

Career Tips

Let's Talk About Eating

Eating should be a fun time, but you still need to watch those etiquette faux pas. What happens if your neighbor takes your napkin or starts drinking out of your coffee cup?

Here are my Top Ten Guidelines for a relaxed and comfortable experience:

1. A buffet is not your last meal. I promise you will eat again. Please remember to always get a clean plate every time you go back for your next course.
2. Bread and butter are on the left, and your drinks are on the right. There is always the “b” and “d” rule to help you remember but also “BMW.” Remember “B” is for bread on the left, “M” for meal in the middle and “W” is for the water or drinks on the right. (If you don't know the “b” and “d” rule, you will have to e-mail me and I will tell you.)
3. Never let your silverware touch the table again once it is picked up. Meaning no “gang plank” silverware hanging off your plate. Move them on the plate.
4. Don't turn over your coffee cup. If you do not want any coffee or wine, don't turn them upside down. Let the wait staff do that or have them take them away.
5. The napkin is to blot not to be used as a tissue, or wrapped around your neck to catch that spill.
6. Never, ever take your roll and cut it half, and then butter the entire roll. One piece at a time. Break the roll in half with your hands. Take off a small bite, butter that piece, set your knife down and then place that one piece in your mouth.
7. If you invite people to a business meal, then you pay. For women a lot easier to take care of this ahead of time to avoid any confusion at the end of the meal.
8. No lipstick, make-up or toothpicks at the table. That pretty much settles that.
9. Salt and pepper are married. Pass them together. Do not season until you at least try out the food.
10. Don't push, stack, cover or hand. Don't push your plate back to make an area for your work or elbows. Don't stack your plates for any reason, don't cover with your napkin and definitely don't hand to your wait staff.

Enjoy your meal and always be relaxed and comfortable with any dining partner or situation from fast-food to a seven-course meal.

Colleen A. Rickenbacher, CMP, CSEP, CPC
Etiquette and Protocol Consultant/ Speaker/Trainer/Author
colleen@crspeaks.com
www.colleenrickenbacher.com