

EATING SKILLS: USING A KNIFE AND FORK

- Use a tray or place mat to help maintain your orientation to your place setting.
- One way to tell what food is on your plate is to use the clock reference system. Think of your plate as a clock face with 12:00 at the top (the edge that is farthest away from you) and 6:00 at the bottom (the edge that is closest to you). This can help you form a mental picture of where each food item is located on your plate.
- Try turning your plate around so that your meat is at 6:00. If you're not reaching over other foods, it can sometimes make cutting easier.
- Use your fork and the tip of your knife to periodically check the location and arrangement of the food on your plate.
- The tip of your knife can also give you an indication of the size of the meat or any other food item that requires cutting.

Page 1 of 2

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EATING SKILLS: USING A KNIFE AND FORK (cont.)

- The weight of the food on your fork or spoon can help indicate the size of the portion.
- When scooping with a fork, press the tines down into and under your food; you will feel a "dragging" sensation if the food item is not fully cut and severed from the main piece.
- You can identify the cutting edge of the knife blade without touching it. Since the cutting edge is usually curved, try rocking the knife blade forward and backward on the tabletop to determine when the cutting edge (which will rock) is facing downward.
- If you place the non-cutting edge against the tabletop, the knife will be flush against the surface and will not rock.
- Place the fork tines down into the meat or food item to be cut and hold the fork firmly in place while you cut around it with the knife to obtain a bite-sized piece.
- When placing your order at a restaurant, ask to have your meat cut before it is brought to the table.

Page 2 of 2

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