



TABLE MANNERS

Table Service

An attractive, well-set table is an excellent background for a pleasant meal and perfect table manners.

There is no one service that is correct for every family. Each home should select the style that suits its needs and equipment, that is as to whether the mother or father serves the meat and vegetables, or whether the food is passed.

The Cloth

THE COVER for the table has only three important limitations, it must be clean, neatly pressed and must harmonize somewhat with the dishes and centerpiece used with it. It may be linen or cotton or oilcloth; it may be fine or coarse in texture; it may be white or cream or gay in color; and in design it may be simple or elaborate.

A silence cloth is usually placed under the table cloth to protect the table, improve the appearance of the cloth and deaden the clatter of dishes. It consists of a piece of white table felt, quilted padding, blanket, asbestos lined padding, or other heavy washable material cut to fit the top of the table.

If such a cloth is made at home a paper pattern should be cut accordingly. The edge should be bound neatly with cotton tape about three-fourths of an inch wide, being careful to catch the tape on both sides of the cloth with one stitching. If the family table linen does not include a silence cloth it is suggested that one be made.

The tablecloth is always placed so that the lengthwise fold runs along the exact center of the table and hangs 8 or 12 inches over the edge on all sides. No extra doilies for flowers are needed.

If the table top is nicely finished, ~~rectangular-pl~~aced doilies may be used instead of a cloth. Attractive ones are made of paper, oilcloth, ginghams, waffle-weave or other cottons and linens. Each should be large enough to hold the dishes and silverware of one person. In this case the centerpiece is usually placed on a scarf or doily which matches the place doilies.

The Centerpiece

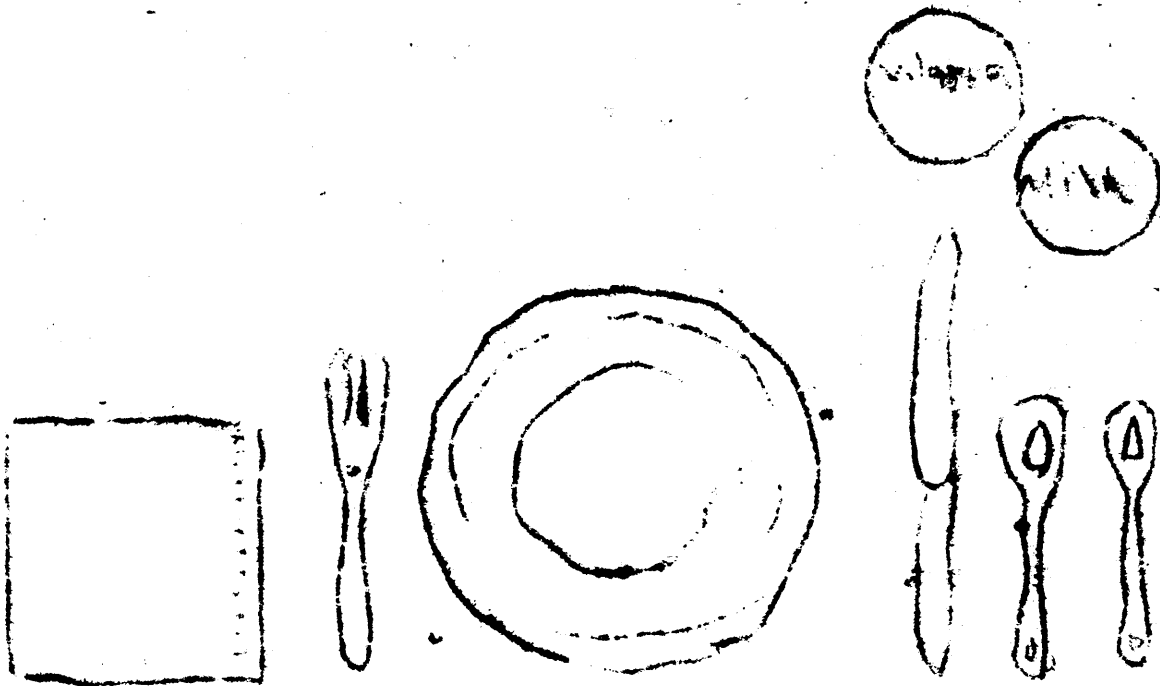
The centerpiece is an arrangement of flowers or fruit or vegetables or ornamental china or glassware in the center of the table to add color and interest to the table. It should be attractive in form and color, not offensive in odor, and never so high that persons on opposite sides of the table cannot see each other easily. Pots of low flowers, low bouquets, bowls of fruit or vegetables make pleasing centerpieces. Sweet potatoes or other vegetables growing in bowls of water or sprigs of ivy in a globe, or wandering Jew are inexpensive and easily cared for. Plants must be washed off occasionally, because they accumulate dust badly and then do not look clean or fresh either. Paper flowers are not attractive, because of their stiffness and unnatural gaudiness, and because they so quickly become dust laden.

The Cover

What is called "the cover" includes napkin, silver, glassware, china and table space for one person. It takes from 20 to 26 inches along the edge of the table.

Silver, china and napkin are placed so that they are about an inch from the edge of the table. The knife rests next to the plate with the cutting edge toward the plate. Spoons are placed at the right of the knife bowls up. The fork rests at the left of the plate with tines up. If the table is round the cover is laid in a straight line and does not follow the curve of the table.

The water glass is placed at the tip of the knife and the milk to the right of that, a little closer to the edge of the table. The napkin is at the left of the cover with the open end at the lower right of the napkin, near the handle of the fork.



If a bread and butter plate is used, it is placed above the fork. The butter spreader may be placed across it parallel with the edge of the table. This is an example of the general rule, that all dishes and silverware are placed parallel or at right angles to the edge of the table, never diagonally.

Glasses of fruit juice or small sauce dishes should always have a small plate under them.

Chairs are placed so that the seats are just touching the table cloth.

Dishes of food are placed so that the table will have a neat appearance. Silver for serving lays at the right of the dish parallel to the edge of the table, with the handle toward the nearest cover. No dish should be so full that there is danger of spilling it. Water glasses should be filled within three-fourths of an inch of the top of the glass.

TABLE CUSTOMS

In "Manners for Millions," we find these suggestions concerning table customs.

"Men should not sit down at table until women are seated. The men pull back the chairs for the women; as soon as grace is finished, when the hostess takes her napkin, each one at the table opens his napkin in half and lays it across his lap. Never begin eating until the hostess does, remember to eat slowly, chewing food quietly with the mouth closed. Never play with your silver. The greatest compliment you can pay those who have prepared the food, is to eat everything served you. It is correct to take a second helping if you so desire if you don't care for a second helping say, "No, thank you," or "No, I thank you." If you desire a second helping, or food that has not been offered you one might say:

"May I have a little dressing?"

May I have some jelly, please?"

Do you suppose that I might have a pickle?"

When passing the cream and sugar, pass the containers so that the handles are turned toward the other person and may be grasped easily.

Other little pointers might well include remembering never to blow food to cool it, never pour a hot drink from a cup to saucer to cool it, never lick the fingers no matter how sticky they might be, do not handle food which you are not going to take upon your own plate, and never use own knife for butter.

Using the Silver

The knife is used only for cutting or spreading and is then placed on the plate. When cutting the meat, the fork is held in the left hand, tines down, and the knife is held in the right hand. Cut one small piece at the time, eating it before cutting the next. When the knife is not being used, lay it across the right side of the plate, sharp edge toward the center.

When passing plate for second helping, the knife and fork are left parallel at the side of the plate, not placed on the table cloth.

When the meal is finished, lay both the knife and fork side by side across the right side of the plate; the knife toward the right, sharp edge toward the center; the fork is left next to the knife, near the center, tines up.

Serving the Meal

The ideal meal assumes that all the family will be present, and may begin by invoking the blessing. A few simple sentences, such as these two by Robert Louis Stevenson's are all that are necessary: "We thank thee for this place in which we dwell, for the love that unites us, for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind."

An invocation sung at many dinners is also suitable for family meals:

"For health and strength and daily food we praise thy name, O Lord."

To Make Meals More Attractive

1. Always serve at least one hot food at a meal.
2. Be sure foods which are supposed to be hot are served hot, and cold foods served cold. This can be done by keeping the food on the stove or in the refrigerator or until served. Chilled or heated dishes help to keep the temperature of the food as it should be.
3. Serve and remove all dishes from the left except the beverages, which are placed, filled or removed at the right of the person seated.
4. Simple meals are best, and simple garnishes such as paprika, parsley, lettuce, pimento, whipped cream and nuts are most attractive, but are seldom necessary at breakfast.
5. Do not allow smears to be on serving dishes.

6. Never serve scorched or burned food or food which has absorbed off flavor or has begun to spoil.
7. Serve the meal on time.

Little Points of Table Etiquette to Remember

"Thoughtfulness of others is the basis of good manners."

1. It is usually most convenient to sit down and rise from the table from the left side of the chair.
2. Unfold the napkin below the edge of the table and lay it across the lap.
3. When all are served, start eating.
4. Sit erect. Keep elbows off the table and rather close at the sides.
5. Always be thoughtful of others. See that the ones near you are served, and that the food near you is passed.
6. Do not attempt to talk while food is in the mouth.
7. Salad is always eaten and cut with the fork.
8. Crackers are broken, eaten with fingers and not crumbled into the soup.
9. Do not butter a whole slice of bread or toast at one time. Break it into three or four pieces and butter each of them just before it is eaten.
10. Ordinary sandwiches should be broken if possible and the piece being eaten held in one hand. Extremely small sandwiches need not be broken.
11. In cutting food, hold the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left. In this case the tines of the fork point downward holding the food, and the index finger holds the fork firmly. When eating food, the fork is held in the right hand with the tines up.
12. Corn on the cob should be served in pieces small enough to be held easily with one hand.
13. When not in use the knife and fork are placed across the upper right hand side of the plate, the edge of the knife toward the center of the plate and the tines of the fork up.
14. Never reach in front of a person.
15. Eat quietly and slowly, lips closed.

16. A spoon should never be ~~left in a glass or cup~~ after tasting the beverage to see if the flavor and temperature are acceptable. Place it on the saucer or plate which underlines it.

17. One should eat what is served, even if only a little. Comments on the disliked food are inconsiderate of the person who planned or prepared the meal. The old idea of leaving part of the food on the plate is quite out of fashion.

18. The spoon is used for all soft foods which cannot be eaten with a fork.

19. Never use a toothpick in public.

20. Conversation at the table should be pleasant. Do not discuss food.

21. There are certain foods that may be taken with the fingers, others that are only taken with a fork or a spoon. Some of those that are taken with the fingers are bread, olives, pickles, celery, fruits, nuts, candies. Baked potatoes are eaten from the shell.

22. It is courteous and thoughtful of a boy to seat his mother even at breakfast.

23. In handling a glass, cup, spoon, or fork, always try to avoid touching the part that goes into the mouth.

24. If you have an accident at the table, as upsetting a glass of water, do not make a big fuss about it; you are sorry, and your hostess reassures you "That is nothing at all." The best one can do is to be extremely careful.

25. One should remain at the table--until all have finished the meal; you may leave the table by asking the hostess, "May I be excused,"

26. If there are guests, allow them to enter the dining room first. The place of honor for a man guest is at the right of the hostess; for a woman guest at the right of the host. At home the husband and wife are the host and hostess.