

## CHAPTER XXIII

# The Service of the Table

OF ALL the many old time family customs in which all the members had a part, the gathering about the dinner table is about the only one which now remains. Whether or not this surviving custom is still adhered to depends on the homemaker and whether she makes it her business to see that the table is a happy family meeting place because of its attractiveness, cleanliness, daintiness and wholesome, cheery atmosphere, as well as to serve the kind of food which satisfies the inner man. To feed the body properly, such a table is essential, for scientific investigation has shown that color and form, as well as those intangible elements, lack of worry, anxiety, fear and other emotions, have a part in nourishing the body.

With this purpose in view, the suggestions for table service in this chapter are given to enable the homemaker who works alone or with the help of her children to provide the ideal family table—the place of family meetings.

### *DINING ROOM FURNISHINGS*

*The Table:* The choice of a table is a matter of fashion, determined by one's pocket book, the size of the dining room and the needs of the family. It is easier to arrange a square or oblong table with the table furnishings, and table linen for such a table is easier to launder than the round tablecloths. A table should provide 20 to 24 inches of space for each occupant. It should not be so high that one has to reach up when sitting at it.

*Chairs:* Dining room chairs should be comfortable to sit upon. They are best suited for dining if the seat is broad enough to support fully the weight of the body. The height is best about 24 inches from the floor.

*Serving Table:* This table is indispensable if the homemaker does her own work. It should be either a tea wagon on wheels, or a table, with shelf beneath, mounted on ball-bearing rollers.

Other furniture used in the dining room may be chosen according to one's taste and purse.

### LAYING THE TABLE

*Silence Cloth:* In order to have the table as noiseless as possible, a silence cloth is put on first. This also protects the surface from mars. This silence cloth may be a special cloth made for the purpose or double faced cotton flannel; if one cannot procure either, a clean, old blanket may be substituted.

*Tablecloths:* The beauty of fine damask adds in itself to the attractiveness of the table. White tablecloths are always in good taste. The use of colored and decorated linens is very much in vogue now, but unless one can afford to change with the fashion, it is better to buy only the white ones.

The cloth should be spotless, for nothing makes food so unappetizing as a soiled cloth. It should be ironed very smoothly in lengthwise folds. In placing the cloth on the table, care should be taken to see that the center fold is in the center of the table.

The use of doilies at breakfast and luncheon is very desirable from the standpoint of economy of time, laundering and first cost. For small families, doilies are well suited for all family meals.

As all materials used about the table are subject to stains from food, a strong argument for the use of white or natural colored linen is the frequent need for boiling and stain removers, which would injure the colored and decorated ones.

The use of a centerpiece adds to the attractiveness of the table, but it is not necessary. A few fresh flowers or a fern, however, are essential to give a bit of color to the table.

It is not in good taste to overlay the tablecloth with doilies to protect it. Pads or mats for hot dishes are useful and have a place.

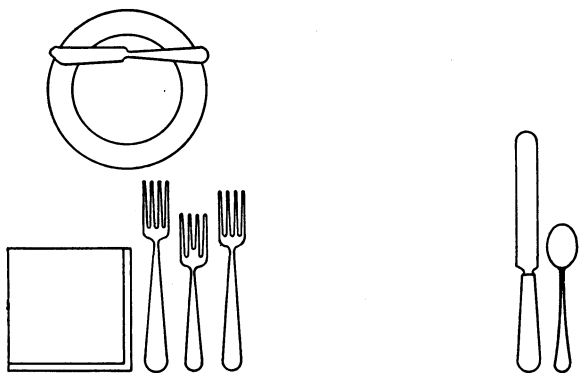
*Napkins:* It is best to match the napkins with the cloth. The size for dinner varies from a 20" x 20" to 24" x 24". A medium-sized one is best to choose unless one can afford a variety. Luncheon napkins, either 12" x 12" or 15" x 15", are used for breakfast and luncheons.

Napkins, as well as tablecloths, should be spotless and this necessitates changing often. Care of the napkin after



The napkin may be laid at the left of the fork or between the knife and fork. It should be folded very evenly in ironing and the open corner of the napkin is laid so it occupies a lower right hand position.

*Silver:* In family service, the same plan of placing the silver is used as when entertaining. The difference lies in the fact that at the latter time more pieces are used.

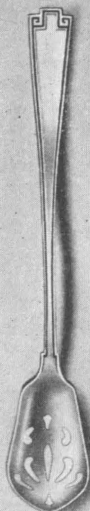


---

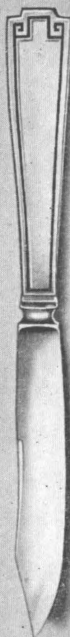
Correct placing of silver, napkin and butter plate

The essential silver pieces are the fork, knife and spoon. The knife and fork are laid so as to mark the place on the table, the knife with cutting edge turned in toward the plate and the fork with tines turned up at the left. If no knife is needed, the fork is placed at the right in place of the knife. The teaspoon is placed at the right of the knife. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed at the right of the teaspoon. A dessert fork should be laid at the right of the dinner fork, for the principle of laying silver is to place it in the order of use. The salad fork should be placed between the dinner and dessert forks. The butter spreader is laid across the bread and butter plate. If several pieces of silver are necessary in a meal, it is always good taste to place the silver necessary for dessert when it is served. The silver for serving, as tablepoons, cold meat fork or carving set, have a special place at the place of the host or hostess.

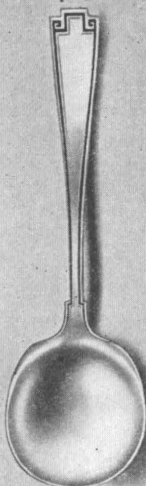
Olive  
Spoon



Fruit Knife  
(Individual)



Bouillon  
Spoon



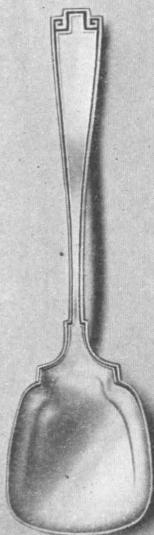
Dessert  
Knife



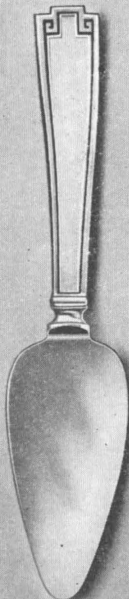
Butter  
Spreader



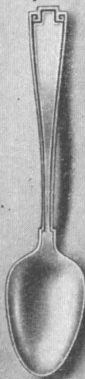
Sugar  
Spoon



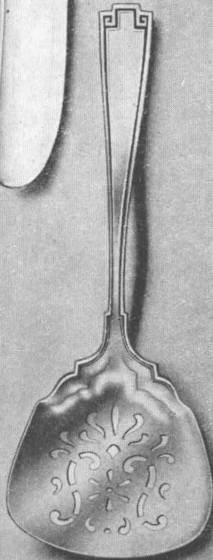
Cheese  
Server



Coffee  
Spoon



Tomato  
Server (Small)



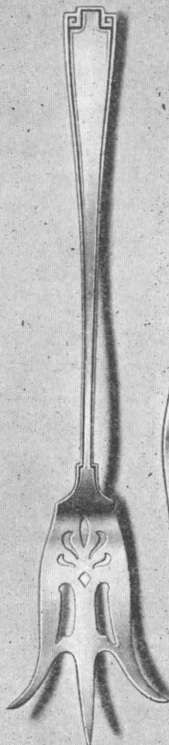
Butter  
Pick



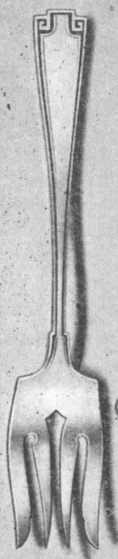
Oyster  
Fork



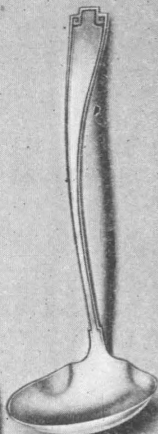
Lettuce  
Fork



Salad  
Fork



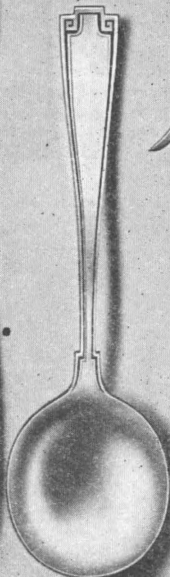
Cream  
Ladle



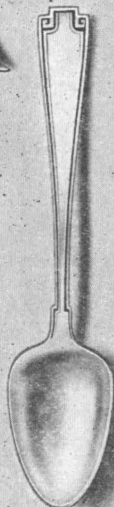
Butter Knife



Soup  
Spoon



Tea  
Spoon



Dessert  
Fork



Sugar Tongs



Silver for serving a dish to be passed may be placed beside it, not in it.

All silver should be in a straight line one-half inch from the edge of the table. All silver should be kept bright and shining and not allowed to grow dull and stained.

*Dishes:* All dishes should be free from nicks and cracks as such defects are insanitary as well as unsightly.

If one must economize, the luncheon size of plate is more desirable for general use than a dinner size. This is about 9 inches in diameter. The salad or dessert plate is 7 inches and the bread and butter plate, 6 inches.

For breakfast and luncheon the plate may be laid between the knife and fork, face up. At dinner the necessary number of plates is set at the host's place, if he serves. The bread and butter plate is placed at the tip of the fork. The water glass should be set at the tip of the knife. The use of small sauce dishes to hold vegetables is not desirable unless the vegetable is liquid in character or served with a sauce and would make the dinner plate unattractive if served on it. Cups and saucers are grouped at the hostess' plate together with the cream and sugar. Each cup rests in a saucer, not piled in pairs.

Serving dishes are placed at the host's plate, while the plates holding bread and butter, together with those holding jellies, pickles, etc., are arranged to give proper balance to the table. Salt and pepper shakers should be placed between every two plates.

### TABLE SERVICE FOR THE HOME

The homemaker who is a good manager plans her menu so that it is not necessary for her to go between kitchen and dining room frequently. There are two ways of serving without additional help.

*Serving With the Aid of One Person:* The person who assists here may be either a member of the family or the hostess herself. Children may easily perform the service and add to the family pleasure by contributing their bit to make the table attractive. After the first course is eaten, the serving dishes at the host's plate are removed first and carried to the kitchen. Then the dinner plates and bread and butter plates are removed from the left, one in each

hand, and carried to the kitchen. It is objectionable to pile up dishes in removing them, from many standpoints. After the table is cleared of all dishes and food except the water glasses and coffee cups, the dessert is brought in. The coffee cups may be refilled for the dessert.

*Using the Serving Table:* The dining table is arranged, having the hot food brought in at the last minute. The dessert is arranged on the top of the serving table and covered with a clean towel or napkin. The lower shelf is empty, if possible. The serving table should be placed near the hostess, so that she may easily reach the dishes on it.

After the first course is eaten, the hostess first asks the host to pass her the serving dishes, as platter, vegetable bowl, etc. These she places on the lower shelf of the serving table. Following this, she has the plates passed to her and she arranges these in piles on the shelf, keeping the silver on top the dinner plates or placing it in an empty bowl. The soiled dishes are thus placed out of sight on the lower shelf. All food is removed from the table, leaving only water glasses, cups and saucers and silver for the dessert. After the table is thus cleared and water glasses filled from the pitcher, which is on the upper shelf of the serving table, she passes the dessert. She may thus serve a meal without rising from her place, except to bring in or replenish hot food. The use of this form of service is best confined to a table holding four to six guests. It is very useful for serving Sunday night suppers or where there are no children to assist.

### *THE SERVICE OF FOOD*

*Hot and Cold Foods:* One of the most important principles in serving food is that hot foods should be served hot and cold foods, cold. For this reason plates should be warmed as well as dishes from which food is served. Hot foods, as toast, baked potatoes and biscuits, may be covered with a napkin to aid in keeping them hot.

Dishes upon which gelatin and frozen dishes are to be served may be cooled in the refrigerator if the weather is very warm.

*Beverages:* Water glasses are filled to within a half inch of the brim, never to overflowing. The same is true



of tea and coffee. At a family dinner the hostess or elder daughter pours the beverage. The cream and sugar may be passed separately, tho it adds to the hospitality of the table to inquire what each person wishes and add it at the time of pouring.

*Bread:* For the family table, bread should be cut in slices one-half inch in thickness. If the slice is large, it is daintier cut again straight across. Bread is always laid on the side of one's plate, if no bread and butter plate is provided, and not on the cloth.

*Butter:* Butter may be served on an individual small plate and passed with a butter knife so that each one helps himself. It is a better plan to cut squares of butter beforehand and place on the bread and butter plate. Bread and butter plates add to the daintiness of the service as they provide a place for the foods which would make the dinner plate look too crowded as well as allowing the butter to melt.

*Soup:* Soup is usually placed on the table just before the meal is announced in order to be as hot as possible. It may be served in the soup plate, coupe or in the bouillon cups, which have two handles.

*Meats:* Meats are placed on hot platters before the master of the house to carve and serve. The carving of the different cuts will be discussed later in this chapter. The host may ask the members to designate a choice, but in the family he soon learns individual preferences.

*Vegetables:* All vegetables are served at the same time as the meats on the dinner plate, unless the vegetable is of such a liquid nature that small dishes are necessary. Then a member of the family usually serves and the dish is passed. The sauce dish is set down at the right of the water glass. Sometimes it is desirable to have a younger member of the family assist by serving the vegetable on the plate after the host has served the meat and potatoes.

*Other Foods:* Jams, jellies, pickles, etc., are passed around the table, at the convenience of the members.

*Salads:* Salads are usually arranged on individual serving plates and placed on the table just before the meal is served. It is also in good taste to have one of the mem-

bers of the family serve the salad from a bowl or salad plate on individual plates, which are passed to the family. The individual salad plate is placed at the left of the fork.

*Desserts:* These may be served by the hostess at the table or individual servings may be arranged to be served after the table is cleared.

### *SPECIAL DUTIES OF HOST AND HOSTESS*

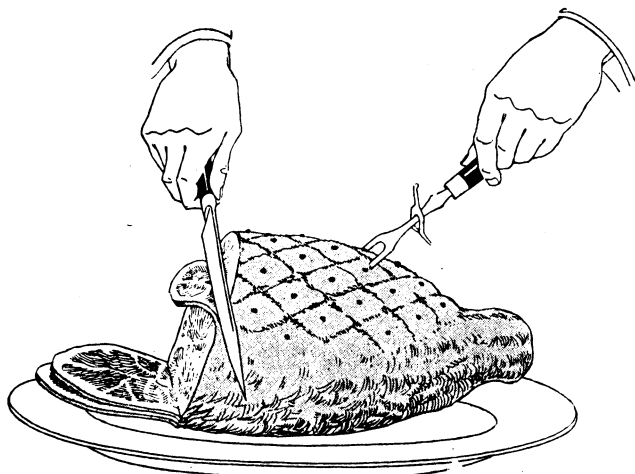
At the family table the mother is the hostess and should occupy a place opposite the host at the table. She should always be served first by the host and foods to be passed are always offered to her first, unless an aged member of the family is present. The hostess smooths over accidents and embarrassments which may happen by graciously accepting the apology and changing the conversation. She must see that even in her family all members are given an opportunity to have a part in the conversation. The host, as master of the house, occupies the position at the head of the table. His chief duty is to serve the main course of the meal as attractively as possible on the individual plates. He does not lift the individual plate from the pile when serving it. The serving should be moderate in size and a bit of the garnish should be served with each plate. He serves the hostess first, always, unless a very distinguished guest is present. He must also see that second servings are offered and attend generally to the table. He usually designates to whom each plate will go, serving first those at one side of the table and then those on the other. After serving, the host places the silver neatly on the dish where it has been used.

The host and hostess offer second helpings by saying, "May I serve you?" or "May I offer you?"

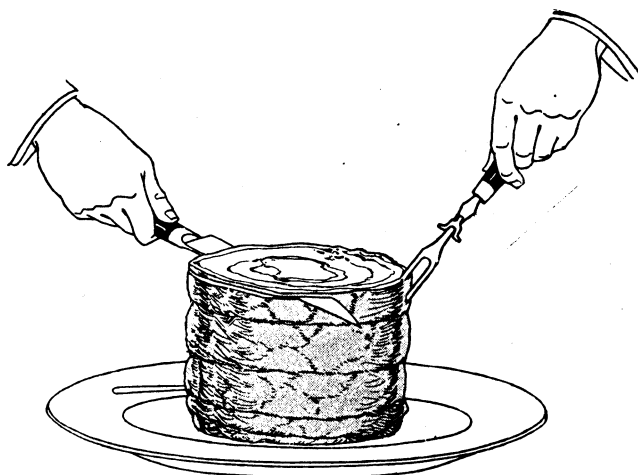
If a man is the guest of honor in a home, he is seated at the right of the hostess, while if a woman, she sits at the right of the host. Seating together guests who are congenial and bringing together new people is an art in making everyone have a pleasant time at a meal.

### *CARVING*

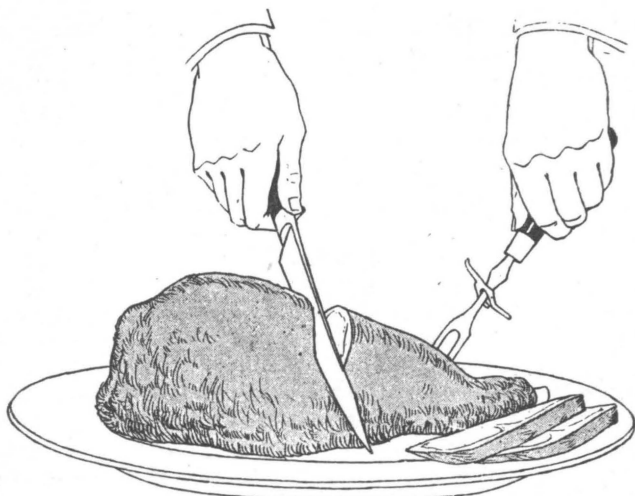
Carving needs to be practiced in order to be easily done, so that the host who serves his own family may become an



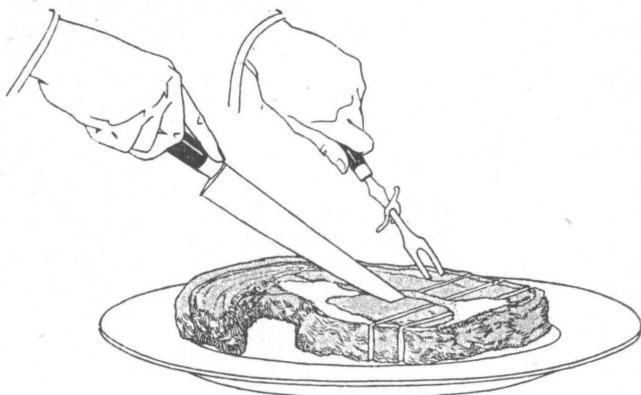
Economical method of carving a ham



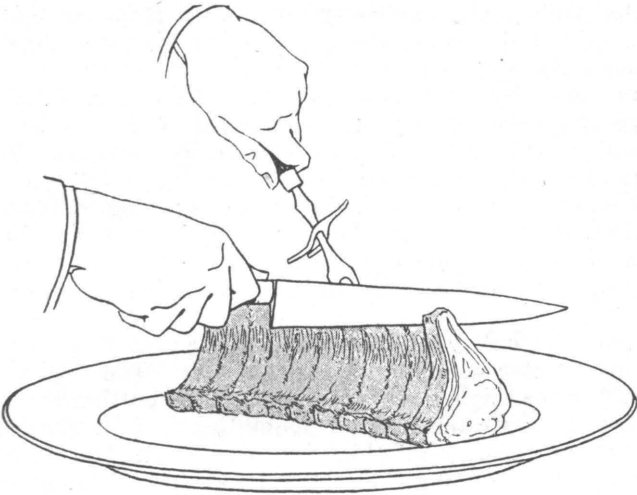
A rolled roast is carved in thin horizontal slices



One way to carve a leg of lamb



Correct method of carving a steak



The way to carve a loin roast of pork, veal or lamb

© Natl. L. S. & Meat Board

expert by such practice. The carving knife should be sharp and the handles be such that they may be grasped easily and firmly.

The platter and space around the carver should allow plenty of room to carve.

Meat is always cut in thin slices across the grain of the meat. A good carver leaves the meat with clean edges and no little loose bits on the platter when he has finished.

*Carving the Rolled Rib Roast:* In this roast, the fork is inserted firmly from the side to keep it in place while the carver cuts thin slices horizontally, across the grain. If the roast is a standing rib roast, the meat is placed on the platter with the ribs at the left. Then thin slices are cut across the grain until the bone is reached. Then the knife cuts the meat down beside the bone.

*Carving Porterhouse, T-bone, Club Steaks:* Beefsteaks should first have the meat cut from the bone. Beginning at the wide bone end, the steak is cut in strips from 2 to 3

inches wide. The smaller strips are cut from the tenderloin side of the choice steak, so that each serving may include a piece of both.

*Carving Loin of Pork or Mutton:* In carving a loin of pork or mutton, it is made much easier if the backbone is sawed free from the ribs, but not wholly removed. Then each chop may be sliced off easily.

*Carving Leg of Lamb or Mutton:* The leg of lamb or mutton is best and most economically carved by slicing down at an angle of about 30 degrees at the larger end of the roast. It may also be sliced by beginning to cut in the middle.

*Carving Poultry:* The fowl should be placed on its back on the platter with the neck at the left. The fork is inserted in the thigh and the leg is cut off by cutting thru the skin to separate the leg and disjointing it from the body. Then the drumstick and thigh may be disjointed on the platter. Next cut off the wing, by cutting thru the joint fastening it to the body. After inserting the fork firmly in the breast, the breast of the fowl may be cut off in thin slices and laid on the platter, ready to serve.

After one side of a fowl is carved, the other side is carved in the same way.

## ENTERTAINING AT DINNER

This chapter will not go into detail about different forms of service, for where no extra help is kept the elaborate entertainment is out of place and in poor taste. "Not what we give, but what we share," is the essence of true hospitality. The family table ought to be so managed and conducted that an additional person or two at a meal means no anxiety, flurry or repression on the part of the family.

Having children become accustomed from the time they come to the table to the pieces of different silver and dishes and the polite usages of society makes for ease in entertaining. This is best taught by doing it every day. "Eat at your table as you would at the table of a king."

*Simplicity in Entertaining:* To entertain at dinner necessitates a well-planned menu, served in an attractive, simple manner without doing anything out of the ordinary, for when we try to do things to which we are unaccus-

tomed, we show in many ways that we are doing something unusual.

In entertaining, a homemaker needs to remember she is the hostess as well as the one who will prepare the meal. To this end, as much of the food should be prepared beforehand as to give her time to rest and dress herself to fill her position as hostess. A menu planned with this in view is very essential. The table should be laid with the best of linens, china and silver and made as attractive as possible. Otherwise, the service may be exactly the type used every day.

### *ENTERTAINING AT TEA*

An afternoon tea is an informal reception, where all one's friends may come in to visit and enjoy a cup of tea. The invitations may be very informal as given over the telephone or by word of mouth, or they may be written and mailed.

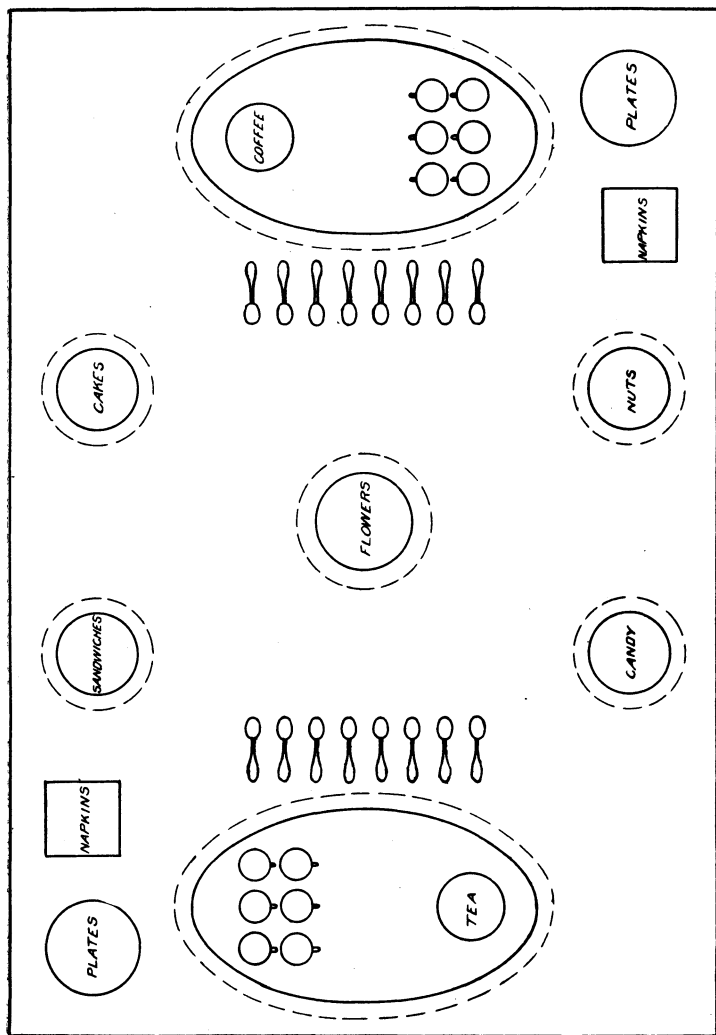
The hostess must have the assistance of friends in serving the refreshments. She must plan her tea so that it will not be necessary for her to go to the kitchen unless the affair is very informal and small.

The table should be covered with one's best linen. Beautiful embroidered or lace pieces may best be used if the table is highly polished. The silver and china are arranged attractively as given in the diagram. At a large tea, two persons usually pour, while one or two others replenish the dishes and assist in serving the guests.

The food is light and dainty and arranged so that the guest may help herself at an informal affair after receiving the cup of tea, or the food may be passed by those assisting.

The food usually consists of thin, dainty sandwiches, hot biscuits, cinnamon toast, small cakes, candies and nuts, tho by no means is it necessary to serve more than sandwiches, cakes and tea.

The beverage may be tea, coffee, chocolate or a fruit punch. Two beverages may be served at a tea, one at each end of the table. A filled cup is placed with a spoon on a plate and offered to the guests. The assisting ladies or hostess invites the guests to have tea, but at a large function it is in



Arrangement of table for an afternoon tea or informal reception.



good taste to approach one who pours and ask, "May I have a cup?" Small napkins may be used. When the guest has finished her refreshments she places her plate and cup on a nearby table or an assisting lady removes it.

### ***BUFFET LUNCHEONS***

Compiled by Virginia Buck.

Buffet luncheons are arranged more and more to take care of larger groups instead of using the formal type of service altogether. The reason for the buffet luncheon's popularity can be attributed to its simplicity, requirement for less space, attractiveness, use of china and silver and less service. It can be used very well in small houses and be kept just as attractive as tho it were in a palatial background.

The center of the service table can be made most attractive thru the beautiful arrangement of flowers, linen, silver and china. A luncheon cloth or doilies may be used to good advantage. The buffet luncheon calls for the best linen and silver that the hostess can afford.

There are three main types of service for buffet luncheons: informal, semi-formal and formal.

*Informal Service:* The informal luncheon requires no waitresses or maid service because the guests help themselves to the food. The table is set with one course at a time and the guests pass around the table, taking up the foods as they have been arranged in the order of their importance and lastly coming to the silver and beverage and the linen napkins. It is most convenient to place the silver at the last because it is difficult to hold silver and serve the plate at the same time. If second helpings are desired, the hostess can ask her guests to wait upon themselves. The hostess may also pass the serving dishes to the guests if she prefers, rather than to have them wait upon themselves for second helpings. While the guests are eating the first course the table can be cleared and the dessert placed. The hostess can ask her guests to place the soiled plates upon the service table and then serve themselves to dessert.

*Semi-formal Service:* The second type of service is semi-formal. Here a friend of the hostess is seated at each end

of the table to serve the main dishes for the main course and also the dessert and coffee or other beverage used. The guests serve themselves to breads, relishes, candies, silver and linen and there is no maid service.

*Formal Service:* The formal type of buffet luncheon accommodates large numbers of people. There are maids or waitresses who fill the plates from the main table after they are served by those sitting at each end of the table. The guests are seated in the dining room or adjoining rooms. Usually, the guests are seated in full view of the luncheon table, where they may enjoy its beauty to the fullest extent, for a buffet table is as beautiful as one can make it. Rolls and relishes may be passed twice. When serving dessert, the dessert plates are exchanged for the soiled dinner plates. A waitress may remove two plates at a time to expedite matters.

Coffee, spoons, cream and sugar, water, nuts and candies are all passed to the guests. If coffee is not served from the buffet table, the waitress will have an urn on her service table and pour from there, but this is rarely done because there is usually someone to pour from the buffet table.

One attractive feature of the buffet luncheon is that only the flowers remain on the table during the dessert, which adds a great deal to the formality of the occasion. When the guests have finished, the plates and napkins are removed by the waitresses. It is customary for the serving hostesses to leave the table after they have finished serving the food.

The menu is always made very attractive for a buffet luncheon and it carries out the color scheme as closely as possible. When planning a buffet luncheon, one must consider whether the guests will eat at small tables or hold their plates in their laps. It is always customary to have food that is easily eaten with a fork because a knife cannot be used conveniently. The rolls are always buttered in the kitchen before serving. There may be hot and cold dishes on the table at the same time, and the coffee is usually served at the table. When setting the table for the luncheon it is advisable to replenish dishes from the service table rather than appear crowded on the table.

*Suggested Menu:* A suggested menu for a buffet luncheon is as follows:

CREAMED VEAL IN TIMBALES

PARSLEY POTATOES

STUFFED TOMATO SALAD

HOT ROLLS

CRANBEERRY JELLY

---

APRICOT SHERBET

WHITE DROP CAKES

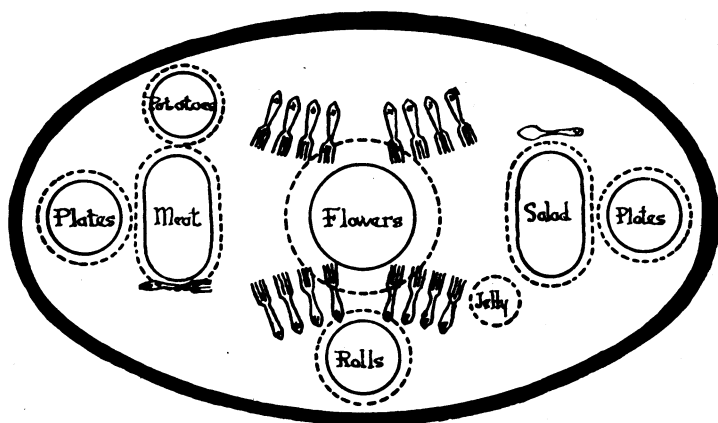
RAINBOW CANDIES

COFFEE

The color scheme can be worked out in the rainbow colors with this menu and a floral piece of spring flowers can be used. The apricot sherbet can easily be changed to strawberry or any other red fruit and then the color scheme could be red and green. The candies and icing of the cakes always add to the aesthetic quality of a meal.

A diagram showing the position of the serving dishes on a formal buffet table is shown in the figure below.

For the second course, the sherbet can replace the meat dish and the coffee replace the salad. The cakes can either be served by the maid or by the one serving the sherbet.



Arrangement of a formal buffet table

The buffet service is a very convenient method of serving and also a very effective one. It creates a social atmosphere which is very desirable in the average home when guests are present, and it relieves the hostess of a great deal of responsibility in the matter of serving crowds if she is handicapped by the lack of quantities of dishes or silver.

### *SERVING CHURCH DINNERS AND BANQUETS*

To insure hot food, properly served, at banquets and church, farm bureau or lodge dinners, it is best to serve directly from the kitchen.

The table is laid with linen, silver and glass, as in the home. It should be attractive and great care must be taken to see that each guest has sufficient room for comfort and also to allow for service.

Bread and butter plates are placed on the table at first unless adequate help and space allow one to serve these after the appetizer is removed, if one is used.

Glasses are filled and butter placed on plates just before the meal is announced. If an appetizer is part of the menu, it is on the table when the guests sit down. Hot plates, holding the main course of the meal, are filled in the kitchen. The arrangement should be neat and symmetrical and the servings moderate. A bit of garnish improves the appearance.

The waitresses may remove all the first course dishes and afterward bring in the hot plates, always removing and serving plates from the left side.

In formal service the guest is always supposed to have a plate in front of him until the table is cleared for dessert. So in that service the hot plate is always substituted for the one used. Several hot plates may be brought in on a tray and placed on a serving table ready for the waitress to serve.

Another less formal way, if helpers are less numerous, is to bring in one hot plate, remove the first course and substitute the hot plate. Then take up another first course from another place. The waitress returning may bring a

hot plate in either hand, serving the vacant place first, then the other and carrying back dishes of the first course from another place, until all are served.

Rolls may be passed to each guest. In serving, bring plate nearly to level of the table at the left side, as this makes it easier for a guest to help himself. If no bread and butter plates are used, the rolls should be buttered. Coffee may be served with the main course. The cup and saucer are placed at the right of each guest, while sugar and cream may be offered at the left.

If the help is inadequate or space small, cups and saucers may be placed on the table when it is laid and filled after the meal is begun. Coffee cups may be refilled by serving additional hot coffee from a coffee pot or pitcher.

In serving a banquet or dinner, the chairman of the society or toastmaster is always served first, and then next the guest of honor on the right hand. The serving may then proceed as convenient, tho a speaker's table is always served first.

After the main course is eaten, a salad plate may be substituted for the hot plate, removing the bread and butter plate also at the same time. Before dessert the table is wholly cleared, with the exception of the coffee cups, which may be refilled for the dessert course. If possible, remove the crumbs from the table by brushing them on to a plate with a folded napkin. The dessert is then served and bonbons and mints may be passed, unless they have formed a part of the table decoration in their individual baskets or cups.

The glasses ought to be refilled frequently thruout the meal.