

Business Dining Etiquette

Pre-Dinner Etiquette

- Arrive on time
- Call ahead if you know you will be late
- Wait 15 minutes before calling to check on the arrival status of your dinner partners

Sitting Down

- Do not place any bags, purses, sunglasses, cell phones, or briefcases on the table
- When you are all seated, gently unfold your napkin and place it on your lap, folded in half with the fold towards your waist
- Keep utensils in the same order they appear on the table
- Do not rearrange to accommodate yourself if you are left-handed
- Wait for all parties to arrive before beginning any part of the meal

Place Setting

- Solids on your left:
 - Forks
 - Butter plate
 - Napkin (may also be on your plate)
- Liquids on your right:
 - Glasses/Cups
 - Knives
 - Spoons
- Whether basic or formal place setting, use your utensils from the outside in
- Dessert utensils may be above the place setting or served with dessert

Eating Styles

- *Continental* or *European* style: cutting the food with the right hand and using the left hand to hold the food while cutting and when eating.
- *American* style: cutting the food with the right hand and holding the food with the left, then switching hands to eat with the right hand.
- Resting and finished utensil positions: see diagrams

Ordering

- When in doubt, follow the lead of the host
- Don't order the most expensive item
- Order simply
- Avoid finger foods or difficult foods that are difficult to eat
- In general, don't order alcohol at a business meal

Do's and Don'ts of Dining

- *General Etiquette*
 - Turn off cell phones and beepers
 - Have proper posture
 - Keep elbows off the table
 - Do not apply makeup or comb your hair at the table
- *Utensils*
 - Remember never to hold a utensil in a fist
 - Do not talk with your utensils
 - Set the utensils on your plate, not the table, when you are not using them
 - Do not use both hands simultaneously to hold utensils and cups
- *Napkins*
 - Use your napkin frequently
 - Do not use your napkin as a tissue
 - If you have to sneeze, turn your head away from the table
- *While Eating*
 - Wait for everyone to get their meal before starting yours
 - Don't talk with your mouth full
 - Don't chomp ice
 - Take small bites
 - Cut your salad into bite size pieces if necessary
 - Try to pace yourself to finish at the same time as everyone else
 - If you leave the table, excuse yourself and place your napkin on your seat
 - When you are finished eating, place your napkin neatly to the left of your plate, but do not push your place setting away from you

Helpful Hints

- Break your bread/rolls and butter each piece individually
- Gently stir your soup to cool it instead of blowing on it
- Spoon your soup away from you
- If something undesirable is in your mouth, discreetly remove it with your fork
- If you have any problems with the meal, quietly bring it to the waiter's attention

Paying the Bill

- You should prearrange how the bill is being paid
- Make sure the bill is accurate
- Tip appropriately
 - 15% for moderate service
 - 20% for excellent service