KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI
JABATAN PENDIDIKAN POLITEKNIK DAN KOLEJ KOMUNITI

PERAK CULINARY ARTS ACADEMY
@ KOLEJ KOMUNITI CHENDEROH

AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING EBOOK

TABLE ETIQUETTE

NOTE ON HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS



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PERAK CULINARY ARTS ACADEMY @ KOLEJ KOMUNITI CHENDEROH

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First and foremost, gratitude is expressed to the Almighty for the opportunity and strength to develop this eBook, Note on Table Etiquette: Table Etiquette, as an educational resource for students in Hospitality Operations.

Special appreciation is extended to Perak Culinary Arts Academy @ Kolej Komuniti Chenderoh for supporting the development of digital teaching and learning materials. Sincere appreciation is also extended to colleagues, lecturers, students, and all individuals who have contributed ideas, suggestions, encouragement, and feedback throughout the development of this eBook.

This eBook has been designed to provide students with a structured and practical learning resource that connects theoretical knowledge with practical application.

It is hoped that this eBook will help students develop confidence, courtesy, appropriate dining behaviour, and professional conduct in preparation for the hospitality industry.

PREFACE

Table etiquette is an essential part of professional behaviour in the hospitality industry.

This eBook introduces the basic principles of table etiquette, including personal grooming, table setting, cutlery, glassware, napkin etiquette, dining behaviour, buffet etiquette, and professional conduct.

To support interactive learning, the eBook includes videos, QR codes, practical activities, quizzes, and self-reflection.

It is designed to help students understand, practise, and apply appropriate table etiquette confidently in hospitality settings.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this eBook, students should be able to:

01 Explain the meaning and importance of table etiquette.

02 Identify basic table setting components and dining equipment.

03 Demonstrate appropriate use of cutlery and glassware.

04 Apply appropriate dining etiquette in different situations.

05 Demonstrate appropriate personal grooming and professional appearance.

06 Practise appropriate communication and behaviour during dining.

07 Demonstrate professional dining behaviour in simulated hospitality situations.

08 Evaluate their own table etiquette skills through interactive activities and self-reflection.

TOPIC 01

INTRODUCTION TO TABLE ETIQUETTE

TOPIC 01 : INTRODUCTION TO TABLE ETIQUETTE

1.1 WHAT IS TABLE ETIQUETTE?

Table etiquette refers to the accepted manners, behaviours, and practices that should be observed when eating or dining with others. It includes more than knowing how to use a fork, knife, or spoon.

Table etiquette involves:

- Personal appearance
- Table setting
- Use of dining equipment
- Napkin etiquette
- Dining behaviour
- Communication
- Social awareness
- Professionalism

In the hospitality industry, appropriate table etiquette contributes to a positive dining experience and reflects an individual's level of professionalism.

TOPIC 01 : INTRODUCTION TO TABLE ETIQUETTE

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF TABLE ETIQUETTE

Good table etiquette helps individuals to:

- Create a positive first impression.
- Demonstrate respect towards others.
- Communicate appropriately.
- Feel more confident in formal dining situations.
- Maintain a comfortable dining environment.
- Demonstrate professional behaviour.
- Adapt to different dining situations.

REMEMBER **Table etiquette is not only about how you eat. It is also about how you behave, communicate, and respect others.**

TOPIC 01 : INTRODUCTION TO TABLE ETIQUETTE

1.3 TABLE ETIQUETTE IN HOSPITALITY

Hospitality employees interact with guests from different backgrounds and cultures. Therefore, they need to demonstrate:

COURTESY	Polite and considerate behaviour towards all guests and colleagues.
CONFIDENCE	Self-assuredness arising from an appreciation of professional standards.
RESPECT	A deep regard for the feelings, wishes, and traditions of others.
AWARENESS	Attentiveness to the environment, service sequence, and diner needs.
PROFESSIONALISM	The standard of conduct, appearance, and values defining hospitality.

These qualities contribute to the overall guest experience.

TOPIC 02

PERSONAL GROOMING AND DINING PREPARATION

TOPIC 02 : GROOMING & PREPARATION

2.1 PERSONAL GROOMING

Personal grooming refers to the practices used to maintain a clean, neat, and professional appearance.

GROOMING CHECKLIST:

✓ **HAIR**	Clean, neat, and properly arranged.
✓ **FACE**	Clean and presentable.
✓ **HANDS**	Clean and well maintained.
✓ **NAILS**	Short, clean, and appropriate for food and hospitality environments.
✓ **UNIFORM / CLOTHING**	Clean, neat, and appropriate.
✓ **SHOES**	Clean and appropriate.

TOPIC 02 : GROOMING & PREPARATION

2.2 BEFORE DINING

Before joining a dining occasion:

1. Wash and clean your hands.
2. Check your personal appearance.
3. Ensure that your clothing is appropriate.
4. Arrive on time.
5. Observe the seating arrangement.
6. Place your mobile phone on silent mode.
7. Wait for the appropriate time to sit.
8. Follow the host or service sequence when necessary.

TOPIC 02 : GROOMING & PREPARATION

2.3 POSTURE AND SEATING

Good posture creates a professional appearance.

DO	AVOID
✓ **Sit upright.**	✗ **Slouching.**
✓ **Keep your shoulders relaxed.**	✗ **Leaning excessively on the table.**
✓ **Keep your feet appropriately positioned.**	✗ **Playing with the chair.**
✓ **Maintain a comfortable distance from the table.**	✗ **Placing feet on the chair.**
✓ **Keep movements controlled.**	

TOPIC 03

TABLE SETTING

TOPIC 03 : TABLE SETTING

3.1 WHAT IS TABLE SETTING?

Table setting refers to the arrangement of dining equipment on a table according to the type of meal or dining occasion.

Common items include:

- Dinner plate
- Fork
- Knife
- Spoon
- Glassware
- Napkin
- Side plate

A good table setting should be:

CLEAN | ORDERLY | FUNCTIONAL | APPROPRIATE | ATTRACTIVE

TOPIC 03 : TABLE SETTING

3.2 BASIC TABLE SETTING

A basic table setting is suitable for a simple meal with a limited number of courses.

BASIC COMPONENTS:

- Dinner Plate
- Fork
- Knife
- Spoon
- Glass
- Napkin

PRACTICE:

Identify each item in the table setting and explain its function.

TOPIC 03 : TABLE SETTING

Figure 1: Standard and Neatly Arranged Basic Table Setting



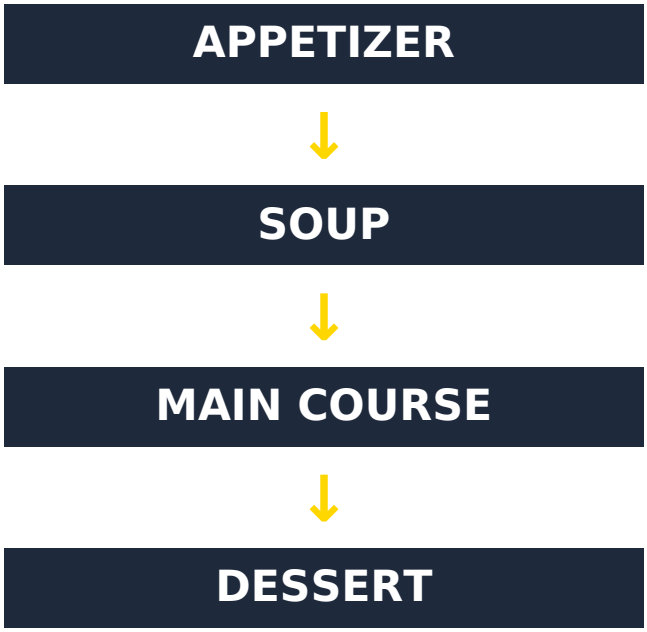
Figure 1: Standard Basic Table Setting Showing the Placement of the Plate, Cutlery (Fork on the Left, Knife and Spoon on the Right), Water Glass at the Upper Right, and Napkin Placed on the Plate.

TOPIC 03 : TABLE SETTING

3.3 FORMAL TABLE SETTING

A formal table setting may include additional dining equipment because several courses are served.

COURSE SEQUENCE FLOW:



The equipment is arranged according to the sequence of the meal.

TOPIC 03 : TABLE SETTING

3.4 NAPKIN ETIQUETTE

A napkin is used to maintain personal cleanliness during dining and forms part of the table setting.

APPROPRIATE PRACTICES	AVOID
✓ **Place the napkin appropriately when seated.** ✓ **Use it gently.** ✓ **Dab the mouth when necessary.** ✓ **Keep it on your lap when appropriate.**	✗ **Wiping the face aggressively.** ✗ **Cleaning cutlery with the napkin.**

TOPIC 04

CUTLERY AND GLASSWARE

TOPIC 04 : CUTLERY & GLASSWARE

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO CUTLERY

Cutlery refers to dining utensils used for eating and serving food. Common examples include:

FORK	Used to hold, lift, or eat food.
KNIFE	Used mainly to cut food.
SPOON	Used for foods such as soup, desserts, and other appropriate dishes.

TOPIC 04 : CUTLERY & GLASSWARE

4.2 FORK & 4.3 KNIFE

4.2 FORK

A fork should be handled comfortably and appropriately according to the dining situation.

GOOD PRACTICE	AVOID
✓ **Hold the fork comfortably.** ✓ **Use it for its intended purpose.** ✓ **Keep movements controlled.** ✓ **Avoid unnecessary gestures.**	✗ **Pointing at people with a fork.** ✗ **Playing with the fork.** ✗ **Making unnecessary movements.**

4.3 KNIFE

A knife should be handled carefully and safely.

GOOD PRACTICE	SAFETY WARNING
✓ **Hold it securely.** ✓ **Cut food in a controlled manner.** ✓ **Keep the blade directed safely.**	✗ **Never use a knife as a toy.** ✗ **Do not point it towards another person.**

TOPIC 04 : CUTLERY & GLASSWARE

4.4 SPOON & 4.5 GLASSWARE

4.4 SPOON

Different spoons may be used for different purposes. Always use the appropriate spoon for the food or beverage being served. Examples include:

- Soup spoon
- Dessert spoon
- Teaspoon

4.5 GLASSWARE

Glassware is used for serving beverages. The type of glassware depends on the beverage and service style. Examples may include:

- Water glass
- Juice glass
- Beverage glass
- Wine glass

TOPIC 04 : CUTLERY & GLASSWARE

4.6 THE OUTSIDE-IN PRINCIPLE

When several pieces of cutlery are arranged on the table, the outside-in principle can help diners identify which utensil to use first.

OUTSIDE → IN

Use the utensil located furthest from the plate first, then work your way inward towards the plate.

TOPIC 05

DINING ETIQUETTE

TOPIC 05 : DINING ETIQUETTE

5.1 & 5.2 MEAL PROCEDURES

5.1 BEFORE THE MEAL

Before the meal begins, ensure the following steps are adhered to:

- Sit appropriately with standard posture.
- Wait until the appropriate time to begin dining.
- Use your napkin correctly according to standard guidelines.
- Keep your mobile phone on silent.
- Observe the host or service sequence carefully.

5.2 DURING THE MEAL

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR
✓ **Take moderate portions.** ✓ **Eat at a comfortable pace.** ✓ **Chew with your mouth closed.** ✓ **Speak after swallowing.** ✓ **Use dining equipment appropriately.**	✗ **Talking with food in your mouth.** ✗ **Chewing with your mouth open.** ✗ **Making unnecessary sounds.** ✗ **Playing with food.**

TOPIC 05 : DINING ETIQUETTE

5.3 COMMUNICATION AT THE TABLE

Good communication demonstrates respect and enhances the social atmosphere of dining.

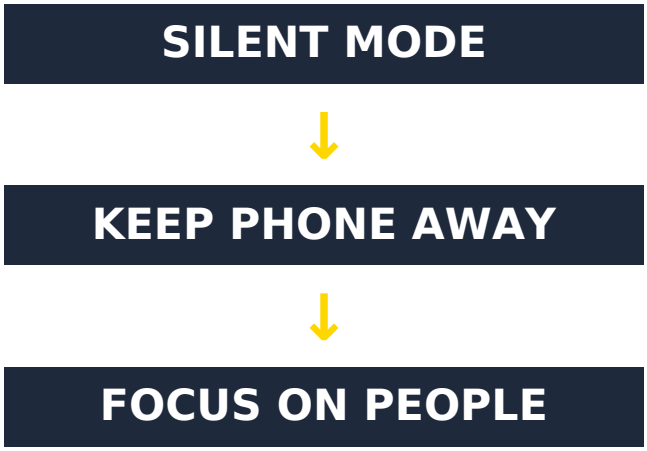
LISTEN	Give full attention to the speaker, showing courtesy and consideration.
THINK	Consider your words before speaking, keeping topics light and pleasant.
SPEAK	Use polite, appropriate, and clear language, keeping volume moderate.
RESPECT	Always respect the diverse view points, traditions, and habits of people around you.

TOPIC 05 : DINING ETIQUETTE

5.4 MOBILE PHONE ETIQUETTE

Mobile phones can distract people from the dining experience and interrupt conversations.

BEST PRACTICE FLOW:



If an important call must be answered, use the following sequence:



TOPIC 06

BUFFET AND FINE DINING ETIQUETTE

TOPIC 06 : BUFFET & FINE DINING

6.1 BUFFET ETIQUETTE

When dining at a buffet, respect for others is paramount. Ensure you adhere to these steps:

1. Queue patiently.
2. Wait for your turn.
3. Use the correct serving utensils.
4. Take a reasonable portion.
5. Avoid touching food unnecessarily.
6. Keep the buffet area clean.
7. Avoid food wastage.

REMEMBER!! **TAKE WHAT YOU NEED. TAKE ONLY WHAT YOU CAN FINISH.**

TOPIC 06 : BUFFET & FINE DINING

6.2 FINE DINING ETIQUETTE

Fine dining may involve a more formal service environment. It represents a structured culinary presentation where adherence to rules is highly valued.

Students should pay close attention to:

- Table setting and layouts
- Cutlery usage standards
- Glassware selection and holding
- Napkin handling and fold placement
- Course sequence and timing
- Service procedures and interaction with staff
- Communication style and topic selection
- Body language and sitting posture

WHEN YOU ARE UNSURE: **OBSERVE → UNDERSTAND → FOLLOW**

TOPIC 06 : BUFFET & FINE DINING

6.3 FORMAL DINING EVENTS

Formal dining events require advanced awareness of dining protocols. Standard examples include:

- Banquet dinners
- Corporate dinners
- Wedding dinners
- Award ceremonies
- Official dinners
- Hotel events

Before attending, always check:

- ✓ Dress code requirements
- ✓ Time and arrival guidelines
- ✓ Venue details and maps
- ✓ Seating arrangements and table allocation
- ✓ Nature of the event and guest profile

TOPIC 07

PROFESSIONAL DINING BEHAVIOUR

TOPIC 07 : PROFESSIONAL DINING BEHAVIOUR

7.1 & 7.2 PROFESSIONAL VALUES

7.1 PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is reflected through appearance, attitude, communication, behaviour, and responsibility. A hospitality professional should demonstrate:

- Confidence and poise
- Courtesy in actions and speaking
- Respect toward hosts and diners
- Cleanliness in appearance and workspace
- Self-control in difficult situations
- Good, articulate communication
- Cultural awareness and adaptability

7.2 CULTURAL AWARENESS

Guests may come from different cultural backgrounds. Dining practices may differ in areas such as:

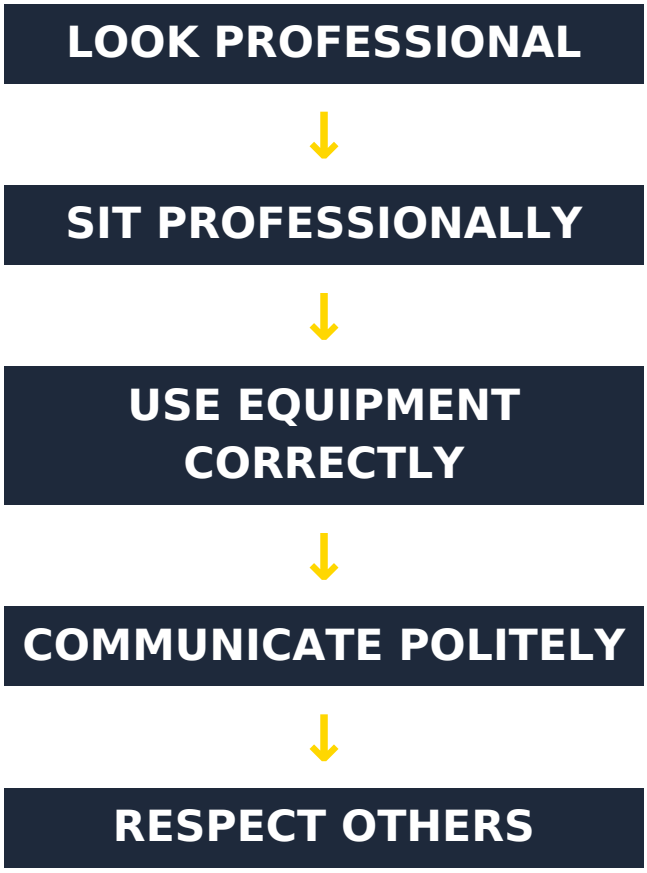
- Use of hands versus utensils
- Use of chopsticks and holding style
- Use of standard Western cutlery
- Seating arrangements based on status or age
- Food-sharing practices and serving etiquette
- Dietary practices and cultural restrictions

PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLE: RESPECT DIFFERENCES. DO NOT ASSUME.

TOPIC 07 : PROFESSIONAL DINING BEHAVIOUR

7.3 THE PROFESSIONAL DINING STANDARD

A hospitality professional should always aim to demonstrate the highest standard of dining behavior:



PART II

INTERACTIVE LEARNING & PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

VIDEO 01 : BASIC TABLE SETTING

WATCH DEMONSTRATION:

Scan the QR Code to watch the step-by-step basic table setting demonstration.

AFTER WATCHING REFLECTION (Identify):

- ☐ **Dinner plate**
- ☐ **Fork**
- ☐ **Knife**
- ☐ **Spoon**
- ☐ **Glass**
- ☐ **Napkin**

SCAN TO WATCH

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

VIDEO 02 : CUTLERY SKILLS

WATCH CUTLERY DEMONSTRATION:

Scan the QR Code to watch cutlery handling standard procedures.

OBSERVE & REFLECT:

- **How the fork is held comfortably.**
- **How the knife is used safely.**
- **How the spoon is handled correctly.**
- **Appropriate overall table behaviour.**

PRACTICE:
Demonstrate one cutlery skill to your partner.

SCAN TO WATCH

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

VIDEO 03 : DINING ETIQUETTE

WATCH DINING ETIQUETTE IN ACTION:

Scan the QR Code to watch formal dining behaviour standards.

OBSERVE & DISCOVER:

- ✓ **Posture standards**
- ✓ **Napkin use protocols**
- ✓ **Cutlery handling techniques**
- ✓ **Clean eating behaviour**
- ✓ **Appropriate communication volume**
- ✓ **Mobile phone etiquette rules**

SCAN TO WATCH

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY 01

BASIC TABLE SETTING CHALLENGE

TASK:

In groups, prepare a basic table setting using the equipment provided.

STUDENTS MUST:

1. Identify the equipment.
2. Arrange the equipment correctly.
3. Maintain cleanliness.
4. Explain the function of each item.
5. Present the completed table setting.

TIME LIMIT: 15 MINUTES

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY 02

ROLE PLAY: “CAN YOU DINE LIKE A PROFESSIONAL?”

ROLES INVOLVED:

GUEST | HOST | HOTEL STAFF | OBSERVER

SITUATION:

Imagine that you are attending a formal dinner at a hotel.

DEMONSTRATE & EVALUATE:

- Appropriate seating
- Napkin etiquette
- Cutlery use
- Dining behaviour
- Communication
- Mobile phone etiquette
- Requesting assistance politely

PART III

ASSESSMENT & REFERENCE

ASSESSMENT

PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

CRITERIA MARKS ALLOCATION:

CRITERIA	MARKS
Personal Grooming	10
Posture	10
Table Setting	15
Cutlery Skills	15
Napkin Etiquette	10
Dining Behaviour	15
Communication	10
Professionalism	15
TOTAL	**100**

PERFORMANCE LEVEL:

- **80–100** — Excellent | **65–79** — Good | **50–64** — Satisfactory

ASSESSMENT

INTERACTIVE QUIZ

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Scan the QR Code to access the interactive quiz.

QUIZ TOPICS INCLUDE:

- **Table etiquette principles**
- **Personal grooming standards**
- **Table setting components**
- **Cutlery & glassware standards**
- **Dining behaviour & buffet etiquette**
- **Fine dining & professionalism**

TARGET PASSING SCORE: **80% AND ABOVE**

SMART QUIZ

The reference eBook concludes its learning content with a reinforcement quiz.

QUICK REFERENCE

TABLE ETIQUETTE QUICK GUIDE

01 Maintain good personal grooming.

02 Sit with good posture.

03 Use the correct dining equipment.

04 Follow the outside-in principle when appropriate.

05 Use your napkin correctly.

06 Eat with your mouth closed.

07 Speak politely.

08 Keep your mobile phone away.

09 Respect other diners and cultures.

10 Always demonstrate professionalism.

CLEAN • COURTEOUS • CONFIDENT

GLOSSARY

TERM DEFINITIONS (PART 1)

TABLE ETIQUETTE	Accepted manners and behaviours when dining with others.
TABLE SETTING	The arrangement of dining equipment on a table according to meal style.
CUTLERY	Utensils such as forks, knives, and spoons used for eating and serving.
GLASSWARE	Glasses of various designs used to serve specific types of beverages.
NAPKIN	A cloth or paper item used during dining for personal cleanliness and decoration.
FINE DINING	A formal dining experience characterized by structured service and upscale menus.

GLOSSARY

TERM DEFINITIONS (PART 2)

BUFFET	A dining arrangement in which guests select food from a range of dishes provided.
HOST	The person who organises, pays for, or leads a dining occasion.
GUEST	A person receiving hospitality or attending a dining occasion.
PERSONAL GROOMING	Practices that maintain personal cleanliness, neatness, and professional appearance.
PROFESSIONALISM	The behaviour, attitude, appearance, and standards expected in a professional environment.

REFERENCES

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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Annotation: A comprehensive reference for dining etiquette, table manners, social etiquette, hosting, and formal dining.

2. Post, L., & Post Senning, D. (2017). Emily Post's Etiquette: 19th Edition. William Morrow.

Annotation: Useful for traditional and contemporary dining etiquette, formal occasions, and social manners.

3. Rothschild, D. The Main Course on Table Service.

Annotation: A useful hospitality reference focusing on table service, restaurant service, and professional dining practices.

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URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_t8nR_59Sig

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NOTE ON TABLE ETIQUETTE

HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS GUIDE

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