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## EC951 Revised 1937 Table Service for the Home

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Extension Circular 951 -37

July, 1937 *Dup*

# Table Service for the Home



The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service  
and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

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FLORENCE J. ATWOOD

# Table Service for the Home

By FLORENCE J. ATWOOD

**O**UR grandmothers tell of how the family gathered around the fireplace in the evenings for a social hour. In modern life, because the attractions outside the home have become so numerous, the family table seems to be almost the only place where the entire family meets together. For this reason the meal hour should be interesting and pleasant and the table as immaculate and attractive as possible. This also helps to promote the physical and mental welfare of the family.

Every homemaker desires to have her family adequately nourished and at the same time she wishes to know the details of correct service so that her children may learn at home how to be at ease on all occasions. An important phase in the education of children consists in their learning, by experience, to appreciate well served food, to handle the tools of eating, and to participate in table conversation. Table service should never be evident as such, but should keep the meal proceeding smoothly, without those at the table being especially conscious of it. In the well-ordered home, table service, table manners, and table conversation are on the same plane, whether there are guests present or only the family group.

The color scheme should never be the means of making an ill choice of foods, but if one wishes to carry out a particular color on special occasions, it adds to the attractiveness of the table to do so. If the desire is to have red and green predominating, the centerpiece should be chosen with this in mind and might be a small red geranium, a few rose buds, a small fern, or a poinsettia.

A meal has three distinct divisions, namely planning, preparation, and service. In this circular we are considering an imaginary meal—one with foods well chosen and well prepared—and are discussing the service only.

## Laying the Table

**R**ULES for table setting and table service are not uniform. Authorities differ on the placing of the forks, salad plates, and in the use of right- or left-hand service. The table setting and service described in this circular are accepted by good authorities. The service is also followed in teaching the food-study classes and is used in the Home-Management Residence at the University of Nebraska.

The dining room should be cleaned and dusted, well lighted, properly ventilated, and comfortable as to temperature. The window shades should be adjusted so that there will be no unpleasant glare.

The table is placed in the center of a regular dining room. If it is a rectangular one, it is obvious that the longer side of the table will be parallel with the longer side of the room unless the room is a combination dining and living room.

The hostess' place is designated as the "head of the table." Her place will be opposite the host's place and may be either nearest the living room and facing the kitchen or nearest the kitchen, depending upon convenience.



If the host's place is nearest the kitchen, it is more convenient for the person who brings the food from the kitchen to the table. In this case the hostess faces the kitchen, so that she can give signals to the waitress if necessary. When there is no waitress, it may be more convenient for the hostess to be seated next to the kitchen to save steps.

The type of table linen selected will be determined by use, personal preference, and size of table. For breakfast, luncheon, or supper the table may be covered with a lunch cloth, runners, or doilies. The latter are attractive and economical, particularly if the laundry problem is considered. Breakfast linens are often more colorful than those used for lunch.

A breakfast or luncheon cloth may be square or rectangular in shape, depending upon the shape of the table. It covers the table and may or may not hang over the edge. Square cloths are placed on the table with the edges parallel with the edges of the table.

Place doilies are usually rectangular in shape and large enough to accommodate the silver, glass, and china for one person.

Runners which extend the entire length of the table may be used and are placed along the edge for the individual dishes and silver. Rectangular doilies are used to fill in the ends, thus making a continuous cloth around the edge.

When doilies or runners are used an extra doily or runner is placed in the center of the table for the centerpiece. Different types of heat-resistant pads are used to protect the table from hot dishes. No articles are placed directly on the bare table.

For dinner a cloth which completely covers the table is usually preferred. If a linen tablecloth is used, a silence cloth is needed under it.

The purpose of the silence cloth is fourfold:

- (1) To protect the table from the heat of the dishes.
- (2) To prevent noise at the table from the handling of the dishes.
- (3) To save the tablecloth from wear which would result if the linen were in contact with the edge of the table.
- (4) To add to the attractive appearance of the tablecloth. This is evident when comparing the linen over a hard surface with that over a padded surface.

A silence cloth may be heavy cotton "felt" or a quilted pad which is sold for this purpose. An asbestos cover is an ideal protection from hot dishes, but because it cannot be laundered and because the edge of it wears the tablecloth, it should be covered with the cotton padding.

The freshness of the linen adds charm to the meal. The tablecloth is more attractive if laundered with only a middle crease and then rolled or carefully folded to avoid unnecessary creasing. The middle fold of the cloth runs lengthwise down the middle of the table between the covers of the host and hostess. Most tablecloths fall about nine to twelve inches below the edge of the table. This distance should be the same at the ends.

A bowl of flowers, a low growing plant, or a dish of fruit makes an attractive centerpiece. Flowers may be arranged more easily in a low

bowl, if it is filled about one-fourth full of clean sand. A flower "frog" or holder serves the same purpose. For special occasions, some people like to use candlesticks; plain glass, pewter, or silver is usually preferred. On a large table, four may be used, but if the table is small, two are sufficient. The candlesticks may be placed near the center, near each corner, or in some other definitely balanced symmetrical form.

The individual cover consists of the silver, china, glassware, and napkin used by each person. Twenty inches is the minimum and thirty the maximum space that is allowed for each cover. All the lines of the cover should run either lengthwise of the table or across it. Diagonal lines should be avoided, since they are not in harmony with the structural lines of the table. The dinner plate, silver, and napkin are placed the same distance in



FIG. 1.—Table laid for breakfast.

from the edge of the table, usually about one inch. This is called the plate line. If the table edge is rounded this rule must be modified, because the pieces of silver must be parallel to each other.

The dinner knife and fork are usually placed next to the plate, the knife on the right with the cutting edge toward the plate and the fork on the left with tines turned up. The distance between the knife and fork will be determined by the size of the largest plate to be used. Placing the dinner knife and fork next to the plate gives a balanced arrangement, although some authorities prefer to place the forks in order of use and in this case the salad or dessert fork will be placed next to the plate. If no knife is used, the fork is placed at the right in the place of the knife, because the fork will be used in the right hand if there is no knife. The spoons are placed to the right of the knife, bowls up, the one to be used first on the outside, and the one to be used last nearest the knife. If a cocktail fork is used it is placed at either the extreme right of the cover

or on the right side of the service plate used with the cocktail. All other forks are placed at the left of the dinner fork in the same order as the spoons.

The pieces of silver are placed close together without crowding. This gives the cover a compact appearance and makes it a unit. The pieces of silver are limited to not more than three on one side of the plate. However, a fourth piece may be used if the cover is very wide or the piece of silver is small. If more silver is needed it may be brought to the table on a doily-covered tray, or on a napkin. Such silver is placed with the right hand to the right of the cover, just before the courses for which it is needed is served.

The tumbler or goblet is placed about a half inch above the point of the knife or slightly to the right. The napkin, neatly folded, is placed at the left of the cover with open corners toward the fork and the edge of the table and the hem or selva parallel to the edge of the table. The napkin must be folded correctly to make this possible. It may be placed in the center of the cover between the knife and fork when both salad and bread and butter plates are used.

When a bread and butter plate is desired, it is placed at the left at the tip of the fork. It is sometimes shifted slightly to the right or left to accommodate the salad plate. The butter spreader, if used, is placed across the top of the bread and butter plate slightly above the center parallel with the edge of the table. The handle is to the right and the spreading edge toward the center of the plate. At a simple luncheon or breakfast where a knife is not needed, it is sometimes desirable to use the butter spreader without a bread and butter plate. In such case the spreader may be placed either above or to the right of the breakfast or luncheon plate.

Often the salad is served with the main course. When this is done, the salad fork is not needed unless one so desires. Many prefer to omit the salad fork, as it saves shifting from one fork to another. When served

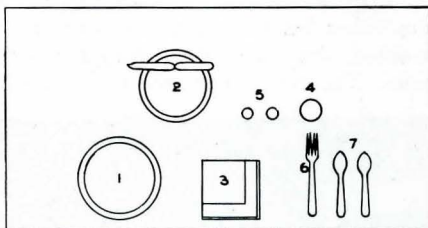


FIG. 2.—Individual cover for luncheon. (1) Salad plate. (2) Bread and butter plate. (3) Napkin. (4) Water glass. (5) Salt and pepper. (6) Fork. (7) Spoons.

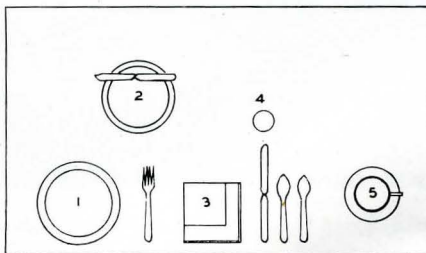


FIG. 3.—Individual cover for dinner. (1) Salad plate. (2) Bread and butter plate. (3) Napkin. (4) Water glass. (5) Cup and saucer.



with the main course the salad may be placed in accordance with the occasion, in any one of four positions:

1. To the left and above the fork (when no bread and butter plate is used). This avoids a crowded appearance of the cover.

2. At the left, slightly below the bread and butter plate and above the napkin, or nearer the edge of the table. (In the latter case, the napkin may be placed at the center of the cover.)

3. Above the dinner plate, between the bread and butter plate and the water glass. The bread and butter plate may be shifted slightly to the left and the water glass to the right.

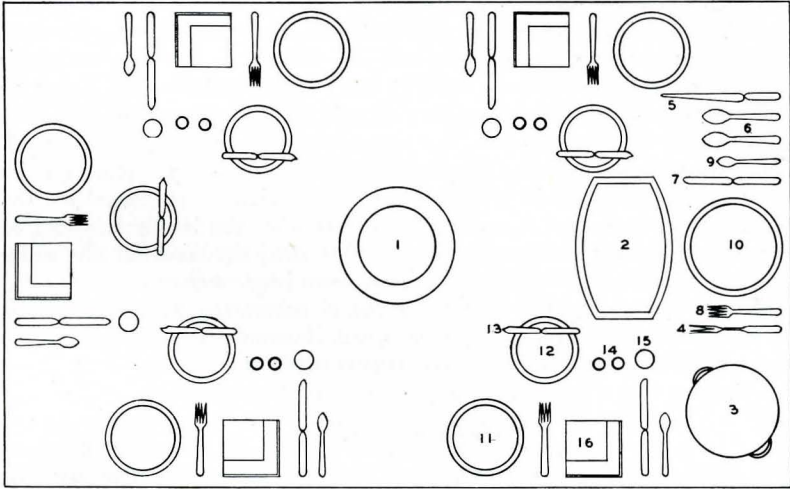


FIG. 4.—Informal dinner service—table laid for main course.

- |                     |                     |                              |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Centerpiece.    | (7) Dinner knife.   | (12) Bread and butter plate. |
| (2) Meat platter.   | (8) Dinner fork.    | (13) Butter spreader.        |
| (3) Vegetable.      | (9) Teaspoon.       | (14) Salt and pepper.        |
| (4, 5) Carving set. | (10) Dinner plates. | (15) Water glass.            |
| (6) Serving spoons. | (11) Salad plate.   | (16) Napkin.                 |

4. At the right and slightly below the water glass, or near the edge of the table (when the beverage is not served with the main course).

Placing the salad at the left (1 and 2) is usually preferred because it permits better leverage when cutting the salad, which is essential to comfort in eating most salads. With left-side service, this position also facilitates removal of covers at the end of the dinner course in that the entire cover may be cleared from the same side.

When the bread and butter plate is omitted, the butter is frequently placed on the salad plate.

Individual salt and pepper shakers may be placed in front of each cover, or larger shakers may be placed between two covers on a line with



the water glasses or near the corners of the table. Bread, butter, jelly, relishes, etc., are placed symmetrically within easy reach, not too close to the middle of the table. The accompanying silver is placed in a straight line on the table beside the dish with the handle toward the person who is responsible for passing it.

Plan to serve "hot foods hot and cold foods cold." To serve any food at its best all equipment must be either warmed or chilled according to the food. Care should be taken that warmed dishes are not too hot to be handled with comfort. Unless the hostess plans definitely for keeping foods at the proper temperature until eaten, no matter how well prepared, they lose much of their palatability and zest.

Before the announcement of any meal the chairs are placed with their edges even with the edges of the table so that the line of the tablecloth will not be broken. If ice is used in the water, the cubes are placed in the glasses and the glasses filled three-fourths full. Many people prefer not to use ice in the water glasses, but in any case the water should be cold. The relishes are also placed on the table. Except for formal occasions the bread and butter and the foods for the main course are placed on the table. If soup is served it may be brought in after the family is seated or just before the meal is announced. In this case, the food for the main course is brought in after the soup dishes have been removed.

Guests are seated according to congenial partners, rather than by age or rank. The most honored woman guest is usually seated at the right of the host; the most honored man guest is seated at the right of the hostess. A man and wife are not often seated next to each other.

### Serving the Meal

**I**N many homes the homemaker does her work without paid service. In such instance, the table service should be simple and planned so that the mother will not be obliged to rise frequently to serve those at the table. A tea cart is helpful in serving a meal and saves trips to the kitchen.

Children ten or twelve years of age may be taught that when Mother prepares the meal it is their duty to leave the table when it is necessary to remove dishes or serve another course. Such experience is also to the children's advantage. This will relieve the mother of many steps and teach the children that Mother's place is at the table whether or not she has guests. The member of the family who waits on the table rises quietly and places her napkin partially folded at the left side of her plate.

Work done in the kitchen during the meal hour, sounds such as scraping of dishes, running water and egg beater, detract from the meal and hence should be done as quietly as possible.

### The Main Course

**I**F the meal is served at the table by the host and hostess, the host serves the meat, potatoes, and vegetables. The hostess serves the beverage and may serve the salad or the dessert. The meat platter is placed in front

of the cover laid for the host and the vegetable dish to the right or left and the warmed plates between his knife and fork. The carving set and serving spoon are placed either with the host's silver or on either side of the platter. Some slight rearrangement of the host's cover may be necessary in order to accommodate the serving dishes.

The host carves the meat before serving the plates. He remains seated while carving and serving. Usually enough meat is carved to serve all persons at the table before the serving of plates is begun. When a roast lies lengthwise on the platter, the carving is usually done from right to left, so the carved portions are on the right. This insures greater comfort in serving. A rolled rib roast which is placed on the platter in an upright cylindrical position would of course be carved from top to bottom. In this way the meat is carved across the grain so that it seems more tender. Steaks are cut with the grain.

The host serves the plates after carving the meat. The plates are not lifted in the hand during serving. Two pieces of silver may be used for serving when necessary. The hostess is usually the first to be served. The host passes the first plate to the person at his left, indicating that it is for the hostess. He continues serving to his left until all persons to the right of the hostess are served. He then passes the served plates to his right, continuing down that side of the table until all at the left of the hostess are served. The host serves himself last. It is not good form to serve a guest and then ask her to pass another plate past hers. Confusion is avoided by beginning with the hostess and serving in regular order around the table regardless of age or sex.

If a second vegetable is to be served, a member of the family to the host's left may assist the host in the service of one vegetable. This may be served on the dinner plate or in individual dishes. When individual vegetable dishes are used, they may be placed either above the dinner plate or at the right of the cover, a little below the line of the water glass.

### Serving the Beverage

THE beverage may be served with the main course, with the dessert course, or with both main and dessert courses. It may be served at the table or from the kitchen. One may also serve coffee in the living room after the dinner, using a coffee table.

When the beverage is served at the table by the hostess, the complete service on a tray may be placed in front of her or the pot is placed to the right of the hostess on a tile with sufficient space between the pot and the hostess' cover to allow room for a cup and saucer so that she may conveniently pour the beverage. Cups and saucers may be placed in pairs at the left of the hostess' cover with handles of the cups turned toward her right. Cream and sugar and spoons are placed in front of the hostess with the handles of the sugar bowl toward the right or toward the hostess, and the sugar spoon or tongs beside it. The cream is usually to the right of the sugar bowl, handle toward the hostess. The hostess may pour cream into



the cup, place lumps of sugar on the saucer in front of the cup, place a spoon on the opposite side, and fill the cup with coffee without lifting the cup and saucer from the table. She then passes it to her left, indicating that the first cup is for the host, or according to some authorities, for the person at his right. After serving the host, the hostess continues until all on her left side are served, then to her right beginning with the person at the host's left and continuing down the right side, serving herself last.

If the hot beverage is served from the kitchen with the main course, the cup and saucer are placed at the right of each cover with the edge of

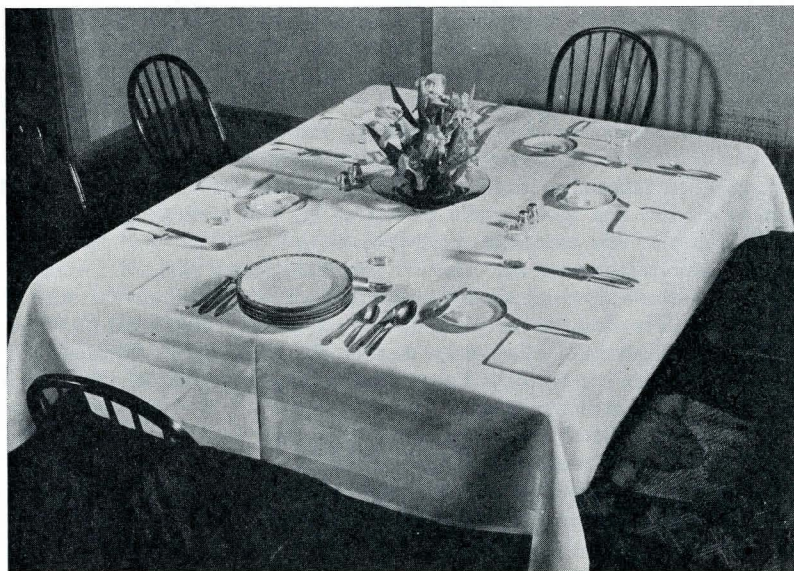


FIG. 5.—Table laid for dinner—informal service.

the saucer a few inches in from the plate line. The beverage is placed from the right with the right hand. In this case the cream and sugar are passed at the table.

Dishes containing foods which are placed on the table, such as bread, relish, or gravy, are as a rule passed to the right (counterclockwise). The food is offered with the left hand with the handle, if there is one, turned toward the person receiving it, care being taken that the fingers do not come over the edge of the dish. A person receives the dish with the right hand and transfers it to the left hand in order to serve himself with the right hand. It is then in position to be passed on to the next person. Pitchers are an exception to the rule, as they are received and held in the right hand for serving but are transferred to the left hand before passing to the next person to the right. If there is serving silver to be used, it is



placed on or in the dish at a convenient angle before passing. The hostess usually suggests that guests help themselves to foods before passing them.

If a waitress is assisting with the service, she may offer one or all of the vegetables or other foods to which guests help themselves at the left of the person, beginning with the hostess. This makes it convenient for the person to use the right hand in helping himself. The waitress holds the dish containing the food on the left hand on a squarely folded napkin called the service napkin. The right hand may be used to steady the offered dish at a position most convenient for the guest. With the exception of the beverage which is placed from the right with the right hand, all foods are placed from the left with the left hand.

In waiting on a table one is watchful of the wants of the guests. The water glasses are refilled as often as necessary. If possible, the glass is allowed to remain on the table while being filled. In this case a napkin may be used in the left hand to catch the drip. If it is inconvenient to fill the glass in position it may be lifted (holding it from the bottom) away from the table and filled three-fourths full. When this method is used, it is usually more convenient to hold the pitcher in the left hand and reach for the glass to be refilled with the right. If preferred, the glasses may be drawn to the edge of the table (placing the hand near the bottom) for convenience in refilling.

If the water pitcher is on the dining room table, the glasses may be passed for refilling to the person who is responsible for pouring water.

The hostess takes a second serving of something so that the guests may feel free to do so if they desire. If the host is serving, he carves a few portions of meat before asking anyone to be served a second time.

### Removing Dishes

**E**ITHER right- or left-hand service may be used. However, one should be consistent and observe the same order throughout the meal.

Directions for left-hand service are given here.

The general rule for left-hand service is, "Place and remove everything from the left except the beverage."

Dishes containing foods such as the platter and vegetable dishes, the bread plate, relish dishes, hot dish pads, etc., are removed before removal of individual covers.

In removing individual covers the waitress begins with the hostess. Standing at the hostess' left she removes the main-course plate with the left hand, transfers it to the right hand, which is held behind the hostess, then removes the salad plate, places it quietly upon the dinner plate, and removes the bread and butter plate. These may be carried directly to the kitchen or placed on a serving table or tea cart and the cover of the person seated to the right of the hostess removed in the same way, and so on around the table to the right. Dishes should never be stacked in front of a guest. It is usually better to remove a complete cover than to remove

parts of two covers. If the hostess herself is removing the course she begins with the person at her right in removing individual covers.

Remove salts and peppers and any unused silver on a napkin or a small doily-covered tray. If necessary, the table is crumbed just before the dessert is placed. A napkin and small plate are used to remove the crumbs. The napkin should be held in such a way that as many edges as possible come in contact with the tablecloth. The waitress works at the left of each cover. It is not usually practical to crumb the table when doilies are used.

### Serving the Dessert

**T**HE dessert may be served at the table by the host or hostess, or from the kitchen. If served from the kitchen, two services are brought in at a time. The one in the left hand is placed from the left in front of the hostess; the other is transferred from the right to the left hand and placed before the person seated to the right of the hostess. If the hostess is serving the beverage, the dessert service may begin with the person to her right and the hostess would then be served last.

If the dessert is served at the table, and the hostess is serving the beverage, the dessert may be served by the host. When the dessert is served at the table, the plates or other dishes used for dessert are placed in front of the person who is to serve, after the serving silver has been placed from a napkin or doily-covered tray where it will be convenient for the person who is serving. The dessert is then placed directly above the plates. The dessert plates may be served in the same order as the main course, or if the hostess is engaged in the service of the beverage, the first plate may be passed to the person at the hostess' right. When all at the host's left have been served, the first plate passed to the host's right will be for the hostess. The person at her left may place this dessert in a convenient position for the hostess. If desired, the dessert platter and coffee service may be removed from the table to the serving table when coffee and dessert have been served.

### Rules for Table Etiquette

**T**ABLE etiquette is so closely related to table service that a few general rules are given. Failure to understand a few rules often causes confusion and discomfort. This is because correct table etiquette is not understood or because it is not practiced at home until it becomes a habit.

1. An invitation to a meal should be acknowledged with acceptance or regrets. When one has accepted an invitation, he should arrive at least five minutes before the stated dinner hour, not much earlier. The hostess should feel a responsibility for the promptness of the meal. When the hostess announces that the dinner is served, the announcement should be answered promptly.

2. On less formal occasions the hostess leads the way to the dining room in order that she may direct the seating of her guests. She should plan the seating arrangement in advance and when possible alternate men

and women. Since host and hostess sit at opposite ends of the table the latter is not possible when the number at the table is 4, 8, 12, etc., but is possible when the number is 6, 10, etc.

3. In taking one's place at the table, stand at the back of the chair and be seated from the left side.

4. The hostess gives the signal to be seated at the table. The men remain standing until they have seated the women by standing back of the chairs and assisting them. The host usually seats the woman at his right.

5. Sit in an erect position with the feet on the floor directly in front of the chair. Do not lounge or rest elbows or hands on the table. The elbows are kept close to the sides of the body while using knife, fork, or spoon.

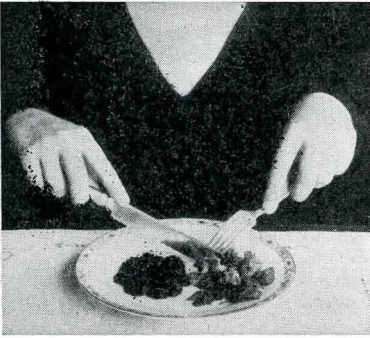


FIG. 6.—Correct way to hold knife and fork when cutting foods.

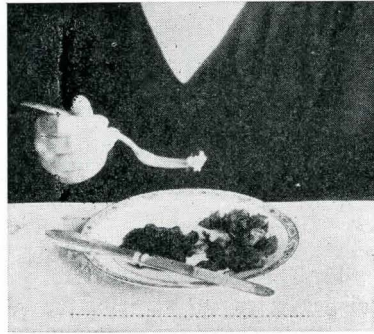


FIG. 7.—Correct way to hold fork. Spoon is held in the same position. Position of knife when not in use.

6. The napkin is removed from the table as soon as grace has been said, or after the hostess has removed hers if grace is omitted. If a large dinner napkin is used, it is kept folded in half and spread across the lap, with the fold toward the person. The napkin is used for the fingers and lips only. At the close of the meal, it may be partially folded and placed to the left of the cover. The napkin is refolded if it is to be used again by the same person.

7. The plate is not moved about. The soup plate should never be tipped while one is eating from it. Other dishes should not be set on the dinner plate after food has been served on it.

8. The knife is held with the end of the index finger just beyond the handle. It is used for cutting foods which cannot be cut with a fork. Only the portion of food which is to be eaten immediately is cut off at one time. After the knife has once been used, it is kept on the upper right hand side of the plate for the remainder of the meal.



9. The fork is held in the left hand by the handle in the same manner as the knife with the tines turned down. It is used in the right hand for carrying dry foods and many semi-solid foods to the mouth, also for cutting foods which are easily separated as lettuce and omelet. In carrying foods to the mouth only a small portion is carried on the fork with tines turned up. When cutting food with both knife and fork, the small portions may be carried to the mouth with the fork in the left hand. When this custom (sometimes called the Continental or European custom) is used, the tines are turned down, and the fork is used as a pick. When not in use, it is placed on the plate parallel to the knife, tines up.

When the course is finished, the knife and fork are laid side by side on the plate, the fork nearer the center of the plate than the knife. The cutting edge of the knife is toward the center of the plate.

10. Use a fork rather than a spoon whenever possible. For buttered vegetables use a fork. Creamed vegetables in a separate dish may be eaten with a spoon. Either a fork or a spoon may be used for brick ice cream.

11. A fork is used to eat cake which has a soft frosting. However, no fork need be used if the cake can be handled without soiling the fingers. Do not use a spoon to eat cake.

12. An ice served with the meat courses is eaten with the dinner fork. This means that the ice must be frozen hard and served just after all plates are served. If the hostess has provided a spoon, use it. The spoon must be left on the dinner plate when not in use.

13. The spoon is used for liquid foods. These foods should be taken noiselessly from the side of the spoon. After the spoon has been used to sweeten the beverage or to test its temperature, it is placed on the saucer and left there. With soups, the spoon is dipped away from one to avoid the drip. Sip soup from the side of the spoon and not the tip. The spoon is laid on the service plate when soup, cocktail or dessert is finished.

14. Only a small portion of bread is buttered at one time. The bread is broken before being buttered. It is either placed on the bread and butter plate or on the dinner plate. Either the fork or butter spreader may be used to spread jelly or conserve on a bit of bread before eating it.

15. Beverages should never be cooled by pouring a portion out in the saucer or blowing on a spoonful. When partaking of the beverage the mouth should be free from foods and it should be taken quietly.

16. Masticate foods noiselessly with the mouth closed. Never attempt to talk while masticating foods.

17. One general rule for all eating is not to hurry through any part of the meal.

18. Foods are accepted with "Yes, thank you" or "If you please" and declined with "No, thank you." Learn to eat and enjoy all foods. Food dislikes and prejudices often inconvenience one when eating away from home and the hostess is often embarrassed because some guest refuses her food because of a personal dislike for it.

19. The guests at a meal, like the food, should be well chosen. Often-times the social hour is marred because all the guests are not congenial. The hostess should lead in the conversation but should not monopolize it. The conversation should be on pleasant topics. Gruesome accidents or sickness should never be table talk. Children should be happy and never quarrelsome.

20. The hostess gives the signal for leaving the table. She may wait a moment for a lull in the conversation before making the suggestion. She then rises and leads the way to the living room.

21. When leaving the home where one has been entertained, the guest usually shakes hands with the hostess and always expresses his or her pleasure for the hospitality extended. Children should be taught this courtesy early in life.

### Formal Service

Space in this bulletin does not permit a full discussion of formal service which has little or no place in the average home. It should not be attempted unless there is either a well-trained corps of servants or an expert caterer or cateress in charge.

The menu and service of a formal dinner or luncheon are more elaborate than the type of service just discussed. Formal meals demand more help, kitchen space and equipment than are available in many homes.

From four to eight courses may be served for a formal dinner. The order is:

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Hors d'oeuvres | 5. Roast and vegetables |
| 2. Soup           | 6. Salad                |
| 3. Fish           | 7. Dessert              |
| 4. Entrée         | 8. Coffee               |

In formal service, the host and hostess do not serve any food at the table. All food is served by waiters or waitresses from the kitchen. In addition to the decorations and the linen, silver, glass and china of the individual covers, only dishes of candy or nuts appear on the table. Goblets are used in place of tumblers.

Service plates are used for formal dinners. These are a little larger than the ordinary dinner plate and are decorative in type. No food is eaten from the service plate, but food on china of its own is placed on the service plate until it is removed for the main course. The service plate is removed when the main course is placed. In formal service, the guest is never without a plate in front of him except when the table is cleared and crumbed before the dessert course.

There are two ways in which food may be served at a formal meal: individual plate service and platter service. In the former the served plates are placed by the waitress for each guest. With platter service either the empty plates or the plates with perhaps the meat are placed before each guest. Then the food on appropriate serving platters or other dishes is

passed to the guests and each one serves himself. The serving dishes may be simply or elaborately garnished.

### Banquet Service

**B**ANQUET service follows in general the rules for formal service. The number of waiters or waitresses depend upon the number to be served. However, one waiter or waitress if inexperienced, should not be responsible for more than eight or ten guests.

Often it is desirable to have the banquet served in a comparatively short time. In such a case, time may be saved by having two or more waiters or waitresses work together. When such a plan is followed, the first waiter or waitress removes the soiled dishes from two covers of the first course and a second one follows with two filled plates for the second course. This waiter in turn removes the soiled dishes from two more adjoining covers and carries them back to the place for soiled dishes. The first waiter has returned with two plates for the covers just cleared by the second waiter. This order continues until the quota of guests are served. It is advisable to have a captain for each group of waiters to keep an eye on each cover to see that every detail has been carried through.

Steps are often saved by placing a U-shaped table with the open end toward the door through which the waiters pass. Steps saved mean time conserved.