



# Tips for Dining Out

Compiled by Casey Mull, Marilyn Poole, and Cheryl Varnadoe

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When eating food in a restaurant or at home, you should always use your manners. Having nice table manners will become very natural for you.

## **REMEMBER:**

- Place your napkin in your lap
- Do not rest elbows on the table
- The key to fast food eating is to be casual and comfortable, but polite and considerate

## **WHEN ORDERING FOOD:**

- If you or the people at your table are not ready to order, simply tell your server that you need a little more time.
- If your group wants separate checks, let your server know that at the beginning before you order anything, including what you would like to drink.

## **BEING SERVED IN A BUFFET LINE:**

- The attraction of a buffet is that you can sample as many foods as you like.
- When going through a buffet line, use a clean plate EACH time you get food. Don't take your used plate through the line.
- In a buffet line, there is no need to overload the food on your plate.
- If you pick up a piece of food such as a piece of chicken or a roll, keep it on your plate. Don't change your mind and put it back.
- If the silverware is rolled inside a paper napkin, unwrap the napkin and place in your lap. Place the silverware in the appropriate place – fork to the left, knife and spoon to the right side of the plate.
- Once seated, do not begin eating until others around you or at least half of your table is seated and ready to eat.

## **SALAD BARS:**

- Use most tips that apply to buffet lines.
- Wait your turn in line, never move ahead of the person in front of you.
- Use the serving utensils provided
- If you accidentally take too much, do not move excess food back to the serving dishes
- Don't reach across to the other side. Wait until you have gone down one side, then move to the other side.
- Always remember to be patient and courteous to the others in line

#### **FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS:**

- Treat those who serve you with respect. Remember to say Please and Thank you.
- Be ready to order when you get to the counter.
- If you have to wait on your order, stand to the side. If you order for several people, ask one of them to help you carry your order to the table.
- Most fast foods are made for eating without utensils, so it is proper to pick up food with your fingers.
- Since the wrapper or containers are actually your plate, you should leave them spread out while you are eating. After you have finished, then always discard your trash in the trashcan and leave your area clean.

#### **WHILE DINING OUT:**

- Be respectful of other people dining.
- Never complain about the food or service.
- Turn your cell phone off to vibrate or silent when you arrive at the restaurant.
- Families with small children should not let little kids run around.
- If your group is celebrating a birthday or special occasion, don't take over and be too rowdy. Arrange for a private room, if needed.
- Wait until everyone at your table has been served, before you begin to eat.
- Remember to leave a tip in a restaurant. A good guide is 15-20%. 10-15% is ok in a restaurant where it is a buffet where you serve yourself, or where you place your order in a central location.
- Remember to say please and thank you to the servers.
- If you are especially pleased with the food or service, it is a nice gesture to offer compliments. The management / waiter will appreciate hearing from a satisfied customer. Praise is important and always appropriate to give.

- Your table manners are very important, since they follow you everywhere. By learning and practicing proper table manners and dining etiquette, you can avoid potentially embarrassing situations. You can enjoy dining no matter where you are, if you are comfortable with yourself and your eating manners.

### IF SOMETHING HAPPENS DURING THE MEAL:

- If you drop a fork or spoon, ask the waiter for another one. Don't pick it up and try to clean it off.
- If a fork or glass is not clean, just discreetly ask for another one.
- If you spot something in your food that doesn't belong, avoid making a scene. Alert your waiter to the problem. He / she will bring a replacement for you.
- If someone at your table has food on their face, politely tell them. You would want to know, if that happened to you.
- If you knock over a drink, set the glass upright and apologize. Use your napkin to begin blotting up the liquid. Summon your waiter who will take care of it.

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