

Dining Etiquette



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Rawls College of Business

Whether you are sitting across the table at a job interview, or rubbing elbows with a stranger at a corporate event, your table manners speak volumes about your social skills and confidence level.

Here is the least you should know when it comes to sharing a meal:

1. At a business meal, men and women are responsible for seating themselves. At a business meal, men and women are gender neutral and each person seats themselves.

2. Watch your host. Before jumping into the bread basket or sweetening your iced tea, wait for the host of the table to lead the way. Generally, he or she will pick up the napkin and place it on his or her lap. Incidentally, once you place your napkin on your lap, it won't see the table again until the end of the meal when it is placed back on the table before departing.

3. Which is my water glass? An easy way to remember what goes where is B-M-W.
Bread plate is always on the left
Meal will be in the middle
Water glass will be on the right side of the place setting

4. Order smart. Stay away from messy foods like spaghetti, corn on the cob, ribs, pizza, and hard to eat or hold items. Cherry tomatoes will always spray the person sitting next to you – skip it when eating your salad.

5. Your cell phone should not be visible anywhere at the table. If you want to blow the job interview, show up holding your cell phone. Your full attention should be on the person sitting across from you, rather than an incoming call or text message. We recommend turning your phone off completely.

6. Never leave a spoon in the soup bowl.

Between bites, place your spoon on the plate, behind and beneath the soup bowl. Spoon the soup away from your body before bringing the soup to your mouth.

7. Cut only one piece of food at a time. Pace yourself and put your utensils down between bites. Use the proper form of “Resting” and “Finished”. It doesn't matter if your server doesn't recognize the Rest/Finish signal, you will appear more composed and your plate won't look as if it has been bulldozed with stray cutlery.

8. Sneeze and cough into your left shoulder. Never use your napkin as a tissue, and sneezing into the crook of your arm is reserved for school children. Turn your head left and use your left hand to shield your mouth when you cough or sneeze at the table. If you must blow your nose, excuse yourself and take care of the issue away from your table guests.

9. Salt and pepper travel together. Bread, salt, pepper, butter and other food items are passed to the right, counterclockwise.

This information is just the very basics and the more knowledge you gain, the more power and control you will show when it comes to looking and feeling your best at the table.

