

WESTERN TABLE MANNERS

WESTERN dining often baffles [困惑] many, what with the variety of crockery [陶器] and cutlery [餐具] that one has to learn to cope with, leave alone identify [確認].

At the simplest level [程度], good dining manners are just different techniques for getting food from your plate to your digestive system [消化系統]. For western dining, you have to do this with a deft [熟練的] hand without breaking the sound barrier [障礙].

A western meal which is normally served course by course can be anything from two to five courses. When you sit at the table, the crockery and cutlery are all arranged so that you know exactly what you are having. If you cannot fathom [瞭解] it, don't worry-they have the menu on each table.

Even if you do not remember much, it is wise to memorize [記憶] these facts about western dining:

1. Your glasses are on the right of the dinner plate,
2. Your side plate is on the left of the dinner plate.
3. Start your meal using the cutlery from the outside.
4. Note that the forks are normally on the left while the spoons and knives are placed on the right.

Western Dining Do's and Don'ts:

Do sit at the table with a nice straight back with your wrists resting gently on the table edge or your hands in your lap.

Do keep your elbows [手肘] off the table when using your cutlery to cut your food.

Do place your napkin on your lap as soon as you are seated. If you are leaving the table before you finish your meal, leave your napkin on the chair and on the table after you have finished your meal and ready to go.

Eat your soup by spooning the soup away from you and sipping the side of the spoon. Do sip silently [安靜的]. No slurps [啜] or burps [打嗝]. Do not dip your bread in your soup.

Do break [撕] bread into a small piece before buttering it. Eat your bread piece by piece.

Do not salt your food before tasting; it's insulting to your host, or to the chef [主廚].

Do not ask for tomato or chili sauce [辣椒醬] with a western meal. If there is to be a sauce, you will be served it.

The polite way to get rid of a fish bone in your mouth is to slip it out between your

barely parted lips into your fingers and onto the plate.

Do remember the “silent service” [及靜的-幫助的] code [慣例的] of positions for your knife and fork.

Do not remove your plate when you have finished eating. Leave it with the knife and fork in the “finished” position (Knife, fork, tines up parallel [平行的] to one another in the following positions six o'clock, four o'clock or eight o'clock).

Do not rest your cutlery half on and half off the plate like oars [槳].

Do not gesture with your knife, fork or spoon in your hand. If you are not eating and want to talk, put it down in the “resting position.”

Do not reach out for things on the table; ask for them to be passed to you.

Do not wipe your cutlery with your napkin or the tablecloth-if it is dirty, ask for another.

Do compliment the food, if it has been beautifully served or is absolutely delicious.

Do not talk about your personal food likes and dislikes at the dinner table.

Do not lean [靠] back after finishing your meal, burp and say "Boy [天阿], I'm stuffed."

If you have food particles in your teeth, excuse yourself and go to the toilet and remove the offending [不舒服的] food particle in private, or ask for a toothpick [牙籤].

Ladies, do not place your purse on the table. Keep it on your lap, under the napkin. Nowadays, keeping your purse next to your chair or hanging it on the back of the chair may be quite unsafe.

It is not appropriate to apply lipstick or comb your hair at the table. Excuse yourself and take care of your grooming [打扮修室] in the toilet; it is not good manners to quietly disappear under the table to repair your make-up.

Western cuisine is considered an art where the food is not only supposed to taste delicious but also look beautiful to eat. Presentation is the key word here. Food should be superbly [上等的] presented!

Asians often find it difficult to appreciate or understand Western cuisine because of the way it is prepared, and very often it does not suit their palate, mainly due to the lack of spices. The natural flavor of food is important for western cuisine.

Western dining takes time and each course is served over a period of time. In between, there is time for talk, and time to rest and enjoy the ambience [氣氛] of the dining room.

It is said about the different cuisines: Asians spend hours cooking a meat only to finish it in 20 minutes, while a Westerner takes an hour to prepare the meal and spends 3 hours eating it!

For additional information, check out

<http://www.cuisinenet.com/digest/contents/custom.shtml>