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For many people, the thought of attending a business dinner can be a tremendous source of anxiety, whether the purpose of the event is to pitch a sale to a new client, land a job, impress your boss, or any number of goals you don't want to mess up with a less-than-stellar performance. If you found yourself nodding as you read that while your stomach
twisted up in a knot, you're not alone. But a white-collar business dinner doesn't have to be so stressful. By keeping a few key tips in mind, you'll do more than just survive the dinner without making a fool of yourself; you'll have a great opportunity to make a good impression on your guests. Key Takeaways: Make sure you dress appropriately and
present yourself professionally. Let your guests or the others at the table set the pace for when you are eating. Avoid being late to the dinner and don't arrive expecting to eat right away. Try to mirror the actions of others to know the proper way to act. Why Is Business Dinner Etiquette Important? You get only one chance to make a good first
impression. In many cases, that first impression happens at the dinner table when you're meeting with clients, prospective business partners, or your new boss. Even if the gathered guests are people you already know in a work setting, one disastrous meal can forever alter their perception of you. Are you the polite, professional person who has
everything under control, or are you the rude, obnoxious person nobody wants to sit next to? Consider how your career, such as a bonus or raise if your boss notices you have poor etiquette around colleagues, or worse, potential new clients, recruits, or collaborators, it won't reflect well on you. That seems
like a lot of pressure on your shoulders, but don't panic. Most business etiquette is common sense that shouldn't take too much thought to master. Eventually, with enough practice, it will become second nature. Step back and let the host take charge. That means allowing the host to pick the time and date, send the business letters, set up the
reservation, greet the guests, direct them to their seats, recommend entrees, start the conversation, etc. If you are expected to be prepared and make sure everything is set up properly and then runs smoothly. You set the pace. Be conscious of various work shifts. When scheduling, consider if your company or client employs workers the pace.
outside of normal business hours. You want to ensure that a business dinner can fit into guests' schedules without too much inconvenience, so taking account of employees who work a first, second, or third shift might require some extra planning on your part. Dress appropriately to present yourself professionally. Even if you're meeting at a semi-
casual restaurant, wearing jeans and a T-shirt isn't going to win any style points or impress your guests. Proper office attire is usually appropriate, although you can dress up more if it's a formal dinner. However, be cognizant of your guests.
touches his or her napkin first. Proper etiquette is to unfold your napkin under the table before draping it across your lap. Do not tuck it into the front of your shirt like a bib. Be prepared to answer get-to-know-you questions. These are ice-breaker inquiries designed to not only jumpstart the conversation but also to help you get to know the people at
the table, especially if you're welcoming a new employee to the team. Remember to keep your responses short and sweet; nobody wants to hear you drone on for twenty minutes about your complete life story. If you can master the nuances of interview small talk, you'll be in a great position to steer the business dinner in the right direction. Be
assertive and decisive. Staring at the menu for fifteen minutes trying to pick an entree while everyone else at the table has been ready to order for a while is not a good impression you want to make. If you know you're indecisive when it comes to ordering food, look at the menu online before you arrive at the restaurant. Being a strong decision-maker
is a good attribute that helps you project confidence, which is exactly what a boss or client wants to see. Let your guest to feel uncomfortable. If the guest orders an appetizer, follow suit. Same with dessert. If you're a fast eater, try to remain conscious of your guest's pace and match
it. If you're a slow eater, be prepared to stop before you're finished if your guest is done with the meal long before you will be. Don't make the guest wait for you to finish. Know which silverware, which should already be at your place setting when you arrive. If you're worried about mistaking
your soup spoon for your dessert spoon, a good general rule is to start with the outermost silverware for the first course and work your way in as the various courses are served. Be polite and courteous to the restaurant staff. Criticizing the food and the staff is a rude gesture and will not impress your guests. Plan the payment before the bill arrives.
Ideally, a host will speak to a server beforehand and give a credit card to ensure everything is already taken care of and there won't be any awkward and uncomfortable looks between guests wondering if they're expected to pay. If this is a circumstance where guests are expected to pay for their meals, make that clear before they order, as it may
affect how a guest selects an entree. Consider following up with a thank-you letter to the host if appropriate. It takes a lot of work to pull off a successful business dinner, and by showing that all that hard work didn't go unnoticed, you'll likely be one of the first to receive an invitation to the next outing. Appreciation and gratitude can go a long way
toward impressing the right people. Here are some of the things you shouldn't do when go do a business dinner, you are essentially telling your guests that their time is not a priority for you. Don' pull out chairs for
guests. While that etiquette may be acceptable in a social setting, it's generally frowned up in a business situation, regardless of the guests. Don't jump the gun when it comes to talking business. This is important for two reasons. First, if you aren't the host, you may
be interrupting your boss's agenda. Second, if you skip the introductions and pleasantries, your guests may not feel comfortable with one another quite yet, and you'll have a much less productive business meeting. Timing can be everything. Don't use your phone during the meal. Your guests should have your full, undivided attention. The best
practice is to either turn your phone off or switch it to silent mode and put it away to ensure it isn't interrupting the conversation by constantly making noise with text messages and work emails. Proper phone etiquette is an absolute must. Don't engage in pet peeve behaviors. They are likely to drive some of your guests nuts. These are the little
annoying habits that you need to be conscious of. For example, chewing or drinking loudly, talking with your mouth full, cracking your knuckles, bouncing your pen, that's a good sign they're not enjoying themselves and are more focused
on the grating sound than they are on the conversation. See a list of the most common pet peeves and identify any that you know you're sometimes guilty of; then be diligent about refraining from that behavior. Don't lose your professional demeanor. Just because you aren't in an office setting anymore, don't forget that this is still about business. You
aren't hanging out with a group of friends on a Friday night, and you aren't on a date, even if you're dating a coworker who is attending the business dinner. Treat every single guest will set the pace. If your guest isn't
hungry, don't count on ordering big entrees. You also don't want to appear unprofessional by wolfing down food and nodding with your mouth full while your guest does all the talking. Don't stack your dishes or push them away when you are finished. You are either a host or a guest, but you're not the server. Allow the wait staff to do their job and
clear the table as the guests finish their meals. Don't ask for a to-go box for leftovers. This isn't a casual family dinner; you came to discuss business, not indulge in the food and bring home lunch for tomorrow. Don't make a big, flashy show of paying the bill. One of the worst things a host can do is draw everyone's attention by whipping out the wallet
with a flourish and counting out hundred dollar bills to show off. Another big mistake would be to argue about the bill. At all times, the host should appear to be calm, composed, and in control. Paying the bill should be an inconsequential act in comparison to the rest of the dinner. Additional Business Meal Etiquette Tips You should have a pretty good
idea of what constitutes proper and poor etiquette. Here are some more tips to help you with your business dinner etiquette: Use your napkin as tissue or beginning to clean your teeth at the table is not going to make a good impression on your guests. Brush up on your basic
table etiquette if you're concerned about making a faux pas. Observe your guests. If in doubt, observe your guests and try to mirror their actions, especially if you're able to identify a seasoned veteran of the trade who has been to many business meals and knows how to act. Pace yourself when eating. Some people tend to be slower eaters than others,
so it's a good idea to finish your last bite when everyone else is. Be mindful of what you order. You should be picking something that can be eaten with a fork. If you have any documents that you have to go over at the dinner, having messy hands from finger foods can look bad. Stick to something that can be used with your utensils. Chew with your
mouth closed. This should be a rule when eating in general, but make sure you chew with your mouth closed, and don't talk with food in your first business dinner, and that's okay. The trick is to not show your discomfort. Like many other life skills, this
is something that will become easier and easier until it's second nature if you keep practicing it. Just remember to be professional and polite. Take a deep breath and relax. You can do this. Never miss an opportunity that's right for you. You've been invited to a business lunch or dinner, and you want to impress. If you're doing this for the first time, it
can be daunting. Or perhaps you've had one or two before and they haven't gone well. Whatever your situation, it can endear you to management, improve your network, or highlight your great work. Doing
well at these lunches or dinners can be your key to more business opportunities. If all that sounds intimidating, just remember that you're attending this lunch for a reason, and that's usually a positive sign. As long as you avoid these simple mistakes, it's hard to go wrong. After you get to the end of this list, you'll understand how to be professional
and courteous at business meals. This will allow you to get through them smoothly without causing offense or having any awkward moments. Life happens, and being late to work sometimes seems unavoidable. However, before an important business lunch, you want to take every possible step to avoid this from happening. Even if you're just on time,
being stressed on the journey isn't a good way to prepare. The ideal scenario is that you leave the office with the people you're taking public transport, get the train or bus before the one you think you need. Also make a
contingency plan, such as if the train you were planning on taking gets canceled. If traveling by car, plan for the worst-case traffic scenario. By taking these steps, there is a good chance you'll arrive early at your destination. However, don't arrive too early either as this can
inconvenience the host. They may be having a pre-meeting, or perhaps the others attending the meal want to catch up over a drink before sitting down. The rules here are slightly different from that of a dinner party, as you should aim to be there 5 to 10 minutes early. If you do find yourself earlier than this, wait in the lobby or somewhere nearby
such as a coffee shop. Following a dress code is made even trickier these days. Many modern offices have a casual approach to work attire, but the place you're eating at may not. Getting the dress code in advance. You
can also casually ask the host of the dinner what you're expected to wear, if appropriate. There are other ways to get over this problem, such as simply getting in touch with the wenue and confirming with them. If it's a formal business setting, then it's best to wear a suit or smart business attire. In more informal settings, business casual may be
appropriate. A neat appearance will always be respected, and if you're unsure, then it's better to err on the side of more formally for a casual lunch is a lot easier to brush off than dressing casually when you should have looked professional. These days it can feel as
though using your phone is second nature, and it's normal to reach into your pocket intermittently just to see if there are any new notifications. It's disrespectful to be on your phone and shows that your interest is elsewhere. There needs to be a specific reason to use your
phone, such as to aid the conversation or for business purposes. For example, you may need to add a future meeting to your calendar, or you could be on the people at your table, as you want to strengthen your professional ties, not undermine them. You
to eat your meal before everyone has been served is a classic etiquette mistake. It will leave a poor impression as it's seen as a sign of impatience and a lack of awareness for social norms. You should wait until everyone else has received their food before you think about picking up your fork. At any good restaurant, this shouldn't be an issue as all
meals should be served in quick succession. There are rare exceptions to this etiquette. An example would be if another guest has returned their meal and wants everyone else to eat before their food gets cold. Even if bread or appetizers are on the table, you shouldn't jump into helping yourself. Instead, wait until everyone is seated and settled and
especially true if someone else is footing the bill. You want to strike a balance between enjoying the meal and maintaining a professional attitude. If you feel as though this could be a problem for you, it may be a good idea to enjoy a light snack beforehand. In addition, you want to avoid selecting the most expensive items on the menu. Doing so can
make you look opportunistic if the meal is being covered by expenses, or rude if the bill is going to be split equally. As always, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, the host may want to show off by imploring you to get an expensive item they recommend. You want to match their tone and err on the side of caution and restraint. The same
applies to appetizers, extras, and desserts. Wait for a collective agreement from the group before ordering anything more. Business lunches/dinners and alcohol have a complicated relationship. This is where you need to use your judgment and observation skills to gauge the mood. Of course, if you don't want to drink alcohol, then don't feel pressured
and stick to your regular order. If you are an alcohol drinker, then overindulging can be a quick way to tarnish your professional image if you're not careful. Drinking too much too quickly can lead to poor judgment and inappropriate behavior. That includes finding it more difficult to follow all the tips listed here. Sharing a drink or two can help to
build rapport, ease conversation, and make you feel more comfortable if you're following the group. However, you should only drink if senior members of the group are also doing so. If you are drinking, be mindful of your tolerance and have some water alongside your alcohol. Finally, be mindful of the time of day and your responsibilities for the rest
of it. If you need to go back to work, then leave the alcohol aside unless the host is upper management and excuses you from your commitments. As you may have noticed, there are exceptions to all of these rules, which can make it tricky. It's important to observe what's happening around you and follow the host's lead at all times. You also have to
appreciate the tone of the meal. It could be lunch with upper management, a networking meal with a client, or perhaps a dinner with a potential new employer. One meal may be casual, and another more formal. The host is expected to set the tone for the occasion, and you can use this to put your mind at ease. They'll be the ones to check whether
everyone is ready to order, initiate discussion topics, and when to transition between business and casual chat. Ignoring these cues may annoy the host or come across as pushy. Without being too obvious, it's a good idea to mirror their choices in terms of type of drink and progression of food courses. Doing so will prove you are both considerate and
professional. When it comes to dining etiquette, there are many rules to follow. Some of them may be obvious, whereas others may be related to food you're not accustomed to eating. If you're wondering what these rules are, thankfully we have a handy guide for you. Not following basic manners is an obvious faux pas and showcases your lack of
preparation and understanding. This may be taken as a sign you're not ready to be trusted with more responsibility. Basic steps include not talking with your mouth full, using appropriate utensils, chewing with your mouth full, using appropriate utensils, and the propriate utensils, and the propriat
you know how to use chopsticks. Finally, try to stick to foods that are easy to manage. The likes of noodles or ribs may be your favorites, but they have a much higher chance of making you look awkward or causing a mess. It's understandable that you'd be excited about attending a business meal. Without trying to make you nervous, this could be a
significant milestone in your career. This can make you desperate to make a good impression and get your ideas out there. However, you need to keep that excitement in check and speak at the right times. Speaking over others can derail a conversation and is simply rude. The person you spoke over is likely to instantly form a negative opinion of you
Wait for natural pauses before responding. Speaking too quickly after someone else spoke will also make it seem as though you didn't care about what the person before you said. Just be patient. If you have something of value to say, then it doesn't need to be said immediately. It will have much more gravity and impact if you say it when there is a
break and you've got everyone's attention. If you're desperate to get your point across, you may not properly listen to what others around you are saying. Active listening is when you impatiently wait for someone to finish
speaking and respond with a point that doesn't acknowledge what they said. An example of good active listening would be to say something like: "That's a great point because of X. What would also help the company is Y." If people notice that you're only pretending to listen, it will come across as inconsiderate or uninterested. You may also be asked
about the business conversation at a later date. It's possible that you find it hard to listen properly due to nerves. If this is an issue, practice mindfulness to stay calm, such as breathing techniques. A simple trick is to maintain eye contact, nod along, add brief verbal gestures, and reference what they said when making your next point. A business
lunch or dinner is not the time to bring up controversial topics or ones that can sharply divide opinion. Subjects such as politics, religion, and social issues should be off the table, as they often spark strong opinions which can lead to tension or feeling alienated. Added to this, you should also avoid topics that make others uncomfortable, such as deeply
personal issues, gossip, or comments on someone else's characteristics. Such remarks can be seen as not only disrespectful but even discriminatory. This key tip also gives you a chance to shine. If someone else is making this mistake, you can craftily steer the conversation back to a more neutral topic. This will be appreciated by everyone else at the
table. Industry trends and work are common subjects of interest, but you can also talk about positive personal stories or non-controversial hobbies. A business meal is a place to build connections and trust. If you start to make others uncomfortable with your conversation topics, that may not be possible. We're not telling you to avoid complaining here
far from it. In fact, if there are obvious signs that you should send back your meal, then that's exactly what you shouldn't complain excessively or argue about trivial matters. This can make you appear rude and someone who may be difficult
to work with. If you do need to raise a complaint, then it should be done politely and discreetly. For example, if you ordered a medium-rare steak and it's slightly overcooked, ask yourself if it's worth making a fuss over. If you can live with
the error and it's not apparent to others at the table, it's usually best to get on with your meal without appearing to be high maintenance. Remember, the main goal here is to build relationships. If your meal is good but not perfect, keep a positive demeanor. Handling the financial aspect of a business meal can be tricky. You want to make the right
impression by paying your share but equally, you don't want to offend. It's unusual that you'd be responsible for the bill, either out of their own pocket or as a business expense. However, you shouldn't presume
this, or act entitled. It's best to offer to pay for your share of the meal if you're unsure and give a good tip. It may be made clear to you beforehand how it's being paid but if not, you can ask someone else who is attending the meal. If the bill is to be split, offer a fair contribution. Unless you've bought more expensive items that increase your proportion
of the bill, be content with splitting it equally between everyone. If you are responsible for a higher percentage of the bill, offer to pay more. You may insist on paying for the entire meal, but this can actually be rude and put the host in an uncomfortable position. Remember, there is no rush. If you're unsure, hang back and wait for cues about the
payment from the other diners. A simple yet important tip is to thank the host. There is a chance they got a secretary to arrange the meal and the bill is being charged to the company, but it's still good etiquette. They have taken time out of their schedule and invited you. It's an important moment and you want to seem grateful. It's best to keep this
short and straightforward. You don't need a big show of gratitude and beautiful prose about how you really appreciate the invite. Instead, a simple "thank you for lunch" is all you need. You can make additional positive comments such as how the food was lovely, the restaurant was excellent, or the view was fantastic. This will show your appreciation
without it seeming inauthentic. If appropriate, you can add a quick "thanks once again" at the end of it. The last tip we have is that you shouldn't leave too soon. It will make everyone else at the table think that you have more important places
to be and that you couldn't wait to leave. Of course, there could be a very good reason you need to leave, but if it comes up during the meal, then it should be agreed upon beforehand. Otherwise, it's important to relax and wait for the
host to naturally wind down the lunch or dinner. If you want to leave but are waiting for cues, avoid checking your watch too frequently as this can make others feel uncomfortable. The end of the meal is often where important information is given such as the next steps on a project, the arrangement of a future meeting, or significant news. If you've
made it to the end of the meal without making any of the mistakes above, you don't want to ruin it at the last hurdle. A well-executed business meal can be an important milestone in your career. If you follow all these steps, you'll be giving yourself the best possible chance of making the right impression. Business dining etiquette refers to behaviors
and skills that equip you to successfully conduct business during a meal. If you are in a relationship-driven career, chances are you have had many opportunity to build rapport and start or strengthen a relationship. Good food in a
comfortable setting allows for conversation beyond business, so you can get to know your client on a more personal (but not too personal) level. Adding another perspective to the relationship enables you to focus on the relationship
instead of which fork to use. Of course, there is more to dining gracefully than knowing which utensil to use. From extending the invitation to paying the bill, your company. Developing fruitful, long-lasting relationships involves
interpersonal skills, consistency, and genuine effort. Whether your meeting occurs at a fine dining establishment, casual outdoor café, or a sports event, your relationships. If you are hosting the event, inform your guests of the venue's dress code. The
occasion, location, and venue will determine the dress code and attire. When I choose an outfit for a business or social dining event, I want to show courtesy and respect to the host or guest and an understanding of the audience. The three general terms predominantly used to describe business attire are formal, professional, and business casual.
Many details and options define each, all of which help you don the right look. Your appearance and attire are significant nonverbal cues of your professionalism and savvy. As the first impression, it sets the tone and outcome of your professional. As the host
you manage all the event details. The first step is choosing a restaurant with a setting and menu you know your guests will enjoy. Avoid asking if they have food allergies or dietary restrictions. Instead, ask what types of food or restaurants they prefer, which should give you enough information to make a wise choice. With this knowledge, select two
restaurants, email your guest a link for both, and ask where they would like to dine. If you are a guest and have specific dietary requirements, contact the host or dining venue to determine if you need to request an accommodation. This is common, so please feel at ease with your request. Being on time for a planned event demonstrates consideration
for the host and thoughtfulness for everyone's time. It signifies professionalism, a good work ethic, and commitment to fulfilling obligations. Punctuality shows reliability and gives a positive first impression. It also allows you to prepare physically and mentally for the event. I have clients who require their employees to arrive a minimum of ten
minutes before the meeting start time. In other words, arrive early to be on time. Conversational skills build rapport and instill trust in social and business situations. How do you develop these skills? Begin with small talk and active listening. Small talk is a friendly, polite exchange of casual information, and active listening entails concentrating on
what people say so you can understand the message and respond thoughtfully. These essential business skills require strategic planning and practice to ensure rewarding conversations. In business, be personable, not personal. Be well informed and prepared to discuss local and world events; top sports events; latest books, movies, podcasts, and
theater productions; community-sponsored and nonprofit work; and the food, venue, and weather. To be a good conversationalist, avoid talking too much about yourself and focus on getting to know the other person. Off-limit topics include politics, personal finances, religious beliefs, and your or their health. Never gossip or speak negatively about
anyone or anything. It is good practice to limit your alcohol use because it can impair judgment and behavior and reflect poorly on you and your company. Being mindful of alcohol intake ensures clear and effective communication during business discussions and avoids health, safety, legal, and liability issues. Know that toasting with a nonalcoholic
beverage is perfectly acceptable. Treat a cloth and paper napkin the same way. It will be in one of three places: to the left of your plate, on your plate, on your plate, on the right in your server for a replacement. You often hear that placing your
napkin on your lap is the first thing you do after sitting down at the table. However, three things may happen first: an introduction, a welcome, or a prayer. If these occur, look to the host and follow their lead when they place their napkin on their lap to signal the meal has begun. If there is no host at the table, feel free to be the first to pick up your
napkin, fold it in half under the table, and position the folded edge at your waist. Blot your lips before you sip to maintain a clean rim on your beverage glasses. If you drop your napkin on the floor, ask your server for a replacement. Never place a
soiled napkin on the table until the meal ends, at this time, pick it up and lay it loosely to the left of the place setting. Never fold or crumple a soiled napkin or lay it on the plate. Eat your bread or rolls one small piece at a time. Your bread and butter
(B&B) plate is located at the upper left of your place setting. You will find a butter spreader placed horizontally at the top edge or vertically on the right-hand edge of the plate. Both positions have the cutting edge facing toward the plate. Both positions have the cutting edge facing toward the plate.
Never use a knife to cut your roll or bread. Use your butter spreader to add a small portion of butter to the bread. Repeat for each bite of sight. Inform your guest beforehand if you are expecting a call you must answer. Stay engaged in
conversation, excuse yourself discreetly for an urgent call, and be mindful and professional, respecting your guest's time and attention. Refrain from rearranging your place setting, pushing away or stacking your dishes, or handing empty or used items to your server. This will reflect poorly on you and highlight your lack of dining etiquette knowledge.
Put your guest at ease by mentioning a few high-priced items. This lets them know they can order the salmon." "I'll do the salmon." are different dining experiences, "May I have the salmon." To get a to-go box or not to-go bo
and several factors determine the right choice. In a formal or client meeting, it is poor form to ask for a to-go box, and it reduces your professionalism. Consume 90 percent of the meal to respect your host and the meeting. If dining with colleagues or longtime customers, such a request may be acceptable. Have you ever knocked over a beverage on
the table? How about cutting a piece of food and watching it fly off your plate? Everyone has experienced a mishap at the table. If you are the host, your main objective is to ease your guest's embarrassment. Act quickly and smoothly, make light of the situation, and clean up, asking the server for assistance if necessary. It is good business etiquette to
thank your quests. Follow up within two to three days with a handwritten note, an email, or possibly social media to express your appreciation for their attendance. Mention a specific interaction and tell them how their presence added to the enjoyment of the evening. These steps ensure guests feel valued and build lasting relationships. Yes, there
are many. Here's a sampling: blueberries; poppy seeds; heavily seasoned items; hard, crusty bread or rolls; long strands of pasta; shellfish that require cracking; fish, meat, or fowl with bones; French onion soup; tacos; corn on the cob; ribs; chicken wings . . . the list goes on. It is appropriate to start discussing business after exchanging pleasantries
and ordering the meal. Not all business meals are formal. So, yes, jeans may be acceptable. They should be in excellent condition, well fitted, and without embellishments or faded, torn, or worn areas. Table talk is a key part of the overall business dining experience. Ask questions that show genuine interest in getting to know your guest. Be
personable but not too personal. Begin questions with what, where, when, how, or tell me about . . . ?" "What inspired you . . . ?" "What inspired you . . . ?" "What inspired you . . . ?" and "Tell me about begin questions of personal financial matters, romantic life, family dynamics, age
marital status, plans to start a family, children, health conditions, and religion and politics. Whether it's with a client, your boss, or a business over lunch or dinner; however, with this business outing comes some dining
etiquette one should always follow. So, what exactly are the do's and don'ts when it comes to dining etiquette in a business setting? This etiquette guide breaks down the rules you should follow before your meal, during your meal, and after your meal. BEFORE THE MEAL Don't be late. What's worse than being hungry? Being hungry and having to
wait on someone. A business lunch or dinner is just as important as a work meeting, so being late does not look good. Be sure to leave plenty of travel time so you're sure to arrive on time, or even a little bit early. If you're running late, notify your guest(s) and allow them to choose whether they'd like to wait or be seated. Greet everyone with a
handshake. Sometimes business lunches or dinners may include others outside the company, such as partners of the organization, donors, or clients. Whenever you meet someone you're not familiar with, introduce yourself with a firm handshake, as well as informing them of what it is you do for the company. Put away your phone. It's never pleasant
when the buzzing or ringing of a phone goes off, especially in the middle of an important conversation. Remember to silence your phone and put it away during the meal so that you can keep all of your focus on the conversation. Remember to silence your phone and put it away during the meal so that you can keep all of your focus on the conversation.
when. No elbows on the table, put your napkin on your lap, sit up straight, don't talk with your mouth full, and remember to say "please" and "thank you." DURING THE MEAL Now that you're seated and introductions have been made, it's time for the main course. Order food that's easy to eat. While a rack of BBQ ribs or a plate of spaghetti may be
tempting to order, you need to remember that foods such as these are messy to eat and can cause you to get distracted from the conversation. Always order an item that's easy to eat such as chicken, fish, or salad, (Helpful tip: Try and order something similar to your host. If they opt for a salad, consider that instead of a burger.) Don't order expensive
items off the menu. A majority of business lunches or dinners take place at higher-end restaurants. While you may be tempted to order the steak with lobster, by doing so can give off a bad impression of you and can be seen as rude. Stick to a middle price range unless you're the one buying. Stay away from alcohol. In general, it's best not to order
alcohol at a business lunch or dinner. Stick with water, coffee, or a beverage such as iced tea. If your host or others at the table to order their table to finish your drink. (Helpful tip: Offer the host or another guest at the table to order their
drink first, that way the pressure is off you as to whether or not you should order alcohol.) Be mindful of the conversation may be about business one minute, it can turn lighthearted and into something more casual the next. Even then, make sure to avoid talking
about controversial topics such as religion or politics. (Helpful tip: If a topic comes up that you're uncomfortable with, try and politely change the subject as subtly as possible.) AFTER THE MEAL Now that you're finished. When
you're done eating, place the knife and fork on the plate with the handles at a 4 o'clock position. By doing this, it informs the waiter that you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin, leave it placed on your lap until you're done and they may remove your plate. As for the napkin you have a supplied the napkin you have a supplied to the napkin you have a 
been removed, or to the left of the setting if the plate is still there. Paying the bill. In most cases, the host who invited you will pay for the bill. Be sure to thank them for buying and compliment the meal and/or restaurant if it exceeds your expectations. If you're hosting the lunch or dinner, try and subtly pay for the meal without stopping the
conversation. Don't forget to thank your guest(s) for their time and for accompanying you to the restaurant. (Helpful tip: If you're the host and a guest you invited offers to pay the bill, politely decline.) Follow up. Before leaving the restaurant, be sure to exchange business cards with any new folks you may have met at the lunch or dinner. This way
you can follow up with an email, thanking them and stating that you enjoyed meeting them. This will also allow you to broaden your professional network, and will come in handy if/when you work with them in the future. Eating with someone you don't know well in a professional environment can feel tricky. On the one hand, you're trying to get to
professional should know. How to Demonstrate Business Dinner Etiquette 1. The host should choose an appropriate restaurant and make reservations ahead of time. Keep in mind the time and transportation required to travel
to the restaurant as well. Make sure you pick a time that suits you and your guests. Once you're seated, "take charge of the logistics of the meal," Pachter says. This means politely directing your guests to their seats and kindly recommending menu items in various price ranges. If you don't know much about the menu, you can do online research
ahead of time or call to ask what their top few dishes are. 2. Never pull out someone's chair for them, regardless of gender. It's not appropriate or necessary for a business setting. 3. Consider your guest when selecting food options. When
booking a restaurant, consider your guest's dietary restrictions and preferences. It's worth asking them in advance if you're able to. Make sure the meal. If your guest orders an appetizer or dessert, you should do so too. "You don't want to make
your quest feel uncomfortable by eating a course alone," Pachter says. On the flip side, if your boss is a vegetarian but chooses to meet at a steakhouse, "by all means, you can order steak," she adds. 4. Dress appropriately for the occasion. It's important to dress the part when attending a business dinner. Depending on the company's dress code, thi
could mean wearing a suit or dress or more casual attire. Be respectful of the company's policies, even though you're in a social setting. Dress in a way that shows you're taking the meeting seriously. Keep in mind that restaurants can be cold when the air conditioner is blasting, so bring or wear a sweater or blazer. 5. Know the utensils' proper
locations. Want an easy trick for remember the utensils go? Remember this: 'left' has four letters, and 'right' has five. "Your fork (four letters) goes to the left; your knife and spoon (five letters each) go to the right," Pachter notes. This trick can also help you remember where the food and drinks are generally placed on the table. "Food is
placed to the left of the dinner plate. The words 'food' and 'left' each have four letters. If the table is set properly, your bread or salad or any other food dish will be placed to the left of your dinner plate, and the words 'glass' and 'right' contain five letters." 6.
Know which utensils to use. Each course should have its own utensils, which may already be in front of you as the dishes are served. If all the utensils on the outside and work your way in as the meal goes on. According to Pachter, the largest fork is generally for the entrée. The salad fork is
smaller. The largest spoon is usually the soup spoon. If you have a fish course, you may see the fish knife and fork as part of the place setting. The dessert fork and spoon are often placed above the place setting. The dessert fork and spoon are often placed above the place setting. The dessert fork and spoon are often placed above the place setting.
plates and glasses. 'BMW' stands for 'bread,' 'meal,' and 'water.' Your bread-and-butter plate is on the left, the meal is in the middle, and your water glass is on the right," Pachter advises. "Break your roll in half, tear off one piece at a
time, and butter the piece as you are ready to eat it," she said. 9. Know the "rest" and "finished" positions. "Place your knife and fork in the rest position (knife on top of plate, fork across middle of plate) to indicate that you
have finished eating." 10. Do not push away or stack your dishes. Don't worry about handling dirty dishes. It's a distraction and can make the table look messy and chaotic. "Let the wait staff do their jobs," Pachter says. 11. Do not use a napkin as a tissue. A napkin should only be used for blotting the sides of your mouth and gently wiping your hands
as needed. If you need to blow your nose, Pachter recommends using the bathroom. 12. Never ask for a to-go box. "You are there for business, not for the leftovers," Pachter notes. "Doggie bags are okay for family dinners, but not professional occasions." 13. The host should always pay. This one can be a bit tricky, explains Pachter. "If you did the
inviting, you are the host and should pay the bill, regardless of gender," Pachter says. If the guest is insisting to pay, let them know your company is handling it. You can always excuse yourself from the table to pay the bill directly to the server, if needed. Just try not to get in the way of servers and other employees doing their job. You can always tell
the server or host in advance to have the bill delivered directly to you. "The bottom line is that you don't want to fight over a bill," she says. 14. Always say "please" and "thank you" to wait staff. As the guest, aim to not complain about the service or food unless it's absolutely crucial. It can be seen as insulting to the host. Be as polite as possible to all
staff members at and outside of the restaurant. The Takeaway Following these simple dining experience. A version of this article was originally published on November 27, 2013. Photo: Getty Images We've all been there—awkwardly
handling chopsticks for the first time, puzzled by an array of cutlery, or just unsure of the proper manners. Whether you're dining with your friends, family, or colleagues, here's how you can make every meal enjoyable, relaxing, and respectful. Here's a quick summary of the article: Dining etiquette is key to making a good impression at any meal!
Learn to handle utensils, understand table settings, and maintain polite conversation while respecting cultural customs. Food is a big deal to many of us, and cultures worldwide hold their food in high regard. When sharing a meal, it's important to know and follow accepted customs. Good dining and drinking etiquette shows mutual respect and helps
maintain a professional atmosphere. Dining etiquette is the basic rules and customs you follow while eating with others. Different cultures have shown that people who show good dining etiquette are seen as more competent and likable. This positive perception can lead to
better job opportunities because good manners can make a lasting impression during business meals and interviews. In the business world, dining etiquette (or table manners) can provide you great opportunities to establish relationships, negotiate deals, and make positive impressions. It can significantly impact your professional interactions. Here
are some key benefits of dining etiquette: It builds strong relationships. Sharing a meal can create informal, relaxed conversations, helping to build stronger, more personal connections. It creates a good impression: Proper table manners show professionalism, confidence, and respect, enhancing your image and that of your organization. It negotiates
deals: A dining setting can create a comfortable atmosphere for discussing business matters and negotiating deals. Understands cultural differences: Respecting dining settings and glassware can make or break your impression and
mastering it can boost your confidence and grace. When you get to the event, greet your host and other guests warmly. If you're unsure where to sit, wait for your host to guide you. At a large gathering, there might be place cards to help you find your seat. On arrival, greet everyone with a firm handshake and introduce yourself to anyone you do not
know. It is polite to remain standing until your host has taken their seat. Example Scenario: You walk into a restaurant, and your host guides you to your table. What to do: Arrive on time. Being punctual shows respect for the host to indicate
where you should sit. If there's a seating plan, follow it. If not, ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put theirs or ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put theirs or ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put theirs or ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put theirs or ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put theirs or ask the host if there's a preferred seating arrangement. Put your coat or shoes where other guests have put their so it doesn't interrupt a great conversation Reminder: Don't start eating until everyone has been served as a preferred seating arrangement.
or unless the host gives permission, especially in formal settings. Great food is one thing, but sparkling conversation can truly make a dinner memorable! Let's dive into some conversation starters that'll keep the dialogue as delicious as the meal. Shared
hobby]?" This creates an instant connection. Travel tales: Everyone loves a good travel story. Try, "What's the most interesting place you've visited lately?" It's a great way to learn about new destinations and experiences. Career curiosities: Show genuine interest with, "What's the most exciting part of your job?" This can lead to great insights about
different industries. Pop culture: Keep it light with, "Seen any good movies or shows recently?" It's an easy topic that most people can engage with. For more interesting conversation starters, read on: 68 Killer Conversation starters so You Can Talk to Anyone Reminder: Always be a good listener! Ask follow-up questions and show genuine interest in
the responses. Avoid controversial topics like politics or religion unless you know your dining companions very well. Dinner Body Language Sitting correctly can make a big difference in how you feel and how others perceive you at the dining table. Here are some tips to help you sit properly and comfortably: Sit up straight: Keep your back straight
and avoid slouching. Maintain a distance between your seat. Purse? Place it on your hand, but adjust for comfort. Bag placement: If you have a bag, place it at the back of your seat. Purse? Place it on your lap under your napkin or discreetly on the floor beside you, rather than on the table or the back of your chair. This keeps your
space tidy and prevents any awkward distractions. Legs and feet: Avoid crossing your legs or moving them excessively. Keep your hands on your elbows. Instead, keep your hands in your legs or moving them excessively. Keep your hands on your elbows. Instead, keep your hands in your legs or moving them excessively.
lightly on the table when you are. Have a work lunch or dinner around a board room table? Check out our video and article on seating: Many people might have trouble with this one—should you order cheap? Or the same thing as your host? Follow these golden rules: Keep it simple: When in doubt, place a straightforward order. Avoid asking your
server to explain everything on the menu, unless you have a particular food allergy or sensitivity. If you're unsure, you might want to opt for something simple and not so unique: "I'll have grilled chicken with vegetables, please." This is a simple, easy-to-eat dish that won't cause any distractions. Avoid expensive items: It's considered impolite to order
the most expensive item on the menu, especially if someone else is paying. Opt for something reasonably priced. Reminder: If the host is ordering the filet mignon, it might be fine to follow their lead depending on your relationship to the host is uncertain, feel free
to make a safe suggestion, such as, "The grilled salmon looks good, doesn't it?" Avoid "trouble" foods: Steer clear of foods that are difficult to eat, such as spagnetti or dishes with lots of bones. This prevents any awkward moments and keeps the dining experience smooth. Instead of ordering a messy burger, opt for something easier to handle like a
boneless grilled salmon or chicken breast dish. Your napkin is not there for show or to keep your silverware warm. Its primary purpose is to protect you from potential messy food stains at the table. So, do not leave your napkin on the table for decoration. As soon as you sit down, place your napkin on your lap. If it's a large napkin, fold it in half in a
rectangle or square shape. Keep it there throughout the meal, using it to gently blot your mouth as needed. If you need to leave the table, place your napkin on your chair, not the table. When you're done with the meal, fold the napkin loosely and place it to the left of your plate, not on the plate. Avoid this: Don't tuck your napkin into your shirt like a
bib as this is quite uncommon etiquette and usually appears messy. For more great table manner etiquette, check out the below video: Seeing difference. Know these tips: Use utensils from the outside in. Start with the outermost utensils
and work your way towards the plate. Remember, the fork is usually on the left, knife, and spoon on the right. The bread plate is usually on your left, and your drink is on your right. If you're unsure, observe your host or wait until others begin using their utensils. Pro Tip: Master the "b and d" Rule. To figure out which bread plate and drink are yours,
make a circle with your index finger and thumb on each hand, forming a "b" with your left hand for your bread plate and a "d" with your right hand for your bread plate isn't necessarily needed, it might be helpful to know common positions in case the
opportunity arises: PositionRepresentationPurposeFinishedKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up.Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork tines up. Indicates the meal is finished and the plate can be cleared. Still EatingKnife and fork parallel, placed vertically or at an angle (4 o'clock), knife blade facing inward, fork plate and the pl
you are not finished and do not want your plate cleared. PauseFork placed diagonally, tines down, knife blade resting on the plate and fork parallel, horizontally across the top of the plate, knife blade facing inward, fork tines up. Indicates readiness
for the next course. Did Not Enjoy the MealKnife and fork crossed, knife blade facing down. Subtly indicates dissatisfaction with the meal. For your reference, take a look on the image below: P.S. If you're looking to level up your people skills beyond table manners, we've got you covered: Be The Most Likable Person In The Room Learn the skills we've
taught 500k+ students to become more charismatic and successful — including: 5 phrases that will make you instantly more likable Our secret likability strategy for introverts The #1 trick to never running out of things to say It might seem basic, but how do you actually eat your food? And how do you hold the fork and knife? Look no further! Action
Steps: Wait for everyone to be served: Before you start eating, make sure everyone at the table has their food. This shows respect and patience. Take small bites: Chew with your mouth closed and avoid talking with food in your appearance neat. Cut
as you eat: Cut your food one piece at a time or just a few pieces ahead rather than cutting everything at once. This shows good manners and keeps your meal fresh. Avoid noises: When cutting the food, avoid making noises or dropping it. If using chopsticks, pick only a small portion of food each time and do not lift the bowl to eat the soup. Always
remember which utensils are yours to avoid picking up someone else's. Pro Tip: Imagine you're cutting into a delicious steak but are unsure how to hold your knife and fork properly. Hold the knife in your right hand to eat. If
you're left-handed, feel free to reverse this. Reminder: Avoid making slurping or chewing noises (unless you're in Japan eating in a ramen shop). It can be annoying and offensive to those around you. Passing food at the table might seem simple, but it requires a touch of etiquette to ensure a smooth and polite dining experience. Action Steps: You'll
usually want to pass food items to your right unless someone has already established a direction. This creates a smooth flow and prevents confusion at the table, as this can disrupt others and create a mess. Always use the serving utensils
provided, not your personal utensils, to serve yourself from communal dishes. This is more hygienic and respectful to others. When passing condiments or bread, pass the entire item rather than just the container or the basket. This prevents multiple people from handling the same items unnecessarily. Handling Common Situations: Dropped utensil: If
you drop a utensil, don't pick it up. Ask your host or a server for a replacement to maintain cleanliness and avoid disruption. Phone etiquette: Keep your phone on silent and off the table. If you must take a call, excuse yourself and step away to maintain focus on the meal and respect for your dining companions. Leaving the table: If you need to leave
the table, say "excuse me" and place your napkin on your chair. This signals to others that you will return shortly and maintains the neatness of the table setting. Serving yourself. This is a courteous gesture that shows consideration for others. Reminder:
Always be mindful of your actions at the table to avoid causing any discomfort or disruption. A little courtesy goes a long way in creating a pleasant dining experience for everyone. Food is great, but remember—great conversation can often make a stronger impression! Make sure to keep a balance between eating and talking. You don't want to talk
the night away and risk not feeling satiated, nor do you want to focus strictly on the food. Example Scenario: When your food arrives mid-conversation smooth. Make eye contact and avoid checking your phone or watch to stay
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attentive. This shows vou're a considerate and engaging dining companion. Reminder: Avoid discussing sensitive topics, such as politics or religion. Also, avoid interrupting others and let them finish speaking before you respond. Always keep the conversation light and respectful. And if you're looking for great conversation starters, look no further: 68

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