

Dining Etiquette for Co-op Students

Table manners are an important part of your business success. They are a visible signal to employers and colleagues of your professionalism. Knowing a few simple rules will help you relax, and be able to present yourself appropriately. Watch others around you, and take your cues from your hosts.

Ordering:

- Listen to what other guests are ordering, and order in a similar fashion. For example, if no one else is ordering an appetizer, don't be the first to order one.
- It is usually acceptable to order something in the mid-price range. Do not order the most expensive item on the menu or 'supersize' your order.
- It is safest to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Avoid ordering messy foods such as spare ribs.
- Drink in moderation, if at all. Don't be the first one to order an alcoholic beverage; follow the cues of your host. Limit yourself to one drink before the meal, and perhaps one glass of wine with dinner.
- Be polite and respectful to the server.

Basic Table Manners:

- Don't speak with food in your mouth.
- Place your napkin on your lap when you sit down, and return it to the table only at the end of the meal, placing it to the right of your plate.
- In a small group, wait until everyone is served before beginning to eat, unless your host tells you to go ahead. At large events, you may begin eating when you are served.
- Use the correct silverware. Normally, use the cutlery on the outside first, corresponding with courses, from first to last.
- Spoon soup away from you and sip from the side of the spoon; don't blow on it to cool it.
- Break bread or rolls into smaller pieces, and butter only one or two at a time. Garlic bread and toast may be eaten whole, since they are already buttered.
- Pass the salt and pepper together. When passing items with a handle (cream, syrup) pass with the handle towards the recipient.
- Eat in moderation at a buffet; do not overload your plate.

Help! What do I do when...

...I may have allergies to some of the food?

Quietly ask the server about the ingredients when ordering, and have an alternative selection ready.

...food gets caught my teeth?

If you can't remove it with your tongue, excuse yourself from the table. (Leave your napkin on your chair).

...I drop my silverware?

Pick it up only if you can reach it without disappearing from sight, and ask the server for a clean one.

...food spills off my plate?

You may pick it up with a piece of silverware, and place it on the edge of your plate.

...I get a piece of bad food?

Generally, remove it from your mouth the same way it went in. For example, olive pits can be removed with your fingers, but a piece of chicken bone should be removed with a fork. Place it on the edge of your plate and cover it up with some other food from your plate.

More helpful tips are available at:

[Mastering Business Dining Etiquette](#)

[Navigate Company Social Events](#)