



Going smoothly: Denise Anne Taylor demonstrates how to bring the food up to the mouth while sitting straight, rather than eating while hunched over the plate.

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hunch over the plate and scoop food to the mouth as opposed to bringing it up to the mouth," she said.

But sitting straight and bringing a fork smoothly up to her mouth, she demonstrated the proper way. "You want to bring the food up to you."

No matter which style is used,

she said, the key is to use the fork and knife with ease and confidence.

Taylor said that teaching the skills is rewarding.

"I feel this is my way of helping people understand it's not such a scary experience. It's all about awareness. Even if they learn one thing that they didn't

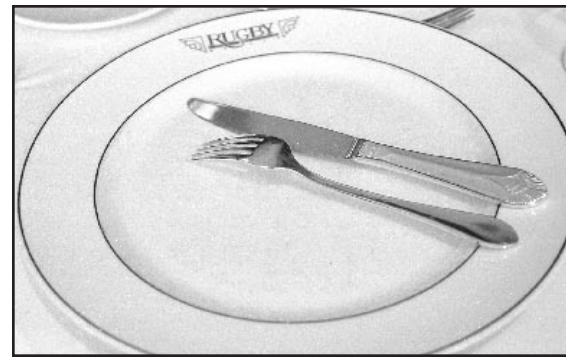
know before, it gives them more confidence, and I feel like I have done my job."

"When people think of etiquette, they think of formality," she added. "And really it's about civility, and about treating people with respect and courtesy."

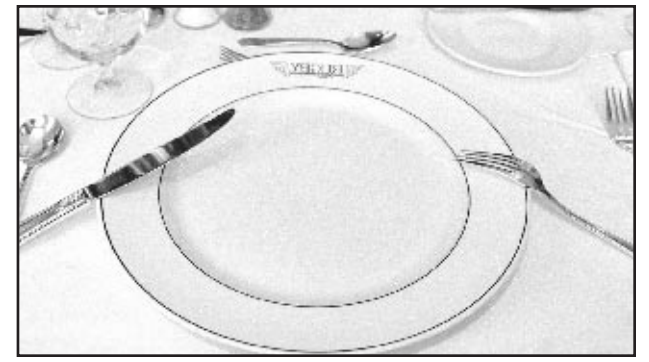
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Photos by
Guy Warren



Do: Leave your knife and fork in the 10:20 o'clock position when done eating.



Don't: Leave your knife and fork apart like this when done eating.

Do's and Don'ts

Here are table manner tips

Following are some "Dining Do's and Don'ts" from The Protocol School of Washington.

The Do's:

Do try a little of everything served to you unless you know you're allergic to a certain food.

Do avoid talking with your mouth full. Take small bites, and you'll find it's easier to answer questions or join in table talk.

Do wait until you have swallowed the food in your mouth before you take a sip of your beverage.

Do take a quick sip of water if a bite of food is too hot.

Do remember solids (food) are always on your left, liquids (beverages) are on your right.

Do leave your plate where it is when you have finished eating, with the knife and fork in the 10:20 o'clock position. Place the tips of the utensils at 10 and the handles at 4.

Do carry food to your mouth with an inward, not an outward, curve of the fork or spoon.

Do look into, not over, the cup or glass when drinking.

Do butter bread on the plate, never in midair.

Do remember your posture at the table. Sit up straight and keep your arms (including

elbows) off the table.

Do leave dropped silver on the floor. Quietly signal the wait staff (waitron) to bring another piece.

Do point out to your wait staff stones, bugs, or hair in your food, but do so in a non-combative manner. You'll get a replacement immediately.

Do remove alien objects from your mouth with your fingers and place them at the edge of your plate.

The Don'ts:

Don't, in serving, overload the plates.

Don't, in eating, overload the fork.

Don't, under any circumstances, put the knife in the mouth.

Don't mop the face with the napkin.

Don't spread your elbows when cutting meat. Keep them close to your sides when eating.

Don't saw the meat in a back and forth motion. Stroke it toward you.

Don't chew with your mouth open.

Don't smack your lips.

Don't touch your face or head at the table.

Don't tip up the glass or cup too much when drinking, but keep it at a slight angle.

Don't drink from the saucer.

Don't twist your feet around the legs of the chair. Both feet should rest flat on the floor.

Don't lean back in your chair. All four legs of the chair should rest on the floor.

Don't reach across the table or across another person to get something. If it's out of reach, ask the closest person to pass it to you.

Don't pick your teeth at the table, either with a toothpick or with your fingers. If something gets caught in your teeth, excuse yourself and take care of the problem in the privacy of the restroom.

Don't push your plate away from you when you've finished eating.

Don't gesture with your knife, fork, or spoon in your hand. If you're not using the utensil, put it down.

Don't talk about your personal food likes and dislikes while eating.

Don't eat your neighbor's bread or salad. A right-handed person reaches to the left across the dinner plate to eat salad. The bread and butter plate is placed slightly above the salad plate. (Remember, solids [foods] on the left.)



■ 'Etiquette is really about civility, and about treating people with respect and courtesy.'

Denise Anne Taylor
—Etiquette consultant

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