

How to Set the Table for Dinner

Your family may not be able to eat together every single night. But there are probably plenty of times when you do sit down for dinner together. There may also be times when extra family members or friends join you. Knowing how to set the table is a good skill to have, whether your meal is fancy or simple.

The first thing to settle is whether or not to cover the table. You can use a tablecloth, placemats, or leave the table bare.

Once you decide that, place a dinner plate on the table in front of each seat. If you are having soup, set a soup bowl on top of every dinner plate. To the left of each plate, set a napkin and a fork. Sometimes people fold napkins into fancy shapes. But, for a basic meal, keep things simple—fold the napkin in half and put it next to the plate. Place the fork on top of the napkin. The points of the fork, called “tines,” should be facing up.

To the right of the plate, set a knife. The knife will probably have two parts, a handle and a blade. Make sure the sharp side of the blade points at the plate. To the right of the knife, set a teaspoon. Place a drinking glass in front of the teaspoon. If you are having soup, the soup spoon goes to the right of the teaspoon. But if you do not have special spoons for soup, use a second teaspoon. If you like, set a candle in the middle of the table. You could also put a bottle of water or milk there. Some people like to decorate a dinner table with fruit, such as a bowl of apples, or with a vase of flowers.