

MESS DINNER

BEFORE DINNER

1.
 - a. Members must assemble in the main lounge some thirty minutes before dinner and remain standing after having greeted the Senior present. If a member is unavoidably late he must, on arrival, apologize to the PM.
 - b. All mess members must see to the entertainment of guests.
 - c. A drink is in order when the bar is opened and the choice of drink is that of the individual. Approximately five minutes to the hour of entering the dining room, the Senior Steward will report to the PMC, "dinner is served, Sir". The PMC will inform the members and during these few minutes the remaining drinks should be consumed or left behind; drinks will NOT be taken to the dining room.

SEATING PLANS

2. All members except honoured guests should look over the seating plan, usually posted in the Mess ante-room and make sure they know where to sit.

ENTRY

3.
 - a. At the appointed hour, the V/PMC will have all members move into the dining room except for the head table. He/She will ensure that all members take up their designated positions in accordance with the seating plan and remain standing behind their chair.
 - b. The Senior Member and PMC will take their guests to the head table and stand at the designated position according to the seating plan. The Senior Steward reports to the PMC, "all members and guests are present, Sir".

NAME CARD

4. A name card will usually be set up on the dinner table in the place corresponding to location in the seating plan.

BLESSING

5. After the head table is in position the PMC will call upon the Junior Member to say

Grace. EG. God, accept our gratitude for thy goodness and mercy as expressed by providing this food for us. Bless this food for our use and us to thy service. Amen.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE

6. Once the dinner has commenced, it is not permissible for any one to leave the table, except for duty reasons, Permission must be obtained from the PMC. Customarily messages concerning such matters are passed back and forth through the Mess Steward.

TABLE MANNERS FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL DINNERS

7. POSTURE: One should always sit in an erect position; never loll or lounge or prop elbows on the table. when not occupied with knife and fork, the hands should rest on the lap. Elbows are kept close to the side at all times. The body should be approximately six inches from the table.
8. Drawing designs on the table cloth with knife and fork, crumbling of bread; beating a tattoo on the table with the silverware, playing with the wine glasses, etc, are all in bad taste. Gentle manners and quietness in eating mark a well bred person.
9. Napkins: The table napkin is partly unfolded, not in view of those present but on the lap, and laid flat across the knees. Never tuck it in front of your tunic. After the meal the napkin is not folded, but laid casually on the table.
10. SILVERWARE: The silverware is laid out in the order in which it is used. The knives to the right of the plate, the forks to the left. NOTE: Use silverware from outside and working in, in the order of courses.

HOW TO USE UTENSILS

11. Soup is always taken from the side of the spoon. The motion of the spoon is away from the dinner, Never tip the plate to get the last drop, or blow on the soup to cool it.
12. A knife is held in the right hand, cutting edge down, with the index finger extended along the back of the blade. (never cut rolls with a knife, break rolls with the fingers).

13. The fork is held in the left hand, prongs down, to eat the food that the knife cuts. Vegetables may be eaten by holding the fork in the right hand prongs up, or in the left hand prongs down. In the latter case the knife is used to help place food on the fork.

CONVERSATION

14. The well-bred person is careful not to speak with food in his mouth, or gesticulate with utensils in his hand. The conversation should be tactful, kind, responsive, brief and cheerful. Unpleasant topics should be avoided; to imitate anyone is ill-mannered. Controversial topics such as religion, politics should, by common consent, be avoided.
15. Tea or coffee cups should not be suspended in the air but raised to the lips, short sips being taken and the cup replaced on the saucer. A teaspoon is not used to taste the tea or coffee but to stir it only. To crook the little finger when lifting a cup looks affected, and affectation of any kind denotes bad manners.

THE CUSTOM OF PREPARING FOR THE LOYAL TOAST

16. At the conclusion of the meal, all china, silverware, and glasses with the exception of the port glass, candelabra, flowers, and trophies, will be removed from the table.
17. Pass the Port. When the table is cleared, the PMC will rap the gavel for attention. The port decanters are placed on the table in front of the MC. If a large number of diners are in attendance, decanters will also be placed in front of the VPMC and at the end of each wing table on the left hand side. When they are in place, the PMC and VPMC unstop the decanters, charge their glasses, and then pass the decanters to the left. Other members having the decanters to the left.
If there is space where there are not diners, the steward will move the decanter to the next diner. Whether the decanter touches the table or not is a matter of mess custom. No one may touch his wine until the Loyal Toast has been proposed. If someone does not drink due to medical or other reasons, he may drink the Loyal Toast with water.
18. The Loyal Toast. When all glasses are charged, the PMC raps his gavel for silence, then stands and addressing the VPMC, says, "Mr Vice, The Queen of Canada". The VPMC then stands and addressing all present says, " Ladies and Gentlemen, the Queen of Canada" (the PMC can address the VPMC in either of the official language and the VPMC shall propose in the toast in the other language). All then stand, and if a band is in attendance, the first six bars of the Royal Anthem are played. During the playing of the Royal Anthem, the port glass may either be left on the table or held in the right hand at waist level while standing to attention; the custom will vary between elements and units. When the band has stopped playing all members repeat the toast, " The Queen of Canada" or "Ala Reine due Canada" and drink. All present then sit down and conversation is resumed. When a band is

not in attendance, all members rise to their feet, pick up their glasses, and repeat the toast, "The Queen of Canada" and drink to Her Majesty's health.

19. Toasts in Naval Messes. Whether ashore or afloat, members do not stand for the Loyal Toast unless royalty or foreign official guests are present and/or when other toasts to heads of state are to be included. However, after the Loyal Toast and subsequent toast which may be proposed to individuals should be drunk standing in the normal way.
20. Other Toasts. When officers or other distinguished persons, officially representing a foreign state, are entertained at a mess dinner, the following procedure shall be carried out:
 - a. The Loyal Toast shall be proposed first.
 - b. When only one foreign guest is present, the host should then propose a toast to the head of state of the country to which the guests belongs, eg. "Gentlemen, the President..". The National Anthem of that nation then should be played. A shorter version of the anthem may be used provided it has been ascertained beforehand that this would be in accordance with the custom of the country concerned.
 - c. When a number of nations are represented, the host should propose a collective toast, eg, "Gentlemen, the head of the states here represented.: The National Anthems of all the countries in the collective toast would not be played in this case.
21. Foreign officers or other ranks undergoing training or covering vacancies in an establishment should not be considered official representatives of their country at a mess dinner unless they have been so delegated. In the case of foreign guests who are being entertained privately in an officers' mess, there need be no deviation from the normal practice of proposing the Loyal Toast only.
22. Naval Toasts. On board ships or in fleet establishments, it is customary to propose the first toast to the head of state of the country to which the guest belongs and then the senior guests member of the other nation proposes the Loyal Toast.
23. Following the Toast. Following the toast(s), coffee is served and the PMC gives permission to smoke by lighting a cigarette or by passing a cigarette to a neighbour. Waiters will place ash trays on the table while the stewards pass cigars and cigarettes to all members, followed by the serving of liqueurs.

SENIOR MEMBER LEAVING THE TABLE

24. When the Senior Member rises to leave the table, all those present will rise and will stand to attention until the Senior Member and his party have passed on the way to the exit. Those present may then leave, or seat themselves at the table for a further SHORT PERIOD.

AFTER THE DINNER IN LOUNGE

25. As the mess is your home, it is reasonably polite to remain until your official guest has left. It is customary not leave the mess for your quarters until the Commanding Officer or whoever on the particular occasion was representing him has gone home or given special permission for you to do so.

GENERAL

SECOND HELPINGS OF FOOD

26. Request for second helpings of food or for foods not on the menu are taboo at a formal dinner.

GLASSES

27. Glasses are never turned down.