

Dining Etiquette



CENTER FOR CAREER SERVICES AND COOPERATIVE
EDUCATION
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Workshop Outline



- Dining Etiquette
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- Before the Interview Date
- The Handshake
- Napkin Use
- Table setting
- Ordering
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Dining Etiquette...



- is a set of rules that serve as tools to help you appear polished and professional.
- is an integral part in making favorable impressions and speaks of your professionalism.
- is essential for your success.

Why a Lunch/Dinner Interview?



- Employers would like to evaluate your social skills and see if you can handle yourself gracefully under pressure.
- More deals are struck over lunch than in the office and you may be the one representing the company.

Before the Interview



- Check the restaurant for the dress code and the menu a day before the meeting. Pick out two or three dishes that appear easy to handle and that are reasonable in price.
- Have a light snack before the interview so that you can concentrate more on satisfying the interviewer and not your hunger.

The Handshake



- Be standing, smile, and maintain eye contact.
- Use the “web-to-web”.
- Use their name during the handshake.
- If you are unable to give a handshake due to a disability or injury, offer the courtesy of an explanation.

Table Setting



- You will find glassware, cup and saucer, knives, and spoons to the right of your plate.
- You will find a bread and butter plate, butter knife, salad plate, napkin, and forks to the left of your plate.
- Just remember “solids on your left and liquids to your right”.

Ordering



- An employer will generally suggest that your order be taken first.
- If there are items you are uncertain about, then ask your server before ordering them.
- You should not order one of the most expensive items on the menu or more than two courses unless indicated by your host.
- Avoid messy foods (big sandwiches, ribs, chicken on the bone, spaghetti) or alcoholic beverages even if your host suggests any of these items.

Napkin Use: Before the Meal



- The meal begins when the host unfolds his or her napkin. This is your signal to do the same.
- Typically, you want the napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down, but follow the host's lead.
- Place your napkin on your lap completely unfolded if it is small luncheon napkin or in half if it is a large dinner napkin.

Napkin Use: During the Meal



- The napkin remains on your lap throughout the entire meal and should only be used to gently blot the corners of your mouth when needed.
- If you need to leave the table during the meal, place your napkin on your chair to indicate that you will be returning.

Napkin Use: After the Meal



- The host will signal the the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table.
- Place your napkin neatly on the table to the right of your dinner plate (not folded or crumpled).

During the Meal: Which Fork Do I Use?!



- Begin with the knife, fork, or spoon that is furthest from your plate and work your way in using one utensil for each course.
- Your dessert spoon and fork are above your plate or brought out with dessert.

During the Meal : Utensils (cont.)



- Hold the knife in your right hand and the fork in your left with the tines down to cut a few bite-size pieces.
- Lay the knife across the top edge of your plate with the sharp edge of the blade facing in.
- Change the fork from your left to your right hand to eat, tines facing up (Lefties keep the fork in the left hand).

During the Meal: Utensils (cont.)



- If a utensil falls to the floor, pick it up only if it is close by. Ask the waiter for another utensil.
- Never place any used utensil back on the table. If you need to put the fork or knife down, place it on your plate (tines down, blade in).

During the Meal: Bread and Soup



- Eat bread by tearing off small bite-size pieces and buttering only the piece you are preparing to eat.
- When eating soup, spoon it away from you. Do not blow on it if it is too hot. Wait for it to cool. Leave the soup spoon in the bowl when you have finished.

During the Meal: Food Casualties!



- If food spills off your plate, pick it up with your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
- Never spit bad food into the napkin. Remove it from your mouth with the utensil or your fingers .

During the Meal



- Talk about pleasant, uncontroversial topics.
- If you need something that you cannot reach easily, politely ask the person closest to the item to pass it to you.
- If someone asks for the salt, always pass the salt and the pepper, and do not use it first.

During the Meal:

Do not...



- leave the table during the meal (only if necessary).
- season your food before you taste it.
- talk with your mouth full or chew loudly.
- smoke under any circumstances.

During the Meal: Do not... (cont.)



- leave lipstick stains on the glassware.
- gesture with your silverware.
- eat too quickly.
- have poor posture.

When You Have Finished



- Leave the plate in the place setting and place your unfolded napkin to the right of it.
- Lay the knife blade facing inward and the fork, tines down, to the left of the knife onto your plate. The knife and fork should be placed as if they are pointing to the numbers 10 and 4.
- Do not leave a used spoon in a cup, place it on the saucer.

When You Have Finished (cont.)



- Let the prospective employer pay the check.
- Remember to say “thank-you” .
- Within a week, send a thank-you note to everyone you met expressing your interest in the position and your appreciation for the interview.

When You Have Finished (cont.)



- Do not expect a job offer at the end of the day, but be prepared to give your impressions of the day if asked.
- If the interviewer doesn't tell you what to expect next, ask what are the next steps in the process (when they might tell you their decision, whether they need your transcripts and references).

Useful Websites



- American Table Manners
<http://www.cuisinenet.com/glossary/tableman.html>
- Japanese Dining Etiquette
<http://library.thinkquest.org/20013/quize.htm>
<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2005.html>
- Dining Etiquette Advice
<http://www.westernsilver.com/etiquette.html>

Bon Appetit!



Thank you for completing our workshop. For further info visit our website at www.montclair.edu/CareerServices

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