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## EC55-904 Mealtime Courtesies

Ethel Diedrichsen

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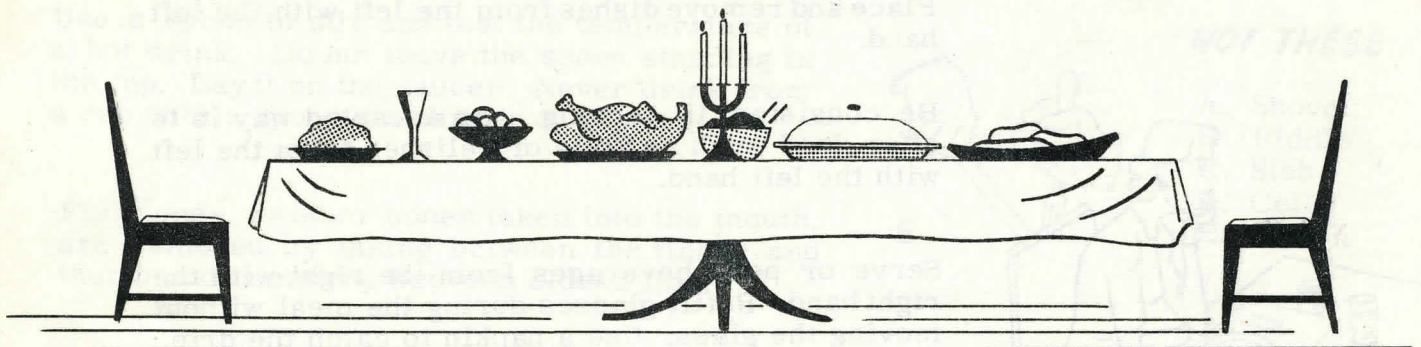
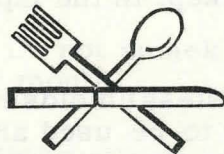
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May 1955

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# Mealtime Courtesies

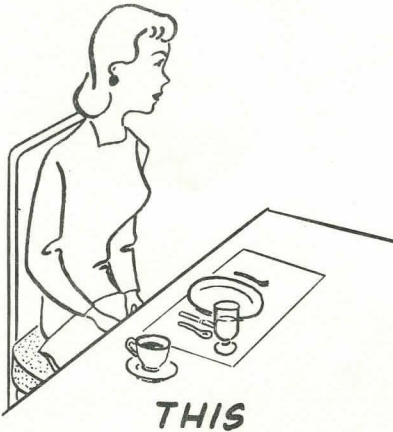


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# MEALTIME COURTESIES

Compiled by Ethel Diedrichsen  
Extension Nutritionist

The basis of all good manners is a kindly thoughtfulness for others whether you are eating at home or in public. Successful entertaining depends more on the spirit of hospitality and the relaxed atmosphere that prevails in the home than on elaborate menus, table settings, and service. Attention to these guides of courtesy will help the family to be more considerate of others, and to be at ease in any gathering.



Be prompt at meals. Hands and face should be clean and hair combed.

If a blessing is asked, the head is bowed and the hands kept in the lap.

The hostess unfolds her napkin first, takes up her silver to be used and indicates that it is time for all to begin eating.

Sit up straight and do not lounge at the table.

Keep elbows at the side, not resting on the table while eating.

Place and remove dishes from the left with the left hand.

Be consistent in serving. An accepted way is to offer food such as rolls or relishes from the left with the left hand.



Serve or pour beverages from the right with the right hand. Refill glasses during the meal without moving the glass. Use a napkin to catch the drip. Handle dishes and plates by the outer edge. Do not place the thumb over the rim.

If you wish something, ask to have it passed. Do not reach in front of anyone.



In cutting food hold the knife in the right hand, the fork in the left, tines down. Grasp the handles firmly and naturally. The ends of the handles rest in the palms of your hands and are not seen. Extend the index fingers along the handles to steady and guide the knife and fork.

Cut only enough meat or other food for one or two bites at a time.

Use fork rather than spoon whenever possible.

When eating soup dip toward back of dish and sip from side of spoon. When eating other food with a spoon dip toward you and take food from end of spoon.

If food or drink is too hot, let it stand until cooler. Never blow on it.

Do not take a drink while you have food in your mouth.

Keep mouth closed while chewing. Do not smack lips. Never talk with food in your mouth.

Never hold food on the fork while talking. Having once picked it up, eat it promptly.

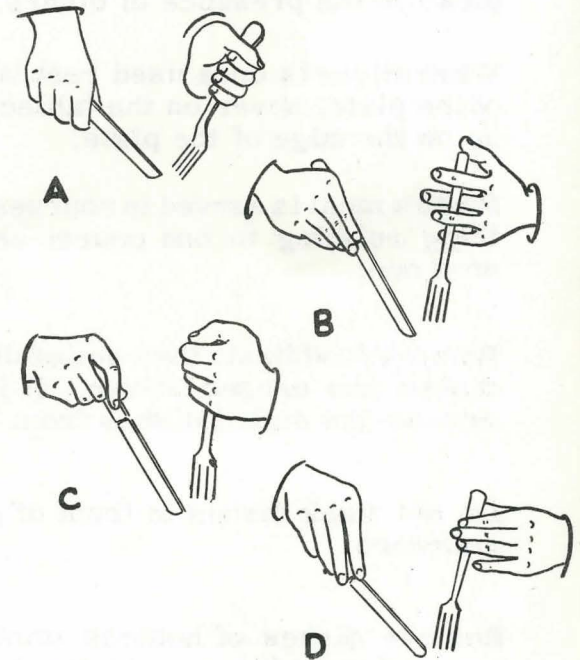
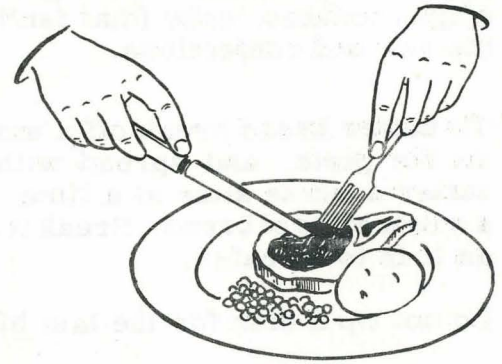
If asked to express a choice of food, do so at once. If not, take what is served without comment. A bit of bread, but nothing else, may be used to help food upon the fork.

Use a spoon to stir and test the temperature of a hot drink. Do not leave the spoon standing in the cup. Lay it on the saucer. Never drink from a cup with a spoon standing in it.

Fish bones, as other bones taken into the mouth, are removed by taking between the finger and thumb and removing between closed lips.

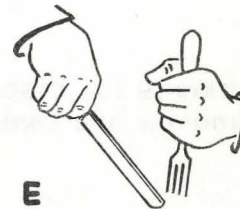
The pits of stewed prunes or cherries that are eaten with a spoon are made as clean and dry as possible in the mouth, then dropped into the spoon with which you are eating and put on the edge of the plate. Seeds and skin may be removed with the finger and thumb with lips closed, or you may drop pits or seeds into the cupped hand, held close to the lips.

**THIS**



**NOT THESE**

- A. Shovel
- B. Fiddle
- C. Stab
- D. Cello
- E. Clutch



**THIS**





Food eaten with the fingers include: bread, olives, pickles, radishes, nuts, celery, strips of carrots, French fried potatoes, and potato chips, cookies, cake (that isn't sticky), corn on the cob and confections.

To butter bread break off a small piece, hold it on the plate, and spread with butter. Do not butter a whole slice at a time. Do not bite from a whole slice of bread. Break it into small pieces as it is to be eaten.

Do not tip a dish for the last bit of food.

The hostess continues eating until all have finished. Leave dishes in place when you have finished eating. Do not stack. Do not use toothpicks in the presence of others.

When silver is once used rest it across the back of the plate, never on the tablecloth nor propped up on the edge of the plate.

When a meal is served in courses, remove everything relating to one course before serving the next one.

Remove food first, then soiled dishes, then clean dishes and unused silver. It is often easier to remove the soiled dishes from the left side.

Do not stack dishes in front of guests or family members.

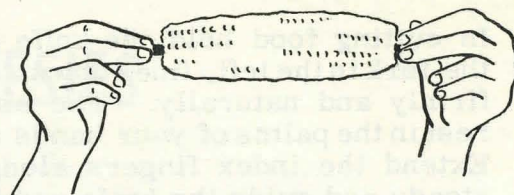
Remove dishes of hostess (mother) first, then in regular order around the table beginning at her right.

If the hostess removes the dishes, she begins at her right and removes her own service last.

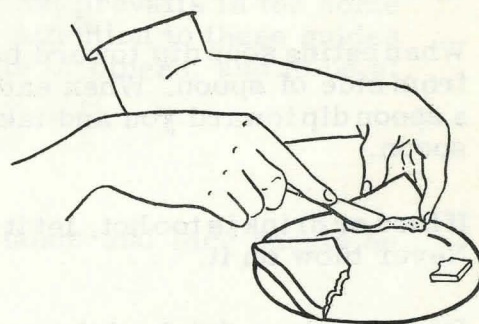
If you must leave the table in the midst of the meal, ask permission of the hostess. Go quietly.

Take part in general table conversation but do not monopolize it. Avoid unpleasant topics and those that may provoke argument.

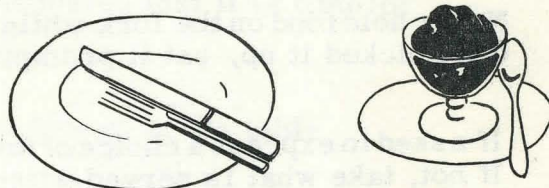
Information in this circular courtesy of Iowa State College Extension Bulletin.



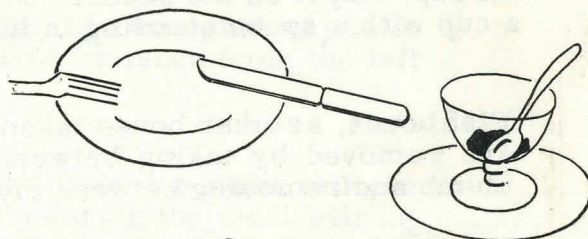
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**NOT THIS**

