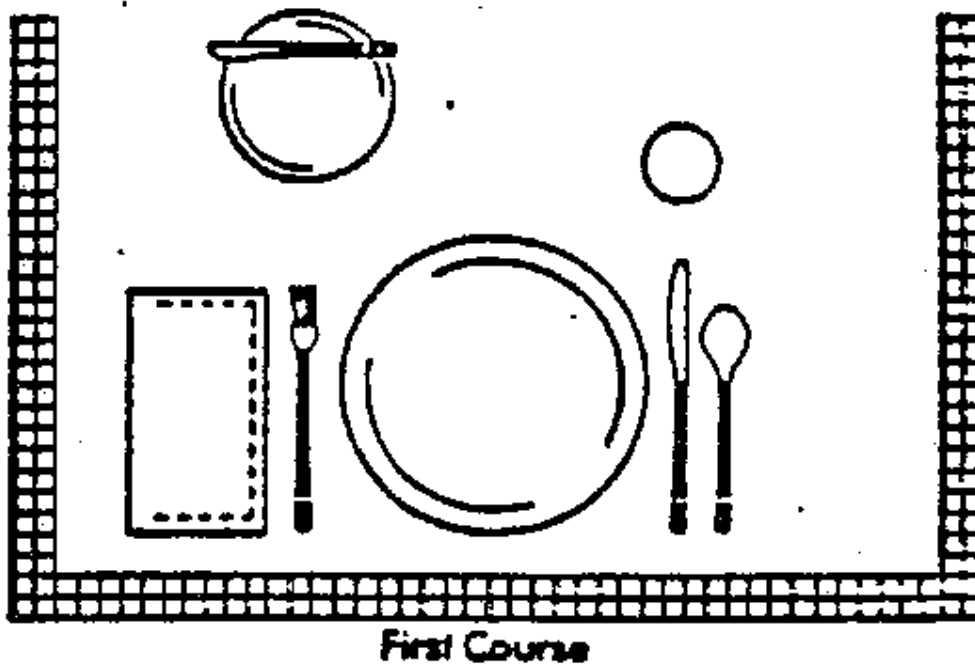
conveniently served on a saucer or underliner that can also accommodate the accompanying spoon.

Placing Dinnerware

The dinner plate is placed in the center of the cover, of course.

The tea or coffee cup and saucer are placed to the right of the plate with the handle to the right, Parallel to the table edge. If the hot beverage is server during the meal, cups and saucers may be placed before the diners are seated. If the beverage is served at the end of the meal or with dessert, the cups and saucers may be placed after the main-course dishes have been cleared away.

Several choices exist for the placement of the salad. If a bread-and-butter plate is not used, the salad plate may be placed to the left of the dinner plate and above the forks. If a bread-and-butter plate is used, it is placed to the left above the forks, and the salad plate is placed slightly blow it. The salad plate may also be placed above the dinner plate or at the right of it. If a salad requires cutting with a knife, the placement of the salad plate to the left is the most convenient.



DECORATING THE TABLE

A centerpiece or other table decoration provides the finishing touch to a beautifully set table. Flowers and leaves have been the traditional favorites for

this purpose, but the imaginative meal manager can use countless other decorations with excellent results.

Balance and scale are important principles to keep in mind. In general, balance is achieved when table appointments and decorations are evenly distributed. Scale refers to the relative size of various objects on the table. A large sculpture would look too imposing on a small table, and a tiny bud vase holding just one small flower would be lost on a large banquet table.

Colors can be used effectively in creating a mood: reds and oranges suggest warmth and intimacy, blue and greens are restful and refreshing, yellows is cheerful. Whatever your choice, the color used in decorating a table should always blend comfortably with the linens, the dinnerware, and the colors of the dining room itself.

A centerpiece can be created that remains as a permanent fixture. For example, figurines, pieces of sculpture or other art objects, an arrangement of dried flowers, or an arrangement of dried pods and weeds can create a beautiful centerpiece as well as a decoration for the home.

A very practical centerpiece is an attractively arranged bowl of fresh fruit, which can double as dessert. Also, many fresh vegetables can combine to form a pleasing contrast in color and texture.

Fresh flowers artistically arranged will last several days in water. When flowers are unavailable, simple green leaves, skillfully arranged, make a striking table decoration. In addition to a centerpiece, flowers or leaves can be placed

along the edge of the table. Several tiny vases containing one or two blooms apiece take up very little room and add color and charm to a small table.

One innovative student whose hobby was rock collecting used a favorite rock for her centerpiece. Combined with leaves and flowers, it provided a topic for table conversation. Other personal interests might yield materials for decorating a table, such as seashells, dolls, pottery, or living plant.

Candles add a romantic touch to the dining table, whether they are used alone or in combinations with flowers or sculptures. Candles are only used after twilight and should always be lit for dining. Keep the candle flames either above or below eye level to avoid glare, and be sure they are not near anything flammable.

Remember, too, that even the most beautiful table decorations must never block a diner's view of the other people at the table, since pleasant conversations thrives on visual contact.

1. Answer the following questions “true” or “false.”

- a. _____ The cutting edge of the knife should be directed away from the plate.
- b. _____ It is necessary to provide a salad fork when the salad accompanies the main course.
- c. _____ Only put flatware on the table which will be used during the meal.
- d. _____ The water glass should be placed directly above the tip of the dinner knife.
- e. _____ If more than one beverage is placed on the table at one time, both glasses should be parallel to the edge of the table.

2. Diagram the individual cover when the following menu is being served (2 courses – main and dessert).

Roast Beef
Baked Potato, Sour Cream
Buttered Green Beans
Pineapple Banana Salad
Hard Rolls, Butter

Gingerbread
Milk, Hot Tea

Answer the following questions based on the cover that you illustrated on the previous page:

- a. What are other possible positions for the salad plate?

- b. Can you combine the salad and bread and butter plate on any occasions? If so, when?

- c. What are other possible positions for the bread-and-butter knife?

- d. What are two options for placing the flatware and dinnerware for the dessert course?

- e. What are possible positions for placing the napkin?

3. List rules for using table decorations and give the corresponding reason for the recommendation:

Rule

Reason

MODULE 3

Styles of Meal Service:

A meal may be served in a variety of ways. Food may be served on each plate and then each plate brought to the table; or serving dishes may be passed around the table; or the host and hostess might serve at the table; or paid waiters/waitresses may serve courses.

A distinction can be made between informal and formal styles of service. One way to make this distinction is that informal involves the host and hostess in the serving process. This indicates the host and hostess are caring personally for their guests service is when the host and hostess take no part in the service of the meal to guests.

Styles of meal or table service can be used to facilitate a meal and to help a desired atmosphere. For example, if there are a number of courses planned and the main course includes a roast which will be carved, then compromise service might be chosen. The styles of table service listed below should be used as a guide to facilitate serving of foods to guests. Variation in service should be considered when the situation dictates adjustment.

Study the summary of styles of meal service. Then answer the following questions following the reference information.

Blueplate Service

1. Plates are prepared in the kitchen and placed on the table before or at the time guests sit down.
2. Second portions can be served from the kitchen or offered from serving dishes at the table.
3. This service is sometimes called “apartment” service.
4. Blueplate service is convenient for use when the group and dining area are small.

Family Service

1. Family service is informal, sometimes called “American” or “country” service.
2. Service is meant to be casual and comfortable.
3. Food is usually served in two courses: Main and dessert. (A variation is to place the dessert on the table before the meal begins.)
4. Plates are at the individual covers before the meal begins. Serving dishes can be placed on the table just prior to when the group is seated or brought to the table after everyone is seated.

5. Serving dishes are passed in one direction around the table. The person nearest the serving dish usually initiates passing the food item.
6. Simplicity is characteristic of family service. Often a salad plate can double for a salad and bread-and-butter.
7. The table should be cleared except for the water glasses and dessert flatware after the main course.
8. It is customary to serve tea or coffee either with the meal or with the dessert.

English Service

1. The host and hostess serve all courses at the table. This style of meal service is considered to be friendly and cordial because of the participation of the host and hostess. This service is considered informal.
2. The host usually serves the main course and dessert.
3. The hostess usually serves the soup, salad, and beverage.
4. Accompaniments are passed from person to person at the table unless a waitress is present.
5. Plates are removed between courses by a family or paid waitress or by the hostess.
6. A serving cart may also be useful for holding food and dishes.
7. The host or hostess places the food on individual plates. The plates are passed to the appropriate guest (unless a waitress is used). Designate who should receive the plate, and pass plates in a systematic manner.

Russian Service

1. This is considered to be formal table service.
2. The host and hostess take no part in serving the meal.
3. A waiter and/or waitress serve all food from the kitchen.
4. One waiter or waitress should attend to six or eight persons. If more than one waiter or waitress is present, serving should take place simultaneously.
5. Russian service may consist of more courses than other services. It is possible to serve seven courses and order of service:

Appetizer

Soup

Entrée

Piece de Resistance

Salad

Dessert

Beverage

6. There are two types of Russian Service:
 - (a) Platter Service. In this case, food is arranged on serving platters and passed by the waiter to each guest so the guest can help himself/herself.
 - (b) Plate Service. Food is served on the plates in the kitchen and the filled plates are placed before each guest.

Compromise Service

1. Compromise is a combination of English and Russian services. Some courses are served at the table by the host and hostess as in English service, and some courses are served directly from the kitchen as in Russian service.
2. Soup, salad, and dessert courses are usually served from the kitchen.
3. The main course is usually served from the table.
4. Passing of plates and accompaniments and clearing of the table are facilitated if a family or paid waitress is present.

Buffet Service

1. Buffet service is generally thought to be an informal type of table service, but it may be quite elegant depending upon the occasion.
2. Buffets are an appropriate style of service for large groups because a minimum amount of personal service is needed.
3. The preferred type of buffet is referred to as a sit-down buffet. This service allows the most comfort to the guest. Tables are set with covers for each person. Water glasses are filled immediately prior to the meal. Salad and bread may also be placed at the cover. The buffet table contains foods for the main course and each guest serves himself/herself by going through the buffet line. Arrangements should be made for clearing covers after the meal. Dessert may be served at the cover or a dessert buffet can be used.
4. Buffets may also be handled so each guest has a tray or T.V. tray or other surface available if table space is not available. Avoid situations where the guest has no place to put dinner plate and beverage.
5. The buffet table should have food and utensils arranged in logical order. For example, plates would be first, followed by the food to be served. Napkins and flatware would be at the end of the buffet line if not provided at the cover.

Answer the following questions regarding styles of meal service:

1. What is the difference between informal and formal service?

2. Which type of meal service would you use for a seven course meal? Why?

3. Write in the name of the meal service which best describes the following statements.
 - a. _____ Combination of English and Russian services.
 - b. _____ Probably the most difficult service for the host and the hostess to execute.
 - c. _____ Good for serving large number of guests.
 - d. _____ All foods served at the table by the host and hostess.
 - e. _____ Considered the most formal of services.
 - f. _____ Good if dining table and area are small.
 - g. _____ Serving dishes passed around the table.
 - h. _____ Platter and plat service are options.
 - i. _____ Casual, comfortable, and probably most used in this country.
 - j. _____ The hostess is relatively free to be with guests.
 - k. _____ Some courses are served from the kitchen and some are served at the table by the host and hostess.

Module 4

Waiting on the table:

Enjoyment of the meal is related to the smoothness with which the meal is served. Traditional methods of serving meals have been revised over the years so that additional flexibility is permissible. The main goal of serving and clearing the meal is to add to the comfort of guests. Refer to information in Kinder (the class handout) for suggestions for waiting on the table. Keep in mind that procedures can be varied depending upon the time, place, and style of meal service as well as preference of the hostess.

Answer the following questions:

1. List steps for placement of a course.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. How does the placement procedure for a course differ from the removal procedure?
3. Which of the following situations is best handled with left-handed serving? With right-handed serving? Can be handled equally well with either? Mark L for left-handed, R for right-handed, E for either, and NA for not applicable.
 - a. _____ Removal of the salad plate.
 - b. _____ Removal of dinner plate and bread-and-butter plate at the same cover.
 - c. _____ Removal of the beverage glass.
 - d. _____ Crumbing the table.
 - e. _____ Refilling water glasses.
4. Explain the procedure for crumbing the table.

5. Answer the following “true” or “false” concerning the use of a side table as an aid for serving.
- a. _____ Use of a side table to save trips to the kitchen.
 - b. _____ A side table can be used to store dirty dishes after a course.
 - c. _____ Dirty dishes and clean dishes are never on the cart at the same time.
 - d. _____ Salt and pepper shakers should be removed and placed on the side table before serving dessert.
 - e. _____ Both the dessert and beverage may be served from the side table.

Module 5

Hostessing:

Another component in creating is attention to assuming the roles of hostess, host, and guest. Read the following information for guidelines when assuming these various roles. Complete your study of meal presentation by reading a short section on table manners.

At Home with Manners

One aspect of mealtime customs in our society is table manners. Today’s young person might ask, “Why are manners important to me? Among my peer group, we’re honest and accepting of each other; our lifestyle is casual with an emphasis on the natural.” Manners, too, have become more casual and natural, but they remain an important part of social life.

Proper manners are a means of making yourself and others comfortable by dealing with events in an orderly, relaxed manner. There is nothing stuffy or old-fashioned in such a goal. Learning how to be courteous at the table with family and friends in a relaxed surrounding increases a person’s self-confidence, ensuring poise when eating in a restaurant or dining with guests. Good mealtime manners make family life more congenial and help avoid interpersonal conflicts. Some examples illustrating the importance of manners follow.

Example A Diane Beauchamp lacks training in manners and is therefore unsure of herself. Because she cannot introduce people without getting flustered and is too nervous about her table manners to eat comfortably with anyone but her own family, she often feels too ill at ease to enjoy herself on dates or other occasions.

Example B Don Harris accepts an invitation to lunch as part of a job interview. His prospective boss is impressed with his education and previous experience, but since the job requires meeting and entertaining clients, he wishes to observe Don in a social situation. Because of his nervousness and lack of social confidence, Don eats too rapidly, talks with a full mouth, and uses his fingers as if he were at a picnic. The total experience is uncomfortable for everyone, and Don's poor table manners cost him this job.

Example C Miguel and Janet Lopez have moved to a new city and would like to meet other young couples. Miguel suggests to Janet that they plan a casual dinner party in order to meet the neighbors. But Janet feels shy and hesitates to entertain, even though she thinks it is a good idea. More social confidence would help Miguel and Janet make friends in their new community.

Guidelines for the Host and Hostess

The most important function of the host and hostess is to make their guests feel welcome and comfortable. With practice, this can be accomplished in a relaxed manner, even when a great deal of planning and work have been required. If the host and hostess behave rushed and harassed, the guest feel ill at ease.

If both of a host and a hostess entertain, they share the duties of serving their guests. Usually each has specific responsibilities that have been discussed in advance so that events flow smoothly. For example, one may help seat the guest and carve the meat while the other serves side dishes. When a single person entertains, then he or she has complete responsibility for seeing that the guests are taken care of. A single person may ask a friend to help, but how responsibilities will be coordinated should be planned in advance.

The host and hostess initiate all meal-related activities. They call their guests to the table when its time to eat. By placing her napkin on her lap and lifting her spoon or fork to begin the first course, the hostess signals to the guest that they may begin eating. The host and hostess must be aware of proper manners, since their guest will look to them as a guide. By eating slowly they allow time for guest to eat at their own pace. They should include everyone at the table in the conversation and see that the meal service proceeds pleasantly and smoothly. Details on types of table service are discussed in Chapter 13.

Some people have bigger appetites than others. Since guest may hesitate to ask for second helpings, the hostess or host must provide the opportunity in a tactful manner. When offering second helpings, avoid using the words "more" and "another." Instead, one might say, "May I serve you some meat and peas?" or "Help yourself to the casserole," as it is passed. If the offer is turned down, do not pressure the guest further.

When everyone appears finished, the host or hostess signals the end of the meal by placing his or her casually folded napkin on the table and suggesting that everyone move to the living room.

Guidelines for Guests

Thoughtful guests feel honored at being invited to dinner and show this gratitude by being courteous and sociable. They are sure to arrive on time, since punctuality is an essential part of good manners. Food may be ruined if it must be held for a guest who arrives late, causing the host and hostess embarrassment and inconvenience.

Polite guests avoid monopolizing the conversation or conversing with only one or two people at the table. They attempt to include everyone in the conversation and are prepared to meet and talk with new friends. If the host or hostess has not had the opportunity to introduce everyone, as can happen at a large party, guests may take the initiative and introduce themselves in a spirit of friendliness.

A host and hostess always appreciate a compliment that is warm and sincere. Special occasions call for a short thank-you note, which is properly sent within a few days of the party.

Most important, a guest should be relaxed and natural. Remember that your host and/or hostess want you to enjoy yourself. If in doubt about how to behave at the table, choose the most considerate action or watch your host and hostess for cues.

Suggestions for Eating Gracefully

Posture Good posture at the table gives a pleasing appearance. Remain natural and relaxed in your chair, which should be at a comfortable distance from the table, but do not lean on the table or recline in a slovenly way. Keep one hand in your lap most of the time, since using both hands may give the impression that you are getting your food down as fast as you can. Your elbows should never rest on the table while eating, but during casual meals you may place them on the table between courses or after eating.

Esthetics Taking small bites permits you to eat quietly with your lips closed. Eat slowly, finishing one bite before starting another. Contribute to pleasant, relaxed table conversation, but only after swallowing food, since talking with a full mouth is unattractive to others. Certain incredible items such as fruit pits or seeds need to be removed from the mouth in an inconspicuous manner. Use your fingers for small items, but place large items like meat gristle on your fork and carry them to your plate.

Some other unattractive habits to avoid are picking up a dish from the table while eating from it, blowing on soup or hot beverages to cool them, handling flatware, napkin rings, salt and pepper shakers, or other small items unnecessarily, and touching your face or hair while eating or serving food. If a particle of food is stuck between your teeth, leave the table to remove it, preferably at the end of the meal.

Accidents If an accident occurs at the table, take care of it as calmly as possible. Food spilled on table linens can be picked up with a fork or spoon and placed on the plate. If your beverage spills, wipe it up with a napkin. Never try to pick up silverware that has dropped on the floor until after the meal is over. If your hostess sees it drop, she may offer a replacement. In a restaurant, simply ask the waiter for another utensil. Apologize quickly for any mishap but avoid discussing it at length since that only makes others uncomfortable.

Coughing or Sneezing If you start to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or tissue and turn your head away from the table. If you have a long spell of coughing or sneezing, leave the table quickly and return when the situation is under control.

Reaching and Passing It is permissible to reach for needed items at the table if they are close enough to pick up without searching in front of anyone. Passing is more orderly if all items go in the same direction, usually counterclockwise (to the right). Keep the food moving until everyone has been served. Pass a pitcher with the handle toward the person receiving it. Also, be sure to pass appropriate serving utensils along with bowls or platters of food.

How Much to Eat It is no longer considered more polite to leave a small portion of food on your plate at the end of the meal. On the other hand, do not force yourself to eat everything on your plate if you feel satisfied already. If you wish to decline a second helping, just say "No, thank you." When the host or hostess asks whether you prefer one food or another, answer promptly and definitely. Refusing to state a preference can create an awkward situation.

Finger Food Most foods requires the use of knife, fork, or spoon, but some are correctly eaten with your fingers. There include artichokes, crisp, bacon, grapes, relish items like small pickles and olives, potato chips, and small sandwiches. Chicken that is not sticky or sauced may be eaten with the fingers at a casual dinner or picnic. Finger foods are usually small, crisp, and dry enough to prevent sticky fingers.

Napkins Before beginning to eat, place your napkin partly folded on your lap. During the meal use it to wipe your fingers below table level. You may lift to blot your lips gently when necessary, especially to avoid greasy lip prints on your water or wine glass. At the end of the meal, casually fold your napkin and lay on the table to the left of your place setting.

Flatware Some people appear puzzled when confronted by a large assortment of silver or flatware at their place setting. If several knives, forks, and spoons have been set by your plate, the proper order is to start with the outside ones and work your way in. When in doubt, follow the example of your host or hostess.

Americans use their knife and fork differently than Europeans, but both customs are proper as long as the flatware is handled comfortably and gracefully. To cut meat or other food, hold the fork in the left hand, tines down, and the knife in the right hand with your forefinger pointed toward the blade. Pierce the food with your fork to hold it still while you cut off enough for one bite. Americans then place the knife on the plate, shift the fork to the right hand, and carry the food to their mouth tines up. Europeans leave the fork in the left hand and carry the food to their mouth tines down.

In either case, eat each bite before cutting the next. Between bites, or at the end of the meal, lay the knife across the plate with the blade towards you, and the fork parallel to the knife near the center of the plate. This placement prevents the flatware from falling off the plate as the plate is removed from the table. Flatware that has been used is never returned to the table, since it would soil the table linens.

Handle a soup spoon lightly and spoon away from yourself. Never leave a used spoon in a cup, glass, or bowl, since this arrangement is awkward when clearing the table. Instead place it on the service place underneath.

Many excellent books on etiquette cover table manners in far greater depth. For more details, consult the suggested readings at the end of the chapter.