



Set your Christmas table

Ever wanted to know how the experts lay a table? **Gary Williams**, Principal of the British Butler Institute, showed us how Photograph SAM STOWELL

Butter knife

Glasses should be arranged in height order, with the short water glass (D) closest to the plate, wine glasses (E) side by side, and the tall Champagne glass (F) furthest away.

Base plate and napkin If the first course is soup, place the soup bowl on the base plate. If the first course is on a plate, then remove the base plate before serving.

A soup spoon for the starter would go on the right-hand side of the base plate on the outside.

Side plate Placed at the top of the cutlery on the left-hand side, mainly to save space – especially when you are having three or more courses. I only lay up to three courses, then supply fresh cutlery for every subsequent course after the first three.

Cutlery should be arranged in the order it is used – first course cutlery on the outside (A), main course knife and fork (B) next, working in to the dessert cutlery (C) closest to the plate.

A Christmas cracker should be placed across the top of the plate.

We've chosen a range of cutlery to inspire you, but Gary would use just one set.

Step-by-step
Timeplan
Masterclass
Expert advice



DID YOU KNOW?

Traditionally, all drinks are served and cleared from the right-hand side of the guest, while all food, including soup, should be served and cleared from the left-hand side.

Which glass is which?



Sarah Jane Evans, our Drinks editor, explains

• **Water glass**

You don't need to use a glass with a stem for water – a small tumbler will do fine.



• **Wine glasses**

The red wine glass is a little larger than the white, giving the wine more space to 'breathe' and oxidise, which improves the flavour. Both



red and white wine glasses should ideally have tulip-shaped bowls, as this is the best shape for releasing the aromas. Fill the glass to just less than half, below the widest part, so that when you swirl the wine there is no risk of spilling it. Glassware with decorated stems are very pretty, but pick plain glass for the bowl itself to display the colour of the wine clearly.

• **Champagne flute** A tall, thin Champagne flute displays the vertical line of delicate bubbles beautifully.



DID YOU KNOW?

If you want to serve sweet wine, Port or liqueurs, there's no need to have a special set of small glasses. Use the white wine glass and pour a smaller amount. These should be placed in the same position as the Champagne flute, once it has been removed.