

TIPS FOR DINING WITH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

Interviews will occasionally entail lunch and/or a reception, therefore it is helpful to know proper business etiquette for dining with prospective employers.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE DINING INTERVIEWEE

Do:

- Order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Finger foods can be messy and are best left for informal dining.
- Stick to soft drinks, tea, coffee and water. Avoid alcohol.
- Cut one bite (meat, fruit or vegetable) at a time.
- Eat at the same pace as your host. Dining is not a race to see who can finish first.
- Prepare to be conversational. Read national and local news ahead of time so

that you can discuss current events.

- Sit up straight.
- Excuse yourself from the table and go to the restroom if food gets caught between your teeth and you are unable to subtly remove it with your tongue.
- Say please and thank you to the waiter.
- Eat like a human – not like a wolf or a bird.

Do NOT:

- Drink from the soup bowl.
- Make slurping sounds and chew with your mouth closed.
- Ask for a box to bring your leftovers home. (tempting, but don't!)
- Talk about personal relationships, recent parties, politics, sensitive social issues, sensitive health issues or religion.
- Blow your nose in your napkin.
- Smoke.
- Talk on or constantly check your cell phone. Turn it off before you enter the room or put it on silent mode.
- Get too comfortable. Even if the meal is not technically an interview, your behavior and interaction with others is still being evaluated.

Other tips:

- **Acceptance of Invitation:** Do not keep your host waiting; reply within 24 hours.
- **Arrival:** Be on time! If you are going to be more than ten minutes late, notify your host directly, or call the restaurant and ask them to relay the message.
- **Seating:** Do not just sit anywhere; wait for a cue from your host. If possible, sit next to the host to gain maximum exposure.
- **Napkins:** Place your napkin on your lap immediately after everyone is seated. At the conclusion of the meal, return your napkin loosely folded to the table on your left. Your napkin should stay clean. No origami!
- **Ordering:** Do not order the most expensive item on the menu, and do not order unfamiliar food. If you are unsure what to order, follow the host's lead or ask for a recommendation.
- **Food arrangement:** Solid foods (bread plate and salad plate) are always on your left, beverages are on your right.
- **Bread:** Butter bread on the plate, not in midair. Break bread into small pieces and butter one piece at a time. Do not make "butter sandwiches", and don't get full on bread!
- **Meal:** Do not begin your meal until all meals are served at your table and your host takes the first bite.
- **Passing Food:** When passing food around the table, always pass it to your right. When passing salt and pepper, always keep them together.
- **Utensil Etiquette**
 - When you face a full battalion of knives, forks, and spoons, work from the outside in; use the flatware furthest from the plate first.
 - Used utensils must never touch the surface of the table or the tablecloth because they might make the cloth dirty.
 - When you are finished, place your knife and fork so they lie horizontally across the center of the plate. The blade of your knife always looks toward you.
- **Write a thank you note** to your host, emphasizing your appreciation for the chance to talk about the job (or learn about the company, meet prospective colleagues, etc.) over a meal.