

FYI BASIC TABLE MANNERS

The rules of etiquette are formed and re-enforced by cultural norms. So, to say one way is right could be a problem depending on where in the world you are. However, basic table manners are the same throughout the world. Keep these few basics in mind and you can be comfortable in any setting.

- Place your napkin in your lap.
- Wait until everyone at the table has been served before beginning to eat.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Never talk with food in your mouth.
- When in doubt about what you should do, always follow the lead of your host or the person of highest authority in your group.
- Keep your elbows off the table.

Finally, remember that no matter where you are, focus on the purpose and enjoy the setting and people around you. For more information on business etiquette, see Cook and Cook.¹⁷

Source: From Guide to business etiquette (2nd ed.) by Cook, R. A., and Cook, G. O. Published by Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall © 2011.

In properties that use F&B as part of their overall marketing strategy, the F&B director is expected to run the operations in a way that will best benefit the entire property. In other words, the F&B director should be more concerned with the overall profitability of the property and meeting guests' needs rather than simply the profitability of F&B operations. This approach can be seen in operations in which attention to little details and customer service are the norm. Little things like responding to a guest request for an item not on the menu, such as a peanut butter and jelly or grilled cheese sandwich, or grander gestures, such as hosting a "no charge" cocktail reception as a kickoff to a three-day conference, create lasting and positive impressions.

Other tourism suppliers face similar types of decisions. Should foods and beverages simply be provided to fill a basic human need or should they be used as a valuable addition to the marketing mix? To answer that question, think about the approaches taken by two different airlines. Singapore Airlines is noted for its high-quality foodservice operations and uses this as a marketing tool, whereas Southwest Airlines flies only short legs, choosing to avoid the costs and challenges associated with foodservice operations.

From Ten to Ten Thousand

How many did you say we should expect? Feeding small and large groups of guests on a one-time basis creates some unique challenges for foodservice operators. Meeting these special needs ranges from simple to complex. It may be as simple as reserving a special section in a restaurant for a tour group as they step off the bus to enjoy a relaxing lunch, or it may be as complex as serving multiple meals at scattered sites across a broad geographic setting such as at the Summer Olympics.

Whether it's providing breakfast, lunch, dinner, or refreshment breaks for groups, foodservice teams must be prepared to meet their needs and budgets flexibly. There are a variety of facilities either specifically designed for **banquets** or that can be easily converted to meet **catering** needs. Most large hotels and resorts and many smaller properties have multipurpose rooms that can be used for both meetings and food functions, and convention centers and even sports arenas can be converted to feed tens of thousands of guests. The task of planning, setting up, and serving these functions falls in the capable hands of catering (also called banquet) managers and their supporting service teams.

Catering sales managers work with clients to discover their needs for such things as meeting and exhibit space as well as F&B requirements. These requirements are then described in great detail for internal use for kitchen and service employees on a catering contract or **banquet event order (BEO)** form. The BEO serves as an internal