



Eating on the Job

Eating on the Job: Dining Etiquette

Perhaps your interview with a prospective employer will include a meal. Perhaps your job will require taking clients out for a meal. Or perhaps your job will require the occasional meal with your supervisor and his or her supervisor in the corporate dining room or a local restaurant. Whatever the occasion, if it is work related and it involves eating, dining etiquette is a critical professional skill you need to develop.

Interviewing and Eating

When it comes to interviewing, most people will be somewhat nervous. Being nervous isn't such a bad thing. It keeps you from becoming complacent during an interview and keeps you focused on your "A" game. When interviewing and eating combined even the most relaxed interviewer is at risk of becoming **overly** nervous which may impede the ability to effectively communicate skills and how those skills meet the employer's needs.

It is important to remember that while good manners and appropriate dining etiquette are essential, they are not enough. You must balance them with effective interviewing skills. **After all, this is an interview that just happens to be taking place during a meal!** Be sure to review the interviewing skills handout and schedule a practice interview with one of our counselors.

What to order

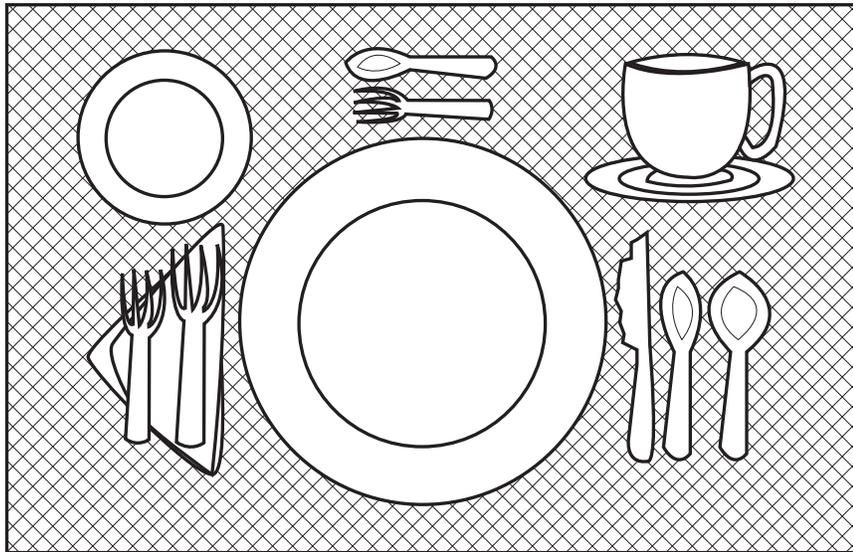
- Easy to eat items that can easily be cut into bite size pieces you won't need to pick up with your hands
- Something you know you'll enjoy eating
- Moderately priced items – don't go high end because someone else is picking up the tab
- Moderate quantities – remember this is about interviewing not about eating

What NOT to order

- Alcoholic beverages even if your interviewer suggests it – keep your competitive edge.
- Messy food that may get onto your interviewing attire.
- Pungent food (e.g., onions, garlic) that might cause your breath to be less than fresh



Eating on the Job, continued.



The table – a quick map of what goes where and when

Beverages – you will find your beverages to the right of your dinner plate.

Bread plate – you will find your bread plate to the left of your dinner plate.

Silverware – when eating, begin with the outside pieces and work your way in: Salad fork will be to the far left and soup spoon to the far right. Dessert forks and spoons will be above your plate. At the end of the meal, place the fork and the knife on your plate with handles pointing to the “four o’clock” position.

Napkins: remain on the table until everyone is seated – then place on your lap. On the arm or seat of your chair if you get up during the meal. On the table next to your plate at the end of the meal.

NEVER

- Talk with your mouth full
- Place your elbows on the table
- Focus overly on the food – remember this is an interview or a business meeting that just happens to be taking place during the meal
- Answer your cell phone – in fact, turn it off especially if this is an interview
- Conduct a prolonged conversation with the waiter about how the food is prepared
- Offer to pay for the meal if you are on an interview – it is not necessary

NOTE: If you have **dietary restrictions** due to health, lifestyle, or religion, we suggest you meet with a career counselor well in advance of your interview to discuss how to manage these in a way that is consistent with maintaining your professional image. One thing you can do – whether on an interview or at a meal-time business meeting - is to contact the restaurant in advance to be aware of your options.