

## Chapter 6

# Putting It All Together

### Table Presentation

Table decorations do not have to be elaborate. However, an attractive and clean table decor and accessories stimulate the appetite as much as well-prepared food. A nice centerpiece for the table might be enough.

Always be sure the table is attractive and immaculately clean. Allow plenty of elbow room, about 30 inches from the center of one plate service to the center of the next. Food, centerpiece, table service, linens — all should coordinate but do not have to match.

It does not matter whether the meal is formal or informal. The rules do not change. The flatware (knives, forks, spoons), plates, and glasses are arranged in basically the same way. Along with the plates, glasses, and flatware, a well-set table also includes a table covering, such as a tablecloth or placemats, as well as napkins and a centerpiece or other table decorations. You might prefer a table runner that goes down the middle of the table and hangs down the ends.

### Centerpiece

A centerpiece gives a finishing touch to a set table, and it adds to the beauty of the meal. It can be placed in the center, to the side, or at one end of the table, as long as the table looks well-balanced. If placed in the center of the table, the centerpiece should be low enough for people to see each other easily across the table. The centerpiece should be suited in color and scale to the foods being served.

Flowers should not have a detectable scent. The height of candle flames should be either below or substantially above the eye level of seated guests.

### Centerpiece ideas

- ◆ A vase or a bowl filled with flowers — real, silk, or dried
- ◆ One or two potted plants
- ◆ A bowl or basket with fruits and nuts, or vegetables

### Candles

- ◆ One or two, or several grouped together, of different heights and widths.

Your ideas

---

---

---

---



## Setting the Table

A *place setting*, or *cover*, includes all the flatware, the glasses, the dishes, and the napkins used by each person at a table. Allow 30 inches of space for each cover so that people are not crowded, and the table does not look cluttered. All pieces in the place setting should be lined up straight. The plate, the flatware, and the bottom of the napkins should be set one inch up from the edge of the table.

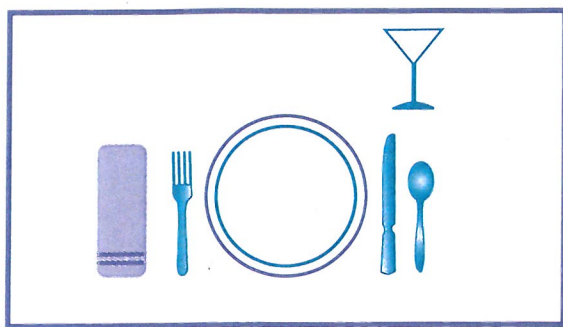
1. The plate is placed in the center of the cover area.
2. The flatware is placed in the order it will be used, with the pieces to be used first on the outside. Correct silverware placement:
  - The forks go on the left side of the plate.
  - The knife is placed on the right with the cutting edge toward the plate.
  - The spoon is placed to the right of the knife.
  - The soup spoon is placed to the extreme right.
  - Flatware to be used first is the farthest from the plate.
  - Never have more than three pieces of flatware at either side of the plate.
  - A dessert fork or spoon can be brought in with the dessert or placed at the top of the plate parallel to the edge of the table.
  - Individual butter spreaders rest at the top of the bread plate parallel to the table's edge.
3. The napkin can be placed next to the fork, or it can be folded in an interesting way and placed on the plate or in the glass. When placed next to the fork, the exposed corners face the bottom left to make it easy to pick up the napkin by one corner, let it drop and unfold completely before placing on the lap.
4. The water glass is placed just above the tip of the knife.
5. An extra glass for milk or an iced drink is placed to the right of the water glass and slightly below it. An iced-tea spoon is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
6. When a bread-and-butter or salad plate is used, place it on the left, just above the forks.
7. If a cup and saucer is placed with setting, it should be at the right of the plate, and below the glass.
8. A soup bowl should be placed in the center of the serving plate. The soup spoon goes on the right on the outside, since it will be used first.
9. For large crowds, salt and pepper containers are placed for every four to six people.

### Remember

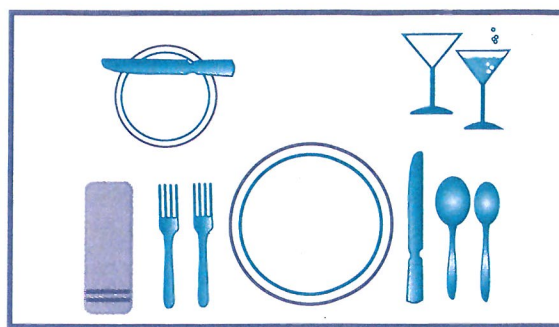
Handle silverware by the handles only, never by the eating surfaces.

Place serving pieces to the right of the serving dish.

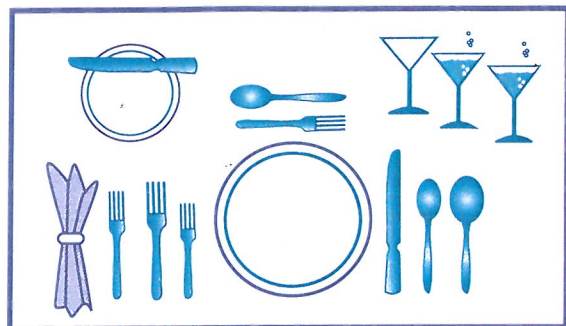
Fill glasses from the right; never lift the glass from the table when pouring.



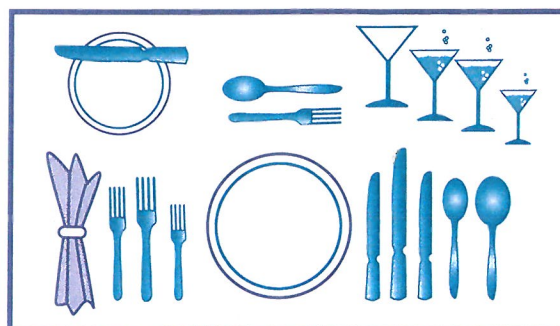
Casual



Informal



Formal



Very Formal

## Table Service

The kind of menu you plan should depend on the way you will serve. Will guests be standing? Will they be sitting at a table? Will they be seated on the floor? The type of party should be considered as you plan your table service and menu.

### Family Style

All of the food is placed on the table in serving dishes and platters. The dishes are passed around the table as each person helps himself or herself. In some families, the host may carve a roast or a turkey and serve it to the guests. Other dishes are then passed family style.

Another informal way of serving is to have people serve themselves from food in the kitchen. They then bring their plates to the table to eat.

### Buffet Service

At a buffet, all the food and the tableware are arranged on a table, and the guests serve themselves. Serving buffet style is easy to manage; it leaves the hosts with more time to spend with the guests. It is also ideal when there is not enough room for a large group of people to have a sit-down meal at a table.

There are no strict rules as to the way a buffet table should be arranged. However, the serving should go in a logical and smooth way. The plates should be first. The napkins and flatware may be next or at the end of the table to be picked up last. The main course will come after the plates, followed by vegetables, salad, and bread.