

Study Guide

Etiquette Hotline Table Manner



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OVERVIEW

Viewers of *Etiquette Hotline: Table Manners* eavesdrop on a fictional hotline as distressed callers query the experts on proper table manners. Some questions the hotline handles include:

I keep taking someone else's roll or drinking out of the wrong glass. How can I tell which is mine?

I feel clumsy using a knife and fork to cut meat. What's the correct way?

How do I know which fork or spoon to use?

How can I eat soup without sounding like a vacuum cleaner?

Is it OK to share food at a restaurant?

Is chicken a finger food?

What if someone asks me a question if my mouth is full?

Is it acceptable to cut a salad with a knife?

What is the difference between the American and continental methods of eating?

Can I put my elbows on the table?

What's the rule on tipping in a restaurant?

If I'm taken out to dinner I feel I shouldn't order something expensive. Is this right?

My date buttered bread like a brick mason. What do you think of this behavior?

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. Administer the pretest provided in this teaching guide prior to viewing the program. The answers are on the final page.

2. Have students bring plastic plates, glasses, and eating utensils to class. Have them practice setting a proper place setting after viewing **Etiquette Hotline**.

3. Hold a pot luck dinner at which students can practice proper table manners. Serve difficult to eat foods, such as spaghetti and soup.

Table Manners Pretest

Mark statements T for true, F for false.

- _____ 1. If you know you'll get spots on your clothes, then wear a napkin like a bib.
- _____ 2. A man should tuck his napkin into his belt.
- _____ 3. The roll plate is above the knife and spoon.
- _____ 4. People who eat continental style hold the fork in the left hand most of the time.
- _____ 5. It is all right to cut all your meat at one time.
- _____ 6. When finished eating, put your silverware on the tablecloth.
- _____ 7. A left-handed person should rearrange the place setting so the forks are on the right and the knife and spoon are on the left.
- _____ 8. It is acceptable to put forearms on the table.

- _____ 9. Cross your knife and fork on the plate to signal the waiter you have left the table but will return to finish your meal.
- _____ 10. It is all right to eat with one hand and drink with the other.
- _____ 11. It is impolite to share a dessert at a restaurant.
- _____ 12. It is all right to sneeze into your napkin.
- _____ 13. You should not blow your nose into a napkin.
- _____ 14. A dinner roll should be buttered whole.
- _____ 15. It is impolite to stir hot soup.
- _____ 16. It is impolite to tip a cup of soup to spoon up the last drops.
- _____ 17. French fries are finger food.
- _____ 18. Crisp bacon is finger food.

Etiquette Hotline: Table Manners Summary

Napkins

Unfold your napkin and place it in your lap as soon as everyone is seated. Lay a large napkin across your lap folded in half with the open edges towards you.

Use the napkin frequently to blot your lips. If you leave the table briefly, leave the napkin to the left of your plate, slightly folded over.

Don't put a napkin at you neck; bibs are for babies.

Table Setting

All silver (except for the dessert course) appears in the order used. Start with the utensils on the outside and work your way inward with each course.

Spoons, like the liquids we use them for, are on the right.

Here's the correct way to handle a knife and fork:

- To spear a piece of food, hold the fork in the left hand, with the forefinger pointing toward the prongs, which are also called tines.
- Hold the knife by the handle in the right hand. The forefinger points towards the blade, but does not rest on the blade. Cut off one piece of meat at a time.
- Never hold a knife, fork, or spoon in your fist.
- Shift the fork to the right hand. Now hold the handle slightly between the index finger and the second finger, thumb on the front side of the handle, almost as you hold a pencil.
- Forks, like the solids they serve, are on the left. Start with the outside fork first. The salad fork is smaller than the dinner fork. But in some restaurants the two forks will be the same size.

Continental Style

Europeans eat Continental style, using the left hand to both spear the food and put the food in their mouths.

American Style

Americans use the American Style to eat-- we call it the zig-zag method. Many of us get in trouble trying to juggle the American hand-switching act.

Left Handed Eating

You don't have to turn into a "righty" when eating a meal. Don't rearrange your place setting or leave your silver on the left hand side of the plate. The waiter will remove dishes from the right and needs to be able to lift the plate without the silver falling off.

Posture

Sit erect when you eat. Adjust your chair a comfortable distance from the table and keep your elbows at your sides. It is no longer a criminal offense if you rest your forearms on the table between courses. Many restaurants are noisy, and leaning forward helps conversation. It is unattractive to push your plate away, drape your arm over the back of the chair, and slouch when you are finished.

Talking with a full mouth

If you take only small bites, you won't have to answer a question with your mouth too full. It also helps to take a sip of water to help get the food down and gain an extra moment.

Leaving the Table

If you must excuse yourself during the meal, signal the waiter you intend to return by making an X with the knife and fork.

You can also leave your napkin on your chair.

Common Pet Peeves

Avoid chewing food with your mouth open while making smacking sounds that even a mother couldn't love. If your lips are together and touching, no slurpy sounds will escape. Chew quietly with your mouth closed.

Avoid eating with one hand and drinking with the other at the same time. Eat some food and set down your fork. Then pick up the glass with the same hand. Even if you are very rushed, take one food at a time.

Smoking and eating at the same time also ranks high on the list. If you must smoke, be sure you are in the smoking section and smoke only between courses and after the meal is over.

Making gestures with your silverware is also asking for trouble. Gestures add a lot to conversation, but don't turn your fork into a prop for telling your newest joke.

Dress Code

Conform to the dress code if there is one. If jeans aren't allowed, or men should wear jackets and ties, don't ask for an exception. Other customers may want a more formal atmosphere maintained.

Splitting Portions

There is no rule stating "Never split a dessert at a restaurant. If sharing a portion, request a knife and extra plate and divide the serving before anyone has taken a bite. Or, request the waiter to split the food for you.

Colds

It is acceptable to sneeze into your napkin. If a sneeze comes on very suddenly, do all you can to avoid donating your cold to others. You definitely wouldn't blow your nose into a napkin, however. If you know you have a cold, keep tissues or a handkerchief handy

Passing food

Pay attention to what is on the table near you-- be it salt and pepper, butter and rolls, salad dressing or gravy. Get things moving in a clockwise direction. If you want to get something passed to you, just ask. Don't reach for anything.

Tips

Waiters earn a very low hourly wage so it's important to leave a percentage of the bill in the form of gratuity. Leave fifteen percent of the total bill in a moderate restaurant. Twenty percent is common for a very expensive spot with exceptional service.

Rolls

Break off a small piece of a roll or slice of bread; don't cut it. Butter it over your plate, and finish eating the piece before you break off another.

Soup

Never blow on your soup. Stirring it a little will help cool it if necessary. Always spoon away from you. Bring the spoon to your lips; don't bend to meet it. Quietly sip from the side or end of the spoon. Tip the cup or bowl away from you for the last spoonfuls.

Salad

If the salad is served with your meal, use your dinner fork to eat it. If the salad is served separately, there will be a salad fork. Just remember to use your forks from the outside in.

Finger foods

Finger foods include pizza, french fries, grapes, corn on the cob, crisp bacon, crab legs, deep fried shrimp, sandwiches, fried chicken, strawberries, and spare ribs.

Bill

If you are hosting the meal, tell the restaurant when you make reservations. Or, quietly tell the waiter at the beginning of the meal that you are paying. Examine the bill to make sure it is correct.

Spaghetti

Hold a few strands against the edge of the plate with the end of your fork, twist the fork to wrap the spaghetti around the tines. When you have a nice neat coil, get as much to your mouth as possible and bite off the trailers. And don't suck up the ends with a loud slurp.

Taking Food Home

It is wasteful to leave perfectly good food on your plate that will end up in a garbage can. Just ask the waiter to wrap the left-overs.

Removing Unwanted Food

Cover your mouth with your napkin while removing unwanted food, be it an olive pit or meat gristle. Put a pit into your hand. Or, if it went into your mouth on a fork, it can exit on the fork.

Catsup and Salt

It's insulting to your host and to a fancy restaurant to ask for catsup for a high quality main dish. Salting food before you taste it is another insult to a good cook. Only season food when you are certain it's necessary.

Poor Service of Food

If your food is not well prepared or the service is bad, politely tell the waiter or manager your opinion. If food is totally unacceptable, the restaurant should offer to replace it with another item.

Dropped Silverware

If you drop silverware in a restaurant ask for a replacement and leave the other on the floor. If you are dining in someone's house, pick it up and ask for another.

Last Done Eating

If you are always the last one done at the table, either step up your pace or skip a course so that you finish the same time as others.

Table Hopping

Most restaurant customers consider table hopping obnoxious. Table hopping usually inconveniences waiters, who must work around the hopper.

Grooming

Do not comb your hair at the table. Your hair could easily find it's way to somebody's food. Make-up touches belong in the rest room, not in public. If you have food caught in your teeth, do not remove it at the table.

Handbags

Do not leave handbags or briefcases on the table. It clutters the table, and secondly, it isn't sanitary.

Answer Key to Pretest

1. F 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. F
7. F 8. T 9. T 10. F 11. F 12. T
13. T 14. F 15. F 16. F 17. T 18. T