

# UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Division

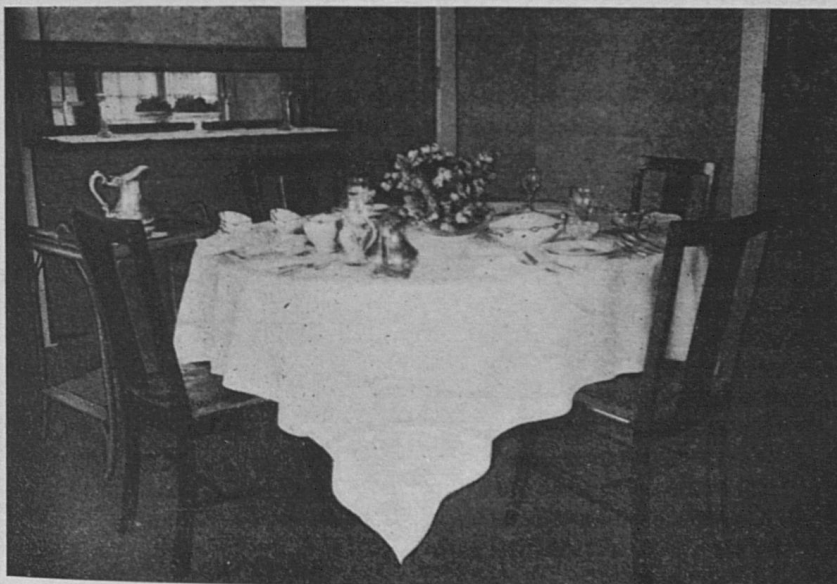
THOMAS P. COOPER, Dean and Director

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CIRCULAR NO. 154

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## TABLE SERVICE AND TABLE ETIQUETTE



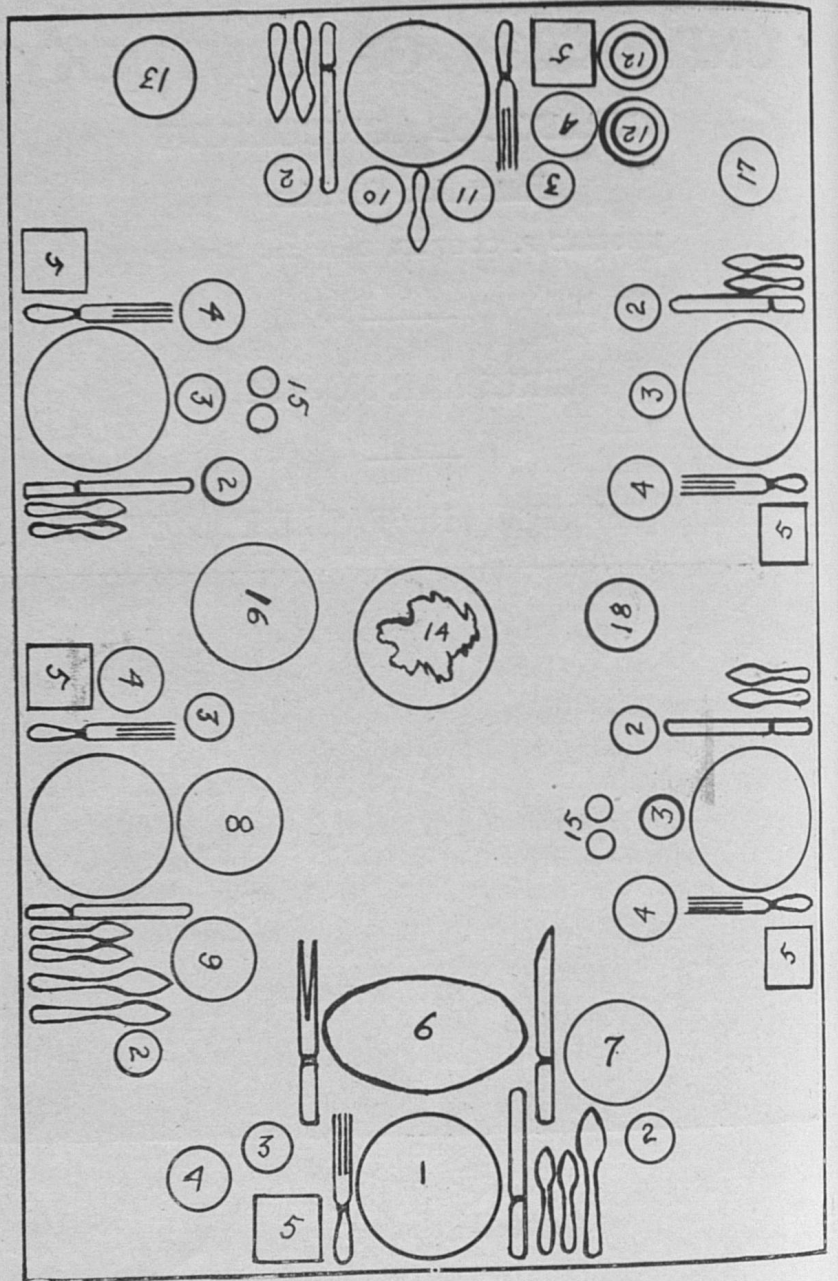
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Fig. 6.  
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CUT I

- |                 |                      |                             |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Dinner plate | 7. Vegetable         | 13. Coffee pot              |
| 2. Water glass  | 8. Potatoes          | 14. Table decoration        |
| 3. Butter chip  | 9. Gravy             | 15. Salt and pepper shakers |
| 4. Salad plate  | 10. Cream pitcher    | 16. Biscuits                |
| 5. Napkin       | 11. Sugar bowl       | 17. Water pitcher           |
| 6. Platter      | 12. Cups and saucers | 18. Relish                  |



## CIRCULAR NO. 154

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### Table Service and Table Etiquette

By MARY MAY MILLER, Field Agent in Foods

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Meals should be well planned, well prepared and well served. The food may be attractive but the palatability is somewhat destroyed when the food is put on the table in an untidy manner, when the table has been carelessly set and the meal served in confusion.

Meal time brings the family together and should provide an atmosphere of cheerfulness and sociability to be enjoyed by every member of the family group.

A big factor in the education of the child in the home is to teach it, by experience, to appreciate well-cooked food and to establish good habits of eating. The habit of not liking certain foods often destroys one's enjoyment of an entire meal and is a habit that must be discouraged. It is possible to learn to like almost all foods, except in few instances, perhaps, where a particular food may act as poison to some individuals.

#### A. THE DINING ROOM

1. Have everything cheery and in good taste.
2. Have room in order, well aired and at proper temperature.
3. Adjust the table to correct size and see that it is in the center of the room if possible.

#### B. TABLE COVERING

1. *Doilies*—Polish the surface of the table if doilies are to be used as a covering. Place a doily for each dish. Slip mats under the doilies on which hot dishes are to be placed.

2. *Runners*—If runners are to be used polish the table so as to remove all water stains or food spots. Spread covering evenly and place mats for the hot dishes.
3. *Silence Cloth and Tablecloth*—If covered table is to be used lay silence cloth straight and smooth. For the silence cloth select material that may be laundered such as white outing flannel blanket or other heavy white material. The silence cloth protects the table from the heat of dishes. The tablecloth fits more smoothly and the clatter of silver and dishes is eliminated if a suitable silence cloth is used.

Spread tablecloth with center fold up and exactly in the center of the table. See that the cloth hangs evenly all around the edge of the table.

#### C. TABLE DECORATION

If a centerpiece is to be used place it in the exact center of the table and the decoration in the center of it. The centerpiece should not be so large that it will interfere with the placing of dishes. The table decoration may be a small plant, a vase containing a few flowers or a bowl of fruit. Select a decoration that is simple and either high or low enough not to interfere with the view across the table.

#### D. INDIVIDUAL COVERS (See Cut I.)

The individual cover consists of the silver, china, glassware and napkin used by one person and usually requires about twenty inches for comfort. The covers should be placed exactly opposite each other. It is sometimes necessary to disarrange the side dishes of those who serve in order that the serving dishes may be conveniently placed. After the foods have been served the serving dishes may be placed on a small side table or if there is sufficient room on the table they may be set back out of the way. The side dishes may then be placed where they may be reached without difficulty.



1. Place knife at right of the plate with cutting edge toward the plate. Place dinner fork at left of the plate with tines up. The distance between the knife and fork will be determined by the size of the plate to be used. Placing the main knife and fork next to the plate gives a balanced arrangement.
2. Place all spoons at right of the knife with inside of bowls up and in the order to be used, beginning at the right and going toward the plate.
3. All forks with the exception of the cocktail fork are placed at the left of the dinner fork and from left to right in order of use. The cocktail fork is placed at extreme right of the spoons or placed on the cocktail plate.
4. Avoid more than four or five pieces of silver in a cover. If more than five pieces are needed, the extra silver may be placed at each cover just before the course is served or on the plate with the food to be served.
5. Place napkin neatly folded at the left of the forks with the open corner next to the lower end of the outer fork. If the space between the covers seems limited then place the napkin between the dinner knife and fork. If plates are to be put around at each cover and the food passed, the napkin, when fresh, may be placed in the plate. If not fresh put at the left of the plate rather than under the plate.
6. The plate, napkin and silver of each cover should be placed on a line about one inch from the edge of the table. The parts of each cover should be grouped compactly and still not have a crowded appearance. One should be able to see at a glance just how much belongs to one cover.
7. Place glass near tip of knife and place the bread-and-butter plate a little to the right of the tip of dinner fork. Individual butter plates or chips eliminate the waste that occurs when butter is put on dinner plates with hot food. The butter spreader, if used, is placed

across the upper right edge of the bread-and-butter plate with cutting edge toward the center of the plate and the handle to the right. If the butter chip is used in the place of bread-and-butter plate better spacing will be obtained if the chip is placed directly in back of the dinner plate. (See cut I.) In this case the side dish of salad, dessert or semi-soft vegetable may be placed at the tip of fork.

8. Place the hot dinner plates between the host's knife and fork. Put meat platter back of the plates and gravy at right of platter and potatoes at left of platter. Place carving knife at right of platter and carving fork at the left. If the host is to be assisted by the person at his left the service will be simplified if the potatoes and gravy are placed back of the cover of the assistant and the second vegetable at right of host near the platter. (See cut I.)
9. Place serving spoons at right of the cover of the person who is to serve or at right of the dish of food to be passed. (See cut I.) The host usually serves the meat and vegetables with the assistance of one who is at his left. The hostess usually serves the beverages, salads and desserts when they are to be served at the table. Place the food back of the cover of one who serves.
10. All articles such as jelly, pickles, syrup, bread, etc., that are to be placed on the table should be arranged as *conveniently* and symmetrically as possible.
11. Be sure that the salt and pepper shakers, sugar bowl, etc., are well filled. Try the shakers, being sure that they give freely before placing them on the table.
12. Place cream pitcher with handle to the right in front of the hostess, back of her plate. Place the sugar bowl at the left of the cream pitcher and sugar spoon at the right of the bowl, with handle of spoon toward the hostess.



13. The cups and saucers may be stacked in twos at left of hostess with the handles of cups toward hostess. (See cut I.)
14. Place pot of beverage at the right of the hostess leaving enough space for a cup and saucer between it and the hostess' cover. (See cut.) The cups are placed in this space by the hostess when pouring the beverage.
15. The cup of beverage is placed at the right of spoons in a cover with handle to the right.
16. Place individual salad plates at left of butter plates.
17. Place the small side dish of semi-solid vegetable or canned fruit between butter plate and glass of water.

E. BEFORE ANNOUNCING THE MEAL

1. Never announce the meal before everything which is needed or may be needed is in readiness.
2. All food pertaining to the first course should be ready for serving before the meal is announced.
3. Place food such as bread and butter on table just before serving, dishing the butter and filling the glasses three-fourths full.

F. SEATING

1. Seating of the host and hostess is dependent on the room construction. Where the hostess does her own work she usually prefers a place near the kitchen door.
2. Guests of Honor
  - (a) The lady guest is seated at the right of the host.
  - (b) The gentleman guest is seated at the right of the hostess.

G. SERVING THE FAMILY MEAL

In serving meals the chief thought should be simplicity. The housekeeper who has no maid should not attempt an elaborate form of service. She should plan a menu that will require but simple service so that she may be seated with the family. Guests always enjoy a meal when it is served with little effort and when it is shared with the hostess. Children should be taught to wait upon the table as it teaches them to be thoughtful of others.

The family meal may be served in two simple ways. If only a few foods are to be served it is well to put a plate at each cover and place the food on the table. In this case each food should be started by the person for whom it is most convenient. The food is offered to the person at one's right and after helping one's self it is passed to the left. All foods should be passed in one direction. If hot foods in heavy dishes are served it is best to have the serving done at the table by the host. It quickens the service if the host is assisted by the person at his left.

When the host serves the food alone he should pass the plates to his left, the first plate being kept by the hostess. The second plate is kept by the person seated at the right of the hostess. When the persons seated on the left side of the table have been served the host should then pass the plates to his right until all have been served. He should keep the last plate.

If the host serves with the assistance of the person at his left the service will be simplified if the passing is done to the left thruout. In this case the person at the right of the host receives the first plate and the second one to his right receives the second plate. The plates are thus passed to the left until all have been served. The host and his assistant should exchange the last two plates, in which instance the assistant will receive the last plate.

The amount of useless passing of food is reduced when part of the serving is done by members of the family group.

#### H. CLEARING THE TABLE (after meal)

1. Scrape the china and stack the dishes on trays or on tea wagon. Stack like dishes together.
2. The table should be cleared in as few trips as possible using trays or tea wagon.
3. After all the dishes have been removed, crumb the table, never brushing crumbs on to the floor.
4. If possible, have some one assist in removing the tablecloth to avoid making wrinkles. Fold as few times as



possible and roll on a roll made for that purpose or fold loosely in previous folds. Removing cloth after meals keeps it fresh longer.

5. It is desirable to air dining room after each meal if possible.

#### J. SOME POINTS ON TABLE ETIQUETTE

Since one is so often judged by the way in which he conducts himself during the meal hour, it is very important that he practice the accepted table customs until they become second nature so that he may feel at ease at all times. It is hard for a grown person to adopt new habits, therefore it is essential that the young people be taught the simple rules of table etiquette at home and in school at an early age. In the following rules the term hostess applies to the mother or lady of the house and host applies to the father or man of the house.

1. All members of the family should be ready before the meal is announced. The men and boys of the family should step aside and permit the ladies to enter and leave the dining room first. At a signal from the hostess the ladies, with the assistance of the men, should be seated.
2. If there are two guests, a lady and a gentleman, the host usually enters the dining room with the lady guest first and the hostess enters last with the gentleman guest. As stated above, the lady guest is seated at the right of the host and the gentleman at the right of the hostess so that they may be well taken care of thruout the meal.
3. It is good practice for members of a family group to make it a rule to be seated and to arise from the left. In this way they can avoid the commotion that occurs when two attempt to be seated at the same side.
4. One should sit up straight, leaning slightly forward. Leaning against the back of the chair, gives one the appearance of being bored and uninterested which, of course, is not courteous.

5. The feet should be kept flat on the floor if possible rather than twisted around the legs of the chair.
6. The napkin is removed from the table when the hostess removes hers. If a large dinner napkin is used it is left folded in half and hems placed toward the knees. If so placed it is easy to use a single corner in wiping the lips. If one is a guest for one meal only, the napkin is slipped quietly to a place at the left of the plate; if for more than one meal, it should be folded and placed at the left of the plate. Fold and unfold the napkin below the surface of the table.
7. The silverware should not be used in making gestures or drawings on the tablecloth.
8. Only pleasant topics should be discussed during the meal hour.
9. Talking or drinking is done only when the mouth is free from food. Chewing is done with the lips closed.
10. When eating soup one should not tip the dish in order to get the last few drops. The spoon is dipped away from one and sipping is done quietly from the side of the spoon.
11. It is customary for one to drink bouillon from the cup rather than to sip it from the spoon.
12. In grasping the knife for cutting, the index finger should extend along the upper edge near the handle.
13. The fork is held in the left hand when holding food to be cut. The tines are turned down as there is less danger of the fork slipping. Only one or two morsels of food should be cut at a time.
14. The knife, when not in use, should rest along the back edge of the plate and never against the plate or on the tablecloth.
15. The knife and fork are placed across the plate, a little to one side, when the plate is passed for another helping. The knife and fork are placed across the center of the plate when the course has been finished.



16. The fork is used for cutting and eating salads and for side dishes when practicable. It is not necessary to provide an extra fork if the salad is served with the main course. As it is difficult to cut head lettuce with the fork, it is permissible to loosen the leaves by cutting thru the section once with a knife, in order to avoid mishaps.
17. Food once taken on the fork or spoon should be conveyed to the mouth at once. No more food should be taken on fork or in spoon than can be put into the mouth at one time. This is especially true in eating ice cream. Seeds or particles of food to be discarded from the mouth are removed by means of the spoon or fork being used.
18. Spoons should be used for liquids and very soft foods in side dishes.
19. The spoon is used with the cup of beverage for stirring in the sugar and cream and for testing the temperature of the beverage. The spoon is then placed on the saucer.
20. Bread is placed on the plate if individual bread-and-butter plates are not provided. The bread should be broken and only a small piece should be spread at a time.
21. Food that is hard or tough should be cut with as little effort as possible.
22. The tableware is not pushed about on the table at any time.
23. Coughing or sneezing is done, with apology, behind the napkin.
24. Toothpicks should never be used in the presence of other persons.
25. Food that is not to one's liking should not be commented upon. One should not ask for foods that are not on the table.
26. Foods should be accepted with "Yes, thank you" or "If you please," and refused with "No, thank you."

27. If guests are to be present the hostess should plan to have foods that are usually enjoyed by everyone.
28. Only persons who are congenial should be invited on any one occasion.
29. A gracious hostess is mindful of the comfort of her guests at all times and should continue to eat until all have finished.
30. One should not leave the table before others without first asking to be excused.
31. When in doubt one may do as the hostess does.
32. When leaving, a guest should shake hands with the hostess and express pleasure for the hospitality that has been extended. It is important that this courtesy be taught to children early in life.