Dining Etiquette



What is Dining Etiquette?

- A set of rules that govern the expectations of social and dining behavior in a workplace, group or society.
- Table manners are visible signs that you are a polished and knowledgeable professional.



Why Interview Over a Meal?

- Employers need to trust you can represent them in social settings with customers, clients, colleagues and competitors. They will be watching your dining manners. Why?
- The focus is on the interview, not the food!
- Eat a light snack before you go. Why?
 - It's NOT about the food!

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For Today:

- You have been invited to an interview at a local restaurant for lunch.
- You know the names of the people you will be meeting from the email invite.
- You know the specifics like date, time, place.
- You have applied for the position and have had a phone screen.



What do you need to do BEFORE the interview/lunch?

- Make sure you know where you're going! Don't trust your phone! Arrive on time!
- Check out the menu especially if you have dietary restrictions! Why?
- Link with those attending on LinkedIn. Why?
- Read the paper/watch the news/know what's going on in the world. Why?
- What 2 things do you NOT talk about?



When you arrive at the restaurant:

- What do you do if you don't see the people you are meeting?
- Introduce yourself and wait to be suggested where to sit.
- How do you know what to do/when to do?
- What's the role of the employer throughout the meal/interview?



How to get started:

- How do you know what to order?
- What about alcohol?
- What to do if you get the wrong order/food?
- Tricks/attempts to make you mess up!
- Wait for employer to bring up business matters. Why?



Table Settings

- Put napkin on lap as soon as host does.
 Napkins remain on your lap until completion of meal. Never use as a bib.
- If napkin falls on the floor, signal a member of the serving staff for a new one.
- Pick up silverware from the outside in toward your plate.





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Let's understand the table setting:

- What goes where? Understanding what you have, what it's used for, and when to use certain elements of the place setting.
- Coffee cup & saucer never leaves table. It can also be used as a trash spot. ^(C)
- Difference in round table vs. oblong.
- What, who, how and when to pass.



Passing

- Salt and pepper are always passed together, as is the packet container.
- Food is served from the left and dishes are cleared from the right.
- Everything gets passed to the right. If you are first to take the bread basket, offer to your left first, take your piece, then pass to the right.
- When butter is passed, take enough for yourself and place it on the edge of your B&B plate.



Courses

- Appetizer
- Soup
- Salad
- Entrée
- Dessert
- Plated verses served

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Ordering

- Take your lead from the employer when ordering.
- Do not order the most expensive item on the menu. Why?
- Order something that will be easy to eat and not messy – no spaghetti, chicken wings, ribs, etc.
- Do not order alcohol! If the host orders a bottle of wine and insists, only take sips from ONE glass.



Eating Tips

- Eat rolls by tearing off bite size pieces and buttering only one piece at a time.
- Cut your salad if the leaves are too large.
- 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.



Utensils

- Do not make a fist around the handle of the utensil.
- Continental style: cut food one bite at a time, use the fork in left hand, tines down, to spear the food and bring to mouth.
- American Standard style: cut food a few bites at a time, lay the knife across the plate (sharp edges toward you), and switch fork to right hand to eat.





Service

- Wait for the employer to pick up his/her fork to eat first.
- Wait until everyone at the table has been served before beginning to eat.
- Never reach across the table for something, always ask for it to be passed.
- Keep pace with your dining partners, don't finish too far ahead or too far behind. Why?
- Take small bites! You'll be answering questions.



More on Service

- "Eat from the outside in."
- Use one utensil for each course, but keep your knife if you used it for salad.
- Unused silverware is left on the table.
- Never put dirty silverware directly on the table, use your plate or bread/butter plate.
- Kill the wait staff with kindness. Reflection of how you treat others!

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More Eating Tips

- Do not talk with food in your mouth.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Do not blow on your soup to cool it; stir it gently to cool off. Spoon soup away from you to eat.
- Do not leave the spoon in the bowl put it on the saucer/platter.
- Never rest your elbows on the table forearms are ok.
- Taste your food before seasoning it. Why?



Even More Eating Tips

- For hard to scoop items, use your knife or a piece of bread to push the items onto your fork.
- If you don't like something, don't eat it, but don't make a big deal out of it.
- If you don't like coffee or don't want anymore refills, simply place your hand over the cup when offered, or tell the waiter "no, thank you."



When You Are Finished

- Lay your fork and knife (sharp side of knife inward), at the 4:00/10:00 position.
- Leave plate where it is don't push it away.
- Used napkin goes to the left your plate, not on top of the plate.
- Do not ask for a doggy bag or to-go bag. Why?
- Do not ask for a toothpick.
- Do not offer to pay; host pays.



Common Sense Etiquette

- Turn off phone before any meal or interview, better yet, don't take your phone to the interview/lunch.
- Men should never wear a hat at the table.
- Do not smoke before or at an interview meal. Why?
- Excuse yourself to go to the restroom to blow your nose – don't blow your nose into your napkin.



Additional Tips

- If you drop a utensil, pick it up and ask for a new one. If you can't reach it, let the server know it's down there.
- What happens if you spill?
- If you need to excuse yourself, put your napkin on the back of your chair or next to your plate.

Final Etiquette Points

- Use "please" and "thank-you" and always be polite to the wait staff.
- Remember: the main point of the meal is the interview, **not the food**.
- Follow up with any reimbursements, mileage, etc. as directed! Follow directions!
- Always send a thank-you note for the interview and the meal.



Questions?

Indiana Tech Career Center Andorfer 229 CareerCenter@IndianaTech.Edu 260-422-5561 ext. 2217 www.CareerCenter.IndianaTech.Edu

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