

Toe the Line



A 4-Her's guide to Buffet Etiquette

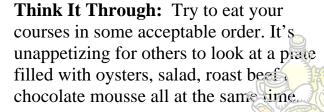
Most of us would consider the buffet to be the less formal version of dining; however, many times buffets are set up for business meals and receptions. Generally these are areas where we want to make a good impression. There are some very basic skills that can help you maintain a positive image in the face of the dreaded buffet! Remember – common courtesy goes a long way toward proper etiquette.

Stand In Line: No butting in or swimming against the tide to speed your journey through. Think of it as a great time to chat with the people in line and network. *Never complain about the line, the cod or the wait.* Others don't need you to put a damper on their enjoyment of the event.

Help Yourself: (as you will at many buffets) Use serving utensils when you help yourself. *Fingers do not count as serving utensils*.

Patience is a Virtue: <u>Never</u> take anything from a serving plate and stick it directly into your mouth. Nor should you start eating from your plate while still in line. Wait until you return to your table.

Don't Let Your Eyes Be Bigger Than Your Stomach: It is bad manners to heap your plate high and then not eat most of it. You can return several times (more opportunities to meet more people!) taking smaller portions, but *never fill your plate to overflowing*.



Use Your Self-Control: Just because this is a buffet, do not turn this into an "all you can eat" occasion. Remember that any business dining experience is never about the food; it is always about business.

Ready, Set, Go: The rules of basic table manners apply at a buffet as with any other meal, with one exception- you don't have to wait for your entire table be seated to begin eating. Because the buffet line can be a lengthy process, you may begin eating while your food is still warm, however, you should wait for at least a few of your companions to be in place before eating.

Simple Reminders: Don't touch food and replace on the buffet. Don't put your face into food to get a sniff. Do not lick your fingers as you go through the line. Don't fidget with your hair or clothing while in line. Don't try to carry everything at once, return for a beverage if necessary.

Denny, 2004

References: http://www.canoe.ca/LifewiseEtiquetteladies03; http://www.easyfunschool.com; http://www.etiquetteessentials.com; Etiquette International – New York.