

# Corey Bruns' Quick guide to Formal Dining

## **The Napkin:**

As soon as you are seated, remove the napkin from your place setting, unfold it, and put it in your lap. Do not shake it open.

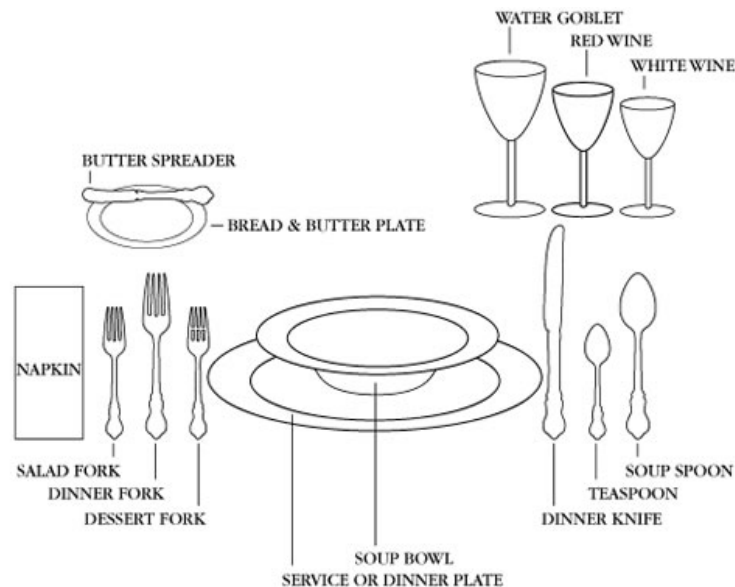
The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal. Don't clean the cutlery or wipe your face with the napkin. NEVER use it to wipe your nose!

If you excuse yourself from the table, loosely fold the napkin and place it to the left or right of your plate. Do not refold your napkin or wad it up on the table either. Never place your napkin on your chair.

At the end of the meal, leave the napkin semi-folded at the left side of the place setting. It should not be crumpled or twisted; nor should it be folded. The napkin must also not be left on the chair.

## **When to Start eating?**

Wait until all are served at your table before beginning to eat.



**Use the silverware farthest from your plate first.**

**Here's the Silverware and dinnerware rule: Eat to your left, drink to your right. Any food dish to the left is yours, and any glass to the right is yours.**

**Remember the rule to work from the outside in and you'll be fine.**

### **All that Silverware!**

The American Technique: Knife in right hand, fork in left hand holding food. After a few bite-sized pieces of food are cut, place knife on edge of plate with blades facing in. Eat food by switching fork to right hand (unless you are left handed). A left hand, arm or elbow on the table is bad manners.

Once used, your utensils (including the handles), **must not touch the table again**. Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate in the 4:20 position.

For more formal dinners, from course to course, your tableware will be taken away and replaced as needed. **To signal that you are done with the course, rest your fork, tines up, and knife blade in, with the handles resting at five o'clock and tips pointing to ten o'clock on your plate (4:20).**

Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

### **When being served food:**

Food is served from the left. Dishes are removed from the right.

Always say please when asking for something. At a restaurant, be sure to say thank you to your server and bus boy after they have removed any used items.

Butter, spreads, or dips should be transferred from the serving dish to your plate before spreading or eating.

### **Passing dishes or food:**

Pass food from the left to the right. Do not stretch across the table, crossing other guests, to reach food or condiments.

If another diner **asks for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table-mate asks for only one of them**. This is so dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers.

Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.

**Do NOT talk with food in your mouth!** This is very rude and distasteful to watch! Wait until you have swallowed the food in your mouth.

Always taste your food before seasoning it. Usually the hostess has gone to a lot of work making sure the food served is delicious to her standards. **It is very rude to add salt and pepper before tasting the food.**

Don't blow on your food to cool it off. If it is too hot to eat, take the hint and wait until it cools.

Always scoop food, using the proper utensil, **away from you.**

Cut only enough food for the next mouthful (**cut no more than two bites of food at a time**). Eat in small bites and slowly.

Do eat a little of everything on your plate. If you do not like the food and feel unable to give a compliment, **just keep silent.** It is acceptable to leave some food on your plate if you are full and have eaten enough. If the food served is not to your liking, it is polite to at least attempt to eat a small amount of it. It is never acceptable to ask a person why they have not eaten all the food. Don't make an issue if you don't like something or can't eat it - **keep silence.**

Do not "play with" your food or utensils. Never wave or point silverware. Do not hold food on the fork or spoon while talking, nor wave your silverware in the air or point with it.

### **Table Manners:**

**Unfold your napkin and place it on your lap within 1 minute of sitting at the table to dine.** When you are finished with your dinner, place it loosely on the table, not on the plate and never on your chair.

Keep elbows off the table. Keep your left hand in your lap unless you are using it.

Do not talk with your mouth full. Chew with your mouth closed.

**Don't clean up spills with your own napkin and don't touch items that have dropped on the floor.** You can use your napkin to protect yourself from spills. Then, simply and politely ask your server

to clean up and to bring you a replacement for the soiled napkin or dirty utensil.

*Loud eating noises such as slurping and burping are very impolite. **The number one sin of dinner table etiquette!***

Say "Excuse me," or "I'll be right back," before leaving the table. **Do not say that you are going to the restroom.**

Do not push your dishes away from you or stack them for the waiter when you are finished. **Leave plates and glasses where they are.**

Information in this guide taken from:

<http://whatscookingamerica.net/Menu/DiningEtiquetteGuide.htm>

For more information on a topic, please click the above link, or read John Bridges' book: How to be a Gentleman (Corey has a copy, he loans!)