

Setting Tables

Setting Tables – Quick Reference Guide

1. Basic Layout (Formal/Informal)

Position	Item	Description
Center	Tablecloth (optional)	Choose a color/texture that complements the décor.
Top?center	Plate (charger)	Large decorative base; removed before the main course (formal).
Middle of plate	Soup bowl / salad plate	Placed on top of the charger (if used).
Right side of plate	Forks (from outside in)	Salad fork (outer), Dinner fork (inner).
Left side of plate	Knives & spoons (from outside in)	Dinner knife (outer, blade inward), Fish knife (if needed), Soup spoon (outer).
Above plate	Napkin	Folded neatly; can be placed on the charger or to the left of forks.
Above knives	Glassware (stacked left to right)	Water glass (largest, closest), White wine , Red wine , Champagne (if served).
Above napkin (optional)	Bread plate & butter knife	Bread plate to the left of forks; butter knife laid diagonally across it.
Top?right corner	Dessert fork & spoon (optional)	Placed horizontally above the plate when only dessert is served.

2. Order of Placement (Outside?In Rule)

1. **Forks** – placed left of the plate; the outermost fork is for the first course.
 2. **Knives & Spoons** – placed right of the plate; the outermost knife/spoon is for the first course.
 3. **Glassware** – arranged in a diagonal line above the knives, largest to smallest moving outward.
 4. **Dessert utensils** – set horizontally above the plate or brought out with the dessert.
-

3. Types of Table Settings

Setting Tables

Setting	When to Use	Key Features
Casual	Family meals, informal gatherings	Simple plate, fork, knife, spoon; glass on the right; napkin on the plate or to the left.
Standard (American)	Business lunches, everyday dining	Fork left, knife & spoon right; water glass above knife; napkin on plate.
Continental (European)	Formal dinners, multi-course meals	Forks left (salad, fish, main); knives/spoons right; multiple glasses; charger plate.
Banquet/Buffer	Large events, self-service	No charger; only dinner plate, fork, knife, spoon; water glass; napkin on the left.
Cocktail/Standing Reception	Hors d'oeuvres only	Small plate or saucer, napkin, single fork or spoon, water/ cocktail glass.

4. Common Etiquette Tips

Situation	Do	Don't
Arriving	Wait for the host to be seated before sitting.	Pull out your own chair before being invited.
Using utensils	Work from the outside in with each course.	Cross utensils on the plate (unless signaling you're finished).
Napkin	Place it on your lap as soon as you sit; dab lips gently.	Use it to wipe your face or blow your nose.
Glassware	Sip from the appropriate glass for the drink being served.	Fill a glass beyond the rim.