

Dear Debutante and Ball Patron,

Some of our new dancers requested information on how to handle the formal situations at the **HUNGARIA GALA BALL**.

The information is presented in point form and in categories. We hope it will help. Please don't hesitate to call on the ball committee members for additional advice.

The categories are:

1. Event invitation
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So here we go...

EVENT INVITATION

- RSVP as soon as possible with all the requested information.
- Adhere to the dress requirement. That is:
Black Tie means formal dress. Men wear tuxedos, women wear long dresses.
- Arrive on time to the function.

INTRODUCTIONS & GREETINGS

- A man, if he is seated, will stand up for the introductions. Both women and men will extend the right hand to give a firm handshake.
- When shaking hands during an introduction, repeat the person's name in your greeting E.g.: "Pleased to meet you, Jane Smith".
- Hold a drink in your left hand so that you have a dry hand to shake hands with.
- Make eye contact! Ask people questions about themselves.
- Introduce individuals to each other using both first and last names. Use their title such as Doctor or Lieutenant, etc.
- Introduce the younger person to the older person. E.g.: "Miss Sandy Jones, I'd like you to meet Mrs. Irene Oldersperson." Or, "Johnny Smith please meet Captain Patrick Brave".
- Introduce an individual to the group first, then the group to the individual. E.g.: "Mrs. Irene Oldersperson, I'd like you to meet my debutante friends, Sparkling Wine, Clint Great, and Left Foot. Everyone, this is Mrs. Irene Oldersperson, my grandmother."
- If you've forgotten a name, you'll seem impolite if you try to ignore the need for the introduction. It's less awkward (and better manners) to apologize and acknowledge that the name has escaped you. E.g. "Please forgive me, but your name escapes me at the moment."

DINING ETIQUETTE

This is a large area addressing a number of items. Look for the information you require.

When entering the Ball Room you shall escort your partner or lady companion to your table.

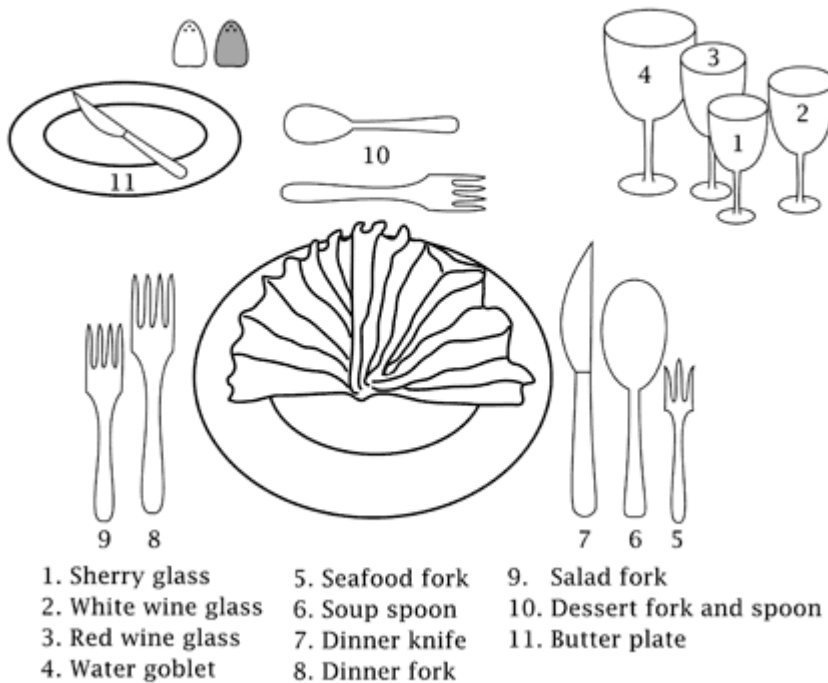
Seating at a formal dinner table

- Men and women should be alternately seated.
- Men offer the chair to the lady by pulling it out and pushing it under her while guarding her dress.

- Men will stand when women leave the table and when they return to the table. Offer the chair to her once again.
- Do not jiggle the table while rising by placing your hand & weight on the table. Use your legs to stand up not your arms.
- Ladies, limit the number of times you leave the table.

Once seated at your table you will find that it set in the Formal Table Setting manner. Not all items may be present or as shown in the picture below. There are general rules in how to set a table and once you learn these you should be able to handle any formal setting or situation.

The Formal Table Setting



General rules (if you only remember these, you'll be fine)

- When presented with a variety of eating utensils, remember the guideline is to "start at the outside and work your way in". For example, if you have two forks, begin with the fork on the outside. That is, if a salad is brought to you as the first course then use the fork #9. IF there is no fish on the menu, there will not be a fish fork, which is #5. If soup is brought first then you will start with the spoon which is #6.

- Or stated another way: Everything to your right you drink. Everything to your left you eat.
- It is important to place the glassware or cup back in the same position after its use.
- Remember then: "liquids on your right" and "solids on your left" will help in allowing you to quickly become familiar with the place setting. That means that the butter plate, #11, is always on your left, by your forks and all your glasses will be above the tip of your knife on your right. Eating utensils are used from the outside in.
- Butter should be taken from the butter dish, as it is passed around, and placed on the bread plate, not directly on the bread.
- Dessert forks/spoons may be placed at the top of the plate.
- Do not leave a spoon in a cup, use the saucer or plate instead.

Napkins

- Typically, you want to put your napkin on your lap soon after sitting down. Do not shake open.
- The napkin should remain on your lap throughout the entire meal. If the napkin is large put the fold toward your waist.
- Use the napkin to gently dab your mouth. Dab prior to drinking each time.
- Never spit a piece of food into your napkin. Never use your napkin for anything else other than what it is intended for.
- If you leave the table, place your napkin on your chair, or to the left of your plate, as a signal to the server that you will be returning.
- When you are finished eating, place the napkin to the right of the plate, not neatly folded nor crumpled.
- If the napkin slips off your lap just pick it up and replace it. Don't make a scene of it. The gentleman should help the lady.

Passing food (bread) or items around the table

Most often buns in a basket and butter will be available prior to the dinner service. These need to be shared with everyone at the table.

- Always pass to the right. If you are the individual starting the passing of the bread basket, first offer some to the person on your left, then take some for yourself, place it on your butter plate and then pass to the right.
- Pass salt and pepper together, one in each hand. If someone has asked you to pass these items, you should not pause to use them.

DURING THE MEAL

Wineglass placements

- Red wine is served in a glass with a round bowl and fairly short stem. Hold it at the base of the bowl. It should be served at room temperature.
- White wine is normally served in a larger glass with a longer stem. Hold it at the base of the stem. The same applies to all chilled wines.
- The order of the wine glasses begins with the one closest to you: (1) Sherry (soup course) (2) White wine (fish/chicken course) (3) Red wine (meat course) (4) Water goblet. (There may be other glasses used throughout the meal.)

How do I butter and eat the bread?

- There will be a butter knife located near the butter dish. Use it to transfer butter to your side plate.
- Your butter knife will either be lying diagonally across your side plate or as the last one to your right in the row of knives. Never use the knife with the butter dish to butter your bread. If there is no knife with the butter dish, transfer the butter with your butter knife.
- Bread should be eaten by tearing it into small pieces, not all at once, buttering only a few bites at a time.
- Do not cut bread with a knife or eat whole.

Eating your main meal

- Begin eating only after everyone has been served and that means for each course.
- The first course may be salad or soup.
- Salad may be served before or after the main course. The placement of the salad fork will give you a clue. If served after the main course the salad fork will be by your dinner plate.
- With a salad, use your salad fork. If the salad pieces are too large, use your knife to cut it into smaller pieces or to fold it over your fork.
- With soup, always scoop food away from you.
- Taste before seasoning.
- Eat slowly and cut food one piece at a time.
- Bring food to your mouth, not your mouth to the food. That means that no part of your arm should be touching the table.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Do not talk with your mouth full.

- Take small bites so you can carry on a conversation without the delay of chewing and swallowing large amounts of food. Do not choke!
- Once you have used a piece of silverware, never place it back on the table. You may leave a soup spoon in a soup plate not in a soup cup. Place the soup spoon on the plate under the soup cup.
- Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.
- Never spit a piece of food into your napkin. Remove the food from your mouth using the same utensil it went in with. Place the offending piece of food on the edge of your plate. The exception to this is a fish bone or a seed which you may remove with your fingers and place it on the edge of your plate. Be considerate of your table partners.
- If food spills off your plate, you may pick it up with a piece of your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
- Taste your food before seasoning it.
- You do not have to clean your plate. It is polite to leave some food on your plate.

How to use the silverware?

There are two ways to use a knife and fork to cut and eat your food.

1. They are the American style and
2. The European or Continental style.

In the American style, one cuts the food by holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand with the fork tines piercing the food to secure it on the plate. Cut a few bite-size pieces of food, and then lay your knife across the top edge of your plate with the sharp edge of the blade facing in. Change your fork from your left to your right hand to eat, fork tines facing up. (If you are left-handed, keep your fork in your left hand, tines facing up.)

The European or Continental style is the same as the American style in that you cut your meat by holding your knife in your right hand while securing your food with your fork in your left hand. The difference is your fork remains in your left hand, tines facing down, and the knife in your right hand. Simply eat the cut pieces of food by picking them up with your fork still in your left hand.

Eating your dessert

- At the top of your plate will be a dessert spoon and dessert fork. When dessert is served, slide them down to the sides of the dessert plate: fork on the left; spoon on the right.
- To eat dessert, break the dessert with the spoon, one bite at a time. Push the food with the fork into the spoon. Eat from the spoon. (Fork in left hand; spoon in right.)
- Coffee spoons are either to the right of the plate or brought with the coffee.

When You Have Finished

- When you are finished, leave your plates in the same position, do not push your plates aside or stack them.
- Lay your fork and knife diagonally across the plate, side by side, pointing at 10:00 and 4:00 on a clock face. The sharp side of the knife blade facing inward and the fork, tines down. Make sure they are placed in such a way that they do not slide off the plate as it is being removed. This signifies to the serving staff that you have finished.
- Do not use a toothpick or apply makeup at the table.

OTHER THINGS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

Sorbet Service

- Sorbet, a fruit flavoured ice, may be served between courses to cleanse the palate. A spoon will accompany the sorbet.

Finger bowls

- Finger bowls are presented after the main course and before dessert. If the bowl is placed on a plate directly in front of you, lift the bowl with both hands and place it to the left of your place setting. If there is a doily under it, move it as well. Often the finger bowl will be placed to the left. Dip the fingers of one hand into the bowl, dry on your napkin which remains on your lap. Follow with the other hand. There may be a flower or a lemon slice in the bowl. Leave it be. A hot small towel may be offered in a similar manner as finger bowl.

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

- If you spill anything on the table or yourself discretely use your napkin or ask the waiter for sparkling water. Do not dip your napkin into your water glass.
- If you spill anything on someone else do not try to mop up the spill, offer them a napkin and let them do it for themselves. Offer to cover any laundering or cleaning costs.
- If you burp cover your mouth with your napkin. After it happens, say a quiet "pardon me" to no one in particular. Do not make a big deal about it.
- If you break anything, call it to the waiter's attention.
- If you get some food stuck between your teeth do not use toothpicks, fingernails, or napkins to dislodge the food at the table. If necessary go to the bathroom and take care of it.

AFTER ALL... WE'RE HERE TO DANCE

Asking Someone to Dance

Having been based on traditional lines, it is customary at most ballroom dancing functions for the men to ask the ladies to dance. Generally speaking it is acceptable for the ladies to ask the guys once in a while as well.

When you ask people to dance, ask politely, even if you know them well. Snapping fingers, nodding toward them or waving toward the dance floor are not acceptable methods of asking people to dance. Walk up to them, look them directly in the eye, and ask them to dance politely. From there escort them onto the dance floor.

When Asked to Dance

It is considered basic politeness that when asked to dance at a ballroom dancing function to always answer "yes". If you absolutely must not dance with this person for some reason (and this is only in the most extreme of circumstances) offer a polite excuse and then do not dance that particular dance with anyone else.

On the Dance Floor

It should be the objective of each of the ballroom dance couples on the floor to avoid collisions. He should maneuver the best he can, knowing his partner is trusting him to keep the dance partnership out of danger. If you are dancing a progressive dance, that is a waltz, tango, fox trot, etc., you are moving along the floor counter clockwise. The inside of the dance floor should be used by dancers who are more stationary.

The lady, customarily in the responding (follow) position, should help keep track of dance floor traffic and indicate to her partner if he is about to back into someone else.

On the very crowded social dance floor the dancing should be kept more compact. If either partner does end up bumping heavily or stepping on someone, apologize and move on. Should you be on the receiving end of the blow continue dancing if you possibly can and, if the injury is serious, excuse yourself to a quieter area with as little 'production' as possible.

Do not dance in your stocking feet, ever! This can lead to serious injury and it is inappropriate. If you suspect that your feet may become tired or painful, bring another pair of dance shoes to change into.

When the Music Ends

When the music for the current dance ends you should thank your dance partner for taking the time to dance with you and, if you are leading, escort your dance partner to the place that she was when you asked her. The lady should allow herself to be escorted from the dance floor. It is considered highly impolite for either person to abandon his or her partner out the middle of the dance floor.

Changing Partners

Remember that it helps build your skill to dance with dancers of all different levels from beginner to advanced. Only the most selfish of dancers will always want to dance with someone more advanced. Dancing with someone less advanced depends on your skill to help make it work and will develop that independent skill for you. Fear of dancing with someone who is a better dancer can only hold you back as well.

Try to contribute positively to the social part of the event. Particularly if it is a ballroom dance function that fosters a lot of partner switching and mixing you should endeavor to dance with every other partner if you arrived alone, or to mix with other partners at least half of the time if you arrived with someone as your permanent dance partner.

Dinner Dances

Dinners for ballroom dancing can be quite formal functions and it can be helpful to be aware of proper dinner etiquette. The lady the gentleman escorted to the event will be seated beside him on his right.

Once the general dancing has started, it is usually considered a polite gesture for the man to start the dancing first with the lady to his right or the lady nearest so and then with all appropriate partners at one's table before asking partners from other tables to dance. Interrupting someone who is eating to ask for a dance is considered impolite.

All dancers should endeavor to keep their alcohol intake to a minimum as it decidedly does not improve their skill on the dance floor.

Proper table manners and conducting yourself with respect and consideration towards others will increase your confidence and promote your ability to show your maturity and skills in handling social situations.