

#GUIDES

# The dining etiquette

Sometimes, table manners can be quite challenging when you are about to eat with someone whom you have never known before, that too, in a professional environment.

But worry not because this week, we will be discussing how to master dining etiquette rules which will have a decent and playful impression over your clients.

## Hosting etiquette

Choose a place of absolute serenity; a noisy atmosphere might distract your guests from discussing confidential matters with you. Your guest deserves the best seat. Your guest should be able to get the best view from their seat so that they can capture the overall outlook of the place. Open the door for your guest. It really doesn't matter whether your guest is male or female, but keep in mind that the person is your guest, so you cannot leave any opportunity to make them feel valued.

Order your food according to your guest's preference. But if your guest tell you that he or she would like to have whatever you will order for them, then remember, as a host, it's your responsibility to ask if your guest has any food restrictions such as if he is diabetic or any kind of food allergy. This will help you either customise the food according to their preference or order something new.

Make sure you are dressed in a proper outfit. Your attire will speak a thousand words. Make sure your turnout is simple and formal. Being decked out for business purpose is a complete NO! Finally, do not constantly make phone calls to your guest to ask why he or she is late or how long it will take them to arrive.

## Guest etiquette

If you reach before your host do not order anything until your host arrives. When your host chooses a place, do not criticize their decision. They will show politeness and will obviously tell you to choose whatever you like. When you show up, surprise your host with a simple gift like a flower bouquet, a gourmet coffee, a perfume or some chocolates.

As a guest, you cannot just simply handpick the expensive food item even if you insanely love the food. Try to select food which shows economic value in the menu book. If you do not like your food or want to make any changes, make an eye contact or beckon to the waiter to come over. Once the waiter appears, with a soft voice, simply ask to change the plate, instead of addressing the waiter in an awful tone.

Once you are done with your meal, do not get ready to immediately leave the place. Stay for a few more minutes and enjoy your valuable time with your host. Take time to know each other outside the business world because before you crack a million-dollar deal, it is important to know your client in and out.

## Table manners

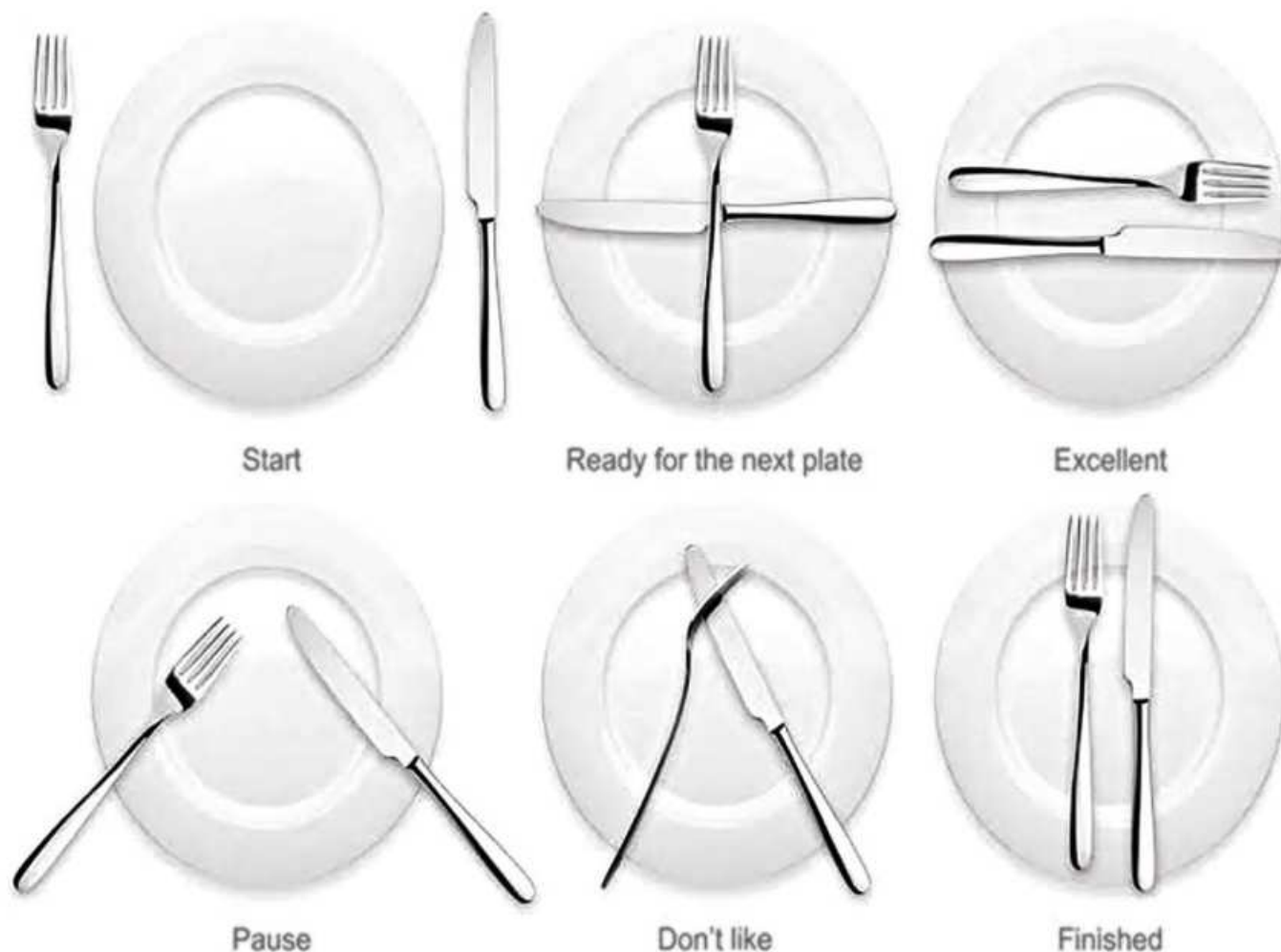
Do not hunch your shoulder or roll in your chair. Your posture will be eye-catching the minute you are seated. Try to be seated in an upright posture with your elbows off the table, but yes you can put your elbows on the table while having your meal only when

If you are carrying a large bag, kindly put them on an empty chair or place it on the floor. In case you are carrying a small bag such as a clutch, you may place your clutch on your lap, but never keep bags on the table.

As soon as the food starts to get served, place your napkin on your lap. The food must be served on your guest's plate first. This is simple courtesy. Let your guest order the food first. Don't order the opposite of what your guest orders. If your guest orders pomegranate juice because they are diabetic, then you may order apple juice or orange juice or anything similar. You can surely adapt

as it shows how presentable an individual is in his or her life but unfortunately, many lack the basic knowledge of how to place the utensils on plates.

Your fork should be placed on the left and your knife on the right of your plate; indicating that you are about to begin your course. When you are ready for the second plate, place your fork above the knife, similar to a plus (+) sign. If you want to give a positive message about how the overall food experience was, then keep your fork and knife horizontally, indicating the excellency of the food. Leave your knife and fork forming a pyramid shaped angle. This



you are about to have a conversation with your guest.

You can either continue your conversation by leaving your hands on your lap or simply prop your wrist on the table so that your hands are always discernible to your guest.

People love to communicate with hand movements, so this might make you more comfortable in front of your guests.

Keep your phone, wallet, keys or anything handy off the table. Keep your phone on silent mode and keep it in your pocket because no one enjoys a loud random music blaring across the room. Also keep your smartphone usage to a minimum as your guests should not feel like you are giving your virtual friends more attention than the ones sitting right in front of you.

to a little change of taste for a while. Some of us hold the wine glass by the bowl of the glass and trust us, this is not at all attractive, so always hold your glass by the stem.

Tip well. When you pay the bill, make sure you tip well, but not beyond your means. Once done, you can gently blot your lips with your napkin; don't rub it.

If you want to greet someone or intend to visit a restroom you can stand up and place your napkin on your chair. This will be a sign that you will be back on your seat. When you are done with your meal and are about to leave, you can place your napkin on the left side of your plate; you do not have to fold that napkin the way it was decorated previously.

## Cutlery knowhow

Well, cutlery etiquette is equally important

will indicate that you are not finished yet, but are taking a break between your meals to have a conversation with your guest. If you don't like the food or if your meal does not meet your expectations, then leave the fork and knife angled like a pyramid but this time, the knife should be positioned between the prongs of the fork which indicates your level of dissatisfaction.

Lastly, once you finish your meal, you may place the fork and knife vertically, facing North.

These dining etiquettes are principles that make an individual disciplined in a dining area. In order to leave a good impression about ourselves, it is essential to master these simple etiquettes.

**By Fatema Tuz Zohra**  
**Photo: Fatema Tuz Zohra**