



BRITISH
Butler[®]
INSTITUTE

DINING & ETIQUETTE PROTOCOL

LUXURY LEARNING ONLINE



BEARER OF THE CREST
THE PRINCIPAL LICENSOR

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REINVENTING LUXURY

POINTS ON PROTOCOL:

(ALWAYS CHECK PROTOCOL WITH THE PRINCIPAL)

- Guest are seated and then no service for 1 min.
- After 1 min we offer drinks menu or still and sparkling water (Remember to top up), and remember who is drinking what.
- Serve all drinks from the right.
- Clear drinks from right.
- Serve all food including soup from the left.
- Clear food from Left.
- Offer bread silver served and know what bread you are serving.
- Don't clear course until everyone has finished that course and only two plates at a time.
- After main course we do crumbing down, unless cheese is being served in which case we crumb down after cheese and biscuits.
- Serve Clockwise and if there is a guest of honour then that guest is seated to the right of the host. The VIP is served first then the principal and then service is clockwise. The VIP partner sits to the right of the hostess.
- If you have low quality candles, put these candles in the fridge the night before as it will help them to burn evenly, thus preventing wax spillage, we can also dip the candle wick in cider or white vinegar and place in the fridge as it makes the flame burn brighter momentarily when you light them, thus creating a bit of theatre or additional ambience.
- Check room temperature.
- When charging drinks have a small napkin to wipe of the excess as you twist the bottle over the glass after pouring to thus avoid spillage.
- Do you have a cork dish?
- If cutlery is dropped on the floor replace it.
- If a napkin is dropped on the floor replace it.
- If we have a large menu lay-up to the first three courses only.
- Laying of the cutlery, crockery and glasses is done with gloves on and from a tray with a napkin covering on the tray.



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LAYING THE TABLE

On this occasion we will be setting up for a 7.30pm dinner:

- You will work closely with the head housekeeper.
- Start laying at 3pm or after lunch service thus giving yourself plenty of time.
- Housekeeping must have cleaned the room before we start and will work off a checklist.
- Have 25% extra of everything, especially napkins, ready in the back of house.
- Take everything in first on a trolley, including the linen.
- On top of the wooden table surface lay a protective cover such as Baize (Soft green matting such as on a snooker table).
- Lay the tablecloth starched without creases onto the table with a 26 inch, $\frac{3}{4}$ metre overhang. If the tablecloth is creased then iron it whilst on the table. The iron must be checked before applying it to the cloth as you do not want it to stain, using distilled water in the iron which is best purchased in a pharmacy. Usually tablecloths are bespoke (made to order), so they are very expensive and need proper care.
- Line up the chairs and place a placemat or show plate down then pull the chairs away from the table to thus work easily around the table.
- If it is a very large table or you are setting up multiple tables then do a complete setting on a separate side table so that staff can copy the setting. For very large events you may have a number of table settings around for staff to copy.
- Lay cutlery from the inside outwards, however the guest will use the cutlery from the outside in. If there is a large menu - lay-up to the first three courses and thereafter lay-up after each course before the next.
- Distance of cutlery and cover or charger plate to the edge of table is a thumbnail or 15mm.
- Water glass is placed just above the main knife.
- White wine glass is placed to the right of the water glass.
- Red wine glass is placed to the left of the water glass.
- Champagne glass (if toasts are given), will be between the red and white wine glasses in the centre.
- Side plate is to the left of the setting next to the starter fork or above the main fork in the centre depending on the table setting's spacing.
- Butter knife is to the right of the side plate with the blade facing in.
- Napkins are placed centrally onto the cover plate.
- Lay covers uniformly.
- Other items needed may include - butter, butter knife, salt & pepper, flowers, candles, place cards, menus.



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- Place cards are placed at the top of the cover.
- Place the chairs back.
- On completion perform an inspection of the table with the principal - this is usually the lady - have a checklist with you.
- Ask the principal if a recipe should either be made available for guests should they ask or placed on the table at the top of the cover.
- Ask the principal if they are happy with the ambience such as the lighting, temperature, music, flowers. Timing permitted you now might say *"as you know the guest are arriving in 15min would you care to enjoy a drink?"* And *"were would you like to enjoy your gin and tonic?"*, *"Certainly"*.

Tips:

- Check cutlery and glasses are spotless.
- Have staff lay-up with white gloves on.
- Give yourself plenty of time.
- Test lighting and sound.
- Light candles before guests are seated.
- Light the fire at least 15 minutes before the guests enter the area.
- Have plenty of pairs of white gloves and cocktail napkins spare and close by.
- Have a spillage set ready.
- Lay the table as early as possible and double-check everything yourself before guests arrive.
- Check personal presentation.
- Check you have a good pen and pad to take orders.
- Make sure you are familiar with the menu and make certain that you know the accompaniments with all the food, such as mayonnaise, salad dressing, cream etc...
- Make sure you know table configuration.
- Make sure you are familiar with the drinks to be offered.
- Check that the table has been set properly as well as salt / pepper / butter are on the table.
- Make certain the dining area is immaculate.
- Check all equipment such as plates, cutlery, glasses of all sizes, and condiment sets are spotless.
- Wear white gloves when performing set up.
- Check napkins & tablecloths are clean, starched and ironed.
- Check that the chairs are clean and have protectors on the bottom of the legs.



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FORMAL DINING PROTOCOL

- Lay the table as early as possible and double-check everything yourself before the guest arrive.
- Check the host's requirements beforehand and write everything down as we never trust to memory.
- If you have staff, brief them so that they know the names of the guests coming to dinner, unless of course for security purposes you must omit this.
- Check the menu with the Chef and show the staff every course that will be served and how it will be served - making certain that the staff know the accompaniments to be served with the food, such as mint sauce, mayonnaise, salad dressing, cream etc...
- Make certain the dining area is immaculate. Check that you have the correct wines, champagne, liqueurs and water.
- Check that the Chef has the entire food ready and knows the timings.
- Red wine should be uncorked and standing in the dining room one hour before dinner is served.
- Check all equipment such as plates, cutlery, glasses of all sizes, condiment sets etc...
- Check place cards and that they have the correct names and spelling on them.
- Check table plan.
- Check pre-dinner drinks.
- Check pre-dinner canapés, cold and then hot.
- Check napkins, tablecloths.
- Check and inspect staff (if applicable).
- Have 25% extra food in case you need it and 25% extra equipment, cutlery and napkins in case of breakages or napkins / food is dropped on the floor.
- Check cups, saucers and side plates for coffee services.
- Check that you have enough coffee, tea and sugar.
- Check menu.
- Check that the reception room/area is clean after guests have gone into dining area, in case they return to the area.
- Check the area that is being used for after dinner drinks has a good selection of drinks.
- Restrooms should be checked once guests have gone into dining table.
- Check with the principal before dinner to see if there are any last minute changes and check timings with the principal in case he/she wants a few more minutes of drinking time.
- Check with the Chef that he/she knows exactly what is happening regarding food and timings.



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- Check that the chairs are clean.
- Be ready to serve pre dinner drinks fifteen minutes prior to scheduled arrival of guests.
- Start to have staff clear the reception area whilst guests are eating their first course and make sure they are quiet.
- Best Length of time for pre-dinner reception is 30 – 40 minutes.
- Check ambience, music, lighting, curtains, and flowers.
- Light candles before guests come into dinner.
- Before announcing dinner have at least 2 members of staff standing at entrance of dinner room with empty trays.
- As guests enter have staff standing behind ladies' chairs. Seat ladies first and if possible seat the gentlemen.
- Etiquette says guests must not sit until the host or hostess is seated.
- Salt & Pepper is on the table.
- Butter on Table. Replenish the butter when necessary. The butler only removes the butter if it is not required anymore before desert. However if cheese is being served fresh butter is kept on the table.
- Guests are seated and then no service for 3 minutes.
- After 3 minutes we offer water, still or sparkling. Make a note of who had still and who had sparkling for the topping up.
- Serve all drinks from the right.
- Serve all food including soup from the left.
- Clear food from Left.
- Clear drinks from Right.
- After a minute serve 1st course wine.
- Sometimes before the bread is served grace is said either seated or standing, however it is protocol to stand. If there is grace remember to turn the music off and then music back on after grace.
- Serve bread silver service. Offer bread throughout the meal until pudding or cheese & biscuits.
- Serve first course with accompaniments.
- If you have waiting staff have them leave the room. Butler remains and if possible one other member of staff.
- We are looking now to top up with wine, water, check napkins and butter whilst walking around room looking.
- Send message to chef when you are nearing the point of clearing the course.
- Don't clear until next course is ready and check with the chef.
- Clear when everyone has completed that course and clear only two plates at a time.



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- Ready to clear now: Bring staff back, stand to one side, and don't talk, then on butlers signal perform synchronized clearing from left at the same time. If you do not have enough butlers to perform synchronized service then clear as normal, a good ratio of service staff to guests in 1:6.
- Once all plates are cleared, charge glasses for next course, unless the guest chooses to stick to the same wine. If the guest requires the next course wine then immediately clear the old wine glasses, unless the guest decides he or she wants to keep both glasses.
- Remember to top up water.
- Serve main course with any accompaniments. (Often the accompaniments are forgotten and not only is the principal displeased but so is the chef as the food will not be the same without the accompaniments). Clear when everyone is finished.
- After main course we do crumbing down, unless cheese is being served in which case we crumb down after cheese.
- Clear Condiments, side plates and disused wine glasses as and when required.
- Place cheese plates and port glasses down.
- Serve port (passing the port might be what the principal wants).
- Cheese and biscuits are served by placing these on the table for the guests to help themselves. Know what cheese you are serving and if need be have flags with names on or using a slate cheese board write the names down on the slate. Don't forget any accompaniments for the cheeses.
- Clear cheese setting as and when the guests are finished.
- Place desert cutlery down and desert wine glass down.
- Serve desert wine - which is normally chilled.
- Serve dessert (pudding).
- Clear dessert when everyone is finished.
- Place coffee cups down or take orders for tea.
- Chocolates or biscuits down.
- Do the coffee and tea service.
- Next is the cognac and cigar service that is normally taken in another room. Have your drinks trolley fully stocked.
- Check cloakroom staff in attendance for jackets.
- Present the jackets and wish the guest a very good evening.

Points:

- The host and hostess may move around during a meal, they will tell you when they plan to move, usually between courses. Whilst they are away from their seats, place clean napkins at their places and add clean glasses if necessary.



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- During the meal, walk slowly around the table looking at the food and place settings, try to avoid looking directly at the guests. Listen carefully for any adverse comments on the food, wine or service and rectify any problems immediately i.e. cold food, tough steak etc...
- Serve clockwise and if the guest of honour is seated to the right of the principal then serve this position, then the principal, and then carry on clockwise.
- Twist bottle onto small napkin when complete charging wine / water etc, this will help prevent spillage.
- If cutlery is dropped on the floor replace it.
- If napkin is dropped on the floor replace it.

How to make a late guest feel welcome:

- Keep the principal informed of the expected arrival of the late guest.
- Try and keep in communication with the late guest.
- Have a member of staff keep a watch out for the guest and inform the butler when the guest arrives.

If you are informed that the guest will not be attending then inform the principals of this as they might want to close the gap in the seating.

- Timings on the opening of the door at entrance:
- Have an umbrella nearby to assist guests from cars if need be.
- Inform Chef of guest arrival timings.
- "Good evening, Sir/Madam//Ma am, welcome back".
- When the guest arrives take jackets.
- "Good evening, Sir/Madam//Ma am, very good to see you. How was your journey? Here is the menu, would you like to freshen up before you go through, in the meantime would you care for a refreshment, your usual. Mr and Mrs Lee ask that you enjoy the full meal which has been reserved for you in its entirety, when you have enjoyed your drink, can I invite you through".
- If the guest wants to go straight through. "Certainly, can I invite you this way".
- Introduce the guest to the principal, then seat the guest and introduce them to the persons on either side of the seated guest. "Mr Thompson may I introduce Madam Wintour, Madam Wintour, Mr Thompson" and if you can connect them by saying something like "Mr Thompson has arrived from ..."
- Offer a drink and then serve the food as required.



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DINING MANNERS

- Your napkin (avoid calling them serviettes), should be placed on your lap, never tucked it into your shirt. Dab the corners of your mouth if necessary during your meal, do not make grand wiping gestures. When you leave the table place your napkin, unfolded, beside your plate.
- Sit up straight and make sure that your elbows don't encroach on the space of the person beside you. Do not rest your elbows on the table or lean on them whilst eating.
- If you are served a meal that is already on the plate, wait until everyone has been served before picking up your cutlery.
- Eat at a relaxed pace and don't rush each course. Pace yourself to match your fellow diners.
- Keep your mouth closed and noise to a minimum. Never smack your chops, or talk with your mouth full. Take care not to take mouthfuls that are too big.
- Talking while there is food in your mouth should be avoided at all costs.
- When you have finished, place your knife and fork - with the tines facing upwards - together on your plate.
- If you are confronted with a plateful that is not to your taste, at least make an effort to try some.
- Always compliment the chef or cook.
- A knife should be held firmly in your right hand, with the handle tucked into your palm, your thumb down one side of the handle and your index finger along the top (but never touching the top of the blade). It should never be eaten off or held like a pencil.
- When used with a knife or spoon, the fork should be held in the left hand, in much the same way as the knife, with the prongs facing downwards. On its own, it is held in the right hand, with the prongs facing upwards, resting on the fingers and secured with the thumb and index finger.
- A spoon is held in the right hand, resting on the fingers and secured with the thumb and index finger. Food should be eaten off the side of the spoon; it should never be used at a right angle to the mouth.
- Cutlery should be rested on the plate/bowl between bites, and placed together in the bottom-centre when you are finished.
- Never gesture with your cutlery, and don't scrape or clatter it noisily against your plate or bowl.
- It is bad manners to loudly clank your utensils against your teeth.
- With cutlery work from the outside inwards, course by course.
- Once seated, unfold your napkin and use it for occasionally wiping your lips or fingers. At the end of dinner, leave the napkin tidily on the place setting.
- It is good dinner table etiquette to serve the lady sitting to the right of the host first, then the other ladies in a clockwise direction, and lastly the gentlemen.
- If the food presented to you is not to your liking, it is polite to at least make some attempt to eat a small amount of it. Or at the very least, cut it up a little, and move it around the plate!



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- It is quite acceptable to leave some food to one side of your plate if you feel as though you have eaten enough. On the other hand, don't attempt to leave your plate so clean that it looks as though you haven't eaten for a while.
- Desserts may be eaten with both a spoon and fork, or alternatively just a fork if it is a cake or pastry style sweet.
- Should a lady wish to be excused for the bathroom, it is polite for the gentlemen to stand up as she leaves the table, sit down again, and then stand once more when she returns.
- Always make a point of thanking the host and hostess for their hospitality before leaving.
- It is good dinner table etiquette to send a personal thank you note to the host and hostess shortly afterwards.

How much drink is needed for an event or party?

- As a general rule, assume guests will have two drinks during the first hour of the party, and one drink every hour after that.
- Number of guests x estimated number of drinks per guest = Total number of drinks
- Next, figure out how you want to divide those drinks among wine, beer and liquor, depending on the people you're serving. Or to make it simple, just allocate a third of the total number of drinks to each type.
- Wine: A 750ml bottle of wine contains about 5 servings, so divide the number of wine drinks by 5 to come up with the number of bottles you'll need.
- For Champagne or sparkling wine, a bottle will fill about 6 flutes.
- Beer: For large parties, a keg often makes the most sense.
- Liquor: Mixed drinks have a 1.5-ounce (45ml) serving of liquor per drink, so a 750ml bottle will make about 16 drinks. To work out how many bottles you need, just divide the number of liquor drinks needed by 16.
- To estimate the amount of mixers needed, figure about 1 quart (1 litre) of tonic water, soda water, or juice for every 3 guests.

Dinner book

A dinner book is a detailed information record of the dinner to assist the principals should they wish to have another such event and need to know:

- Table setting: Take a photo of the setting.
- Date.
- Guests present.
- Where the guests were seated.
- What pre-dinner drinks were ordered.
- Remarks section:



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- Live music playing or was background music a harp player or was it a selection of music playing on iPod, CD and what was the music list.
- Linen used.
- Use of place cards?
- Type of service such as all silver service or was the first course plated, main silver served and then dessert /pudding plated.
- Mr Lee proposed a toast to Major J Smith after the main course and Grace was said as well as a Loyal Toast.
- Flowers: Type of flowers and the design such as a battleship arrangement or no flowers just fruit bowls.
- Candelabra adorned table.
- Cutlery used.
- Jewellery worn by hostess.
- Apparel worn by host and hostess.
- Coffee served in withdrawing room.
- Menu.
- List of wines, liqueurs and other drinks served.
- Cigars served.
- Passing of the port and what port.
- Principal remarks.

Dinner Book

- Date:
- Guests:
- Remarks:
- Principals remarks:
- Flowers:
- Jewels worn by hostess:
- This is subject to the host and hostess approval.