



**Table Talk**  
**The Art of Setting a Table**

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# Agenda

- Introduction to Jaclyn Watson.
- Learning about the details.
- Table etiquette.
- Tips & Tricks on how to remember to set a table
- How to teach your staff
- Enhancing the vision no matter who you are.
- Q&A



# Learning Objectives

During this session, attendees will learn to:

1. How to set a table properly.
2. How to enhance the table design.
3. How to teach their workers how to set the table.
4. How to elevate the design for low to no cost to you.
5. How to add in things that leave them wanting to reach out
6. How upleveling the design will uplevel your business.





# Table Talk & Design Strategy

Welcome to the world of table setting, where precision meets creativity and culinary magic happens! Setting a perfect table is not just about laying out cutlery and dishes, it's an art form that requires a perfect blend of style, elegance, and practicality. It is an art form that is often times not understood in the catering or planning world.



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# 5 Tips on setting a table at a wedding that everyone should know

**Balance and Symmetry:** Maintain balance and symmetry in the table setup. Ensure that items are evenly spaced and aligned. Use visual cues like the plate's center aligning with the chair, utensils placed in a uniform manner, and consistent spacing between place settings to create a visually pleasing layout for when guests enter.

**Layering and Textures:** Experiment with layering different textures and elements. Layering can involve using chargers, placemats, and table runners to add depth and dimension to the table. Mix textures with linens, glassware, and centerpieces to create an engaging setting that adds depth and interest.

**Consider Guest Comfort:** Place settings should be practical and considerate of guests' comfort. Ensure adequate space between place settings to avoid overcrowding. Place utensils in the order they'll be used, working from the outside in, and keep essential items within easy reach to facilitate a smooth dining experience. **DO NOT USE UTENSILS YOU DON'T NEED!**

**Personalization and Detailing:** Add personal touches to each place setting. Incorporate personalized elements such as custom menus, place cards with guests' names, or small favors that align with the wedding. These details not only make guests feel special but also contribute to the overall aesthetic.

**Harmonize with Centerpieces:** Coordinate table settings with centerpieces. Ensure that the tableware, linens, and decor elements complement and harmonize with the centerpiece. The centerpiece should enhance the overall table setting without overwhelming it, striking a balance between elegance and functionality.

# The top 5 reasons to know how to set a table properly.

**Ambiance & Atmosphere** : Table settings set the tone for the event. They contribute significantly to the ambiance and atmosphere of the wedding reception. A well-set table enhances the overall aesthetic, creating a beautiful and inviting environment for guests to enjoy.

**Guest Experience** : Table settings directly impact the guest experience. Thoughtfully arranged dinnerware, linens, and decor elevate the dining experience, making guests feel valued and attended to. A meticulously set table enhances the enjoyment of the meal and fosters a sense of celebration.

**Visual Appeal and Photography:** Beautifully set tables provide a stunning backdrop for wedding photographs. Aesthetically pleasing table arrangements, coordinated with the wedding theme or color palette, contribute to memorable and Instagram-worthy moments captured during the event.

**Personalization and Theme Expression:** Table settings offer an opportunity to express the couple's personality, style, and wedding theme. From unique centerpieces to customized place cards, the table decor can reflect the couple's story, adding a personal touch that resonates with guests.

**Coordination and Cohesiveness:** Well-coordinated table settings contribute to the overall coherence and design of the reception space. When elements like table linens, centerpieces, dinnerware, and floral arrangements complement each other, they create a cohesive and visually appealing environment, enhancing the overall wedding decor.



# It's the details that matter





# Incorporating Cultural and Thematic Elements:

Explore how to integrate cultural traditions and themes into table settings to create a more personalized and memorable experience.

Example:

Asian-Inspired Table Setting:

- **Elements:** Incorporate traditional elements such as bamboo placemats, chopsticks, and rice bowls. Use delicate porcelain plates with intricate patterns and pair them with silk napkins.
- **Centerpiece:** Use bonsai trees, cherry blossoms, or ikebana -style floral arrangements as centerpieces.
- **Colors and Textures:** Utilize a color palette that reflects the chosen culture, such as red and gold for Chinese themes or shades of blue and white for Japanese settings. Incorporate textures like silk and satin to add elegance.
- **Personal Touches:** Include name cards with calligraphy and small gifts like fortune cookies or origami cranes for each guest.







JAG Studios



Rodeo & Co photo



Pinterest



Vangelis Photo- Almond Cookies



# Elevate with Layering and Textures:

- Understand what layering is and incorporate it into various textures to add depth and interest to table settings.
- Use a combination of tablecloths, runners, placemats, and chargers in different materials like linen, velvet, and wood. Layer these elements to create a rich, tactile experience.
- Mix and match patterns and textures carefully to avoid overwhelming the table. Start with a neutral base and add pops of color and texture through napkins, centerpieces, and tableware.
- Incorporate a mix of lighting options like candles, fairy lights, table lamps. Consider using dimmable LED lights that will adjust.
- Pay attention to the placement of lights to highlight key elements of the table design, such as the centerpiece or individual place settings. Use uprights to highlight ceiling florals.



# Other ways to Elevate but not overtake

- Interactive elements at the table, such as personalized messages, games, or trivia related to the couple or event theme.
- Innovative uses of lighting and digital elements to create a dynamic table environment.
- Using QR codes for interactive menus.
- Use various scents, sounds, and tactile elements to enhance the dining experience.



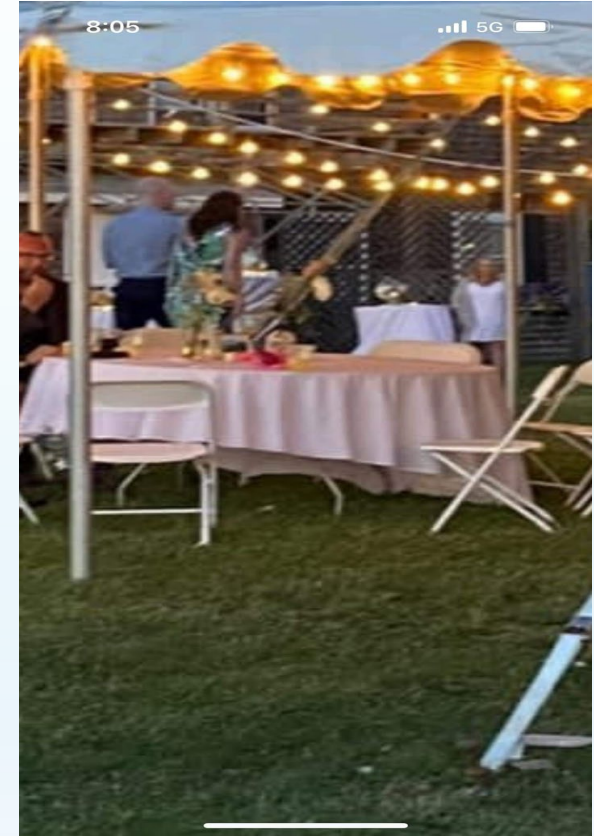


# Attracting Higher-End Clientele when you uplevel your craft

- **Luxury Appeal:** Elevated designs and gourmet catering can attract luxury clients who are willing to spend more for a premium experience. High-end clients often look for distinctive and sophisticated services.
- **Brand Reputation:** By consistently delivering high-quality designs and vendors, your brand reputation will improve, positioning your business as a leader in the luxury wedding market.
- **Unique Offerings:** Specializing in bespoke catering menus and innovative tabletop designs can set you apart from competitors. Unique services are more likely to be noticed and remembered.
- **Industry Recognition:** Being recognized for your exceptional craft can lead to awards and features in wedding magazines and blogs, further enhancing your credibility and visibility. It's all about brand recognition.



# What's wrong here





# Fun Ways to teach your staff

1. Remember the mnemonic *FORKS*. It will help you place the utensils in the correct order and on the proper side of the plate.  
Starting from the left:

- *F* stands for forks.
- *O* stands for the plate. (Just as the *F* is to the left of the *O*, so too are the forks placed to the left of the plate).
  - *r* is a reminder that all the remaining utensils, represented by *K* and *S*, go to the right of the plate.
    - *K* stands for knife, so any knives are set immediately to the right of the plate.
    - *S* is for spoons, so spoons are to the right of the knife or knives.





# Fun Ways to teach your staff

**BMW** Stands for :

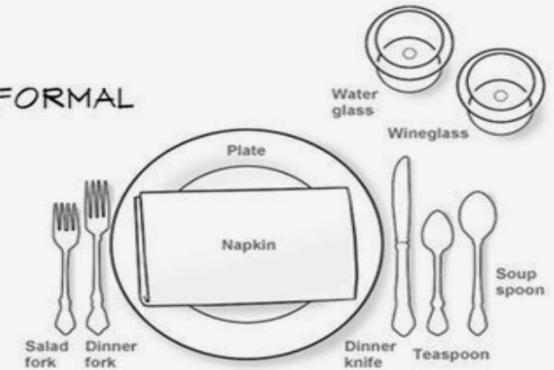
**B** for bread on the left.

**M** for meal in the middle.

**W** for water on the right of your place setting.

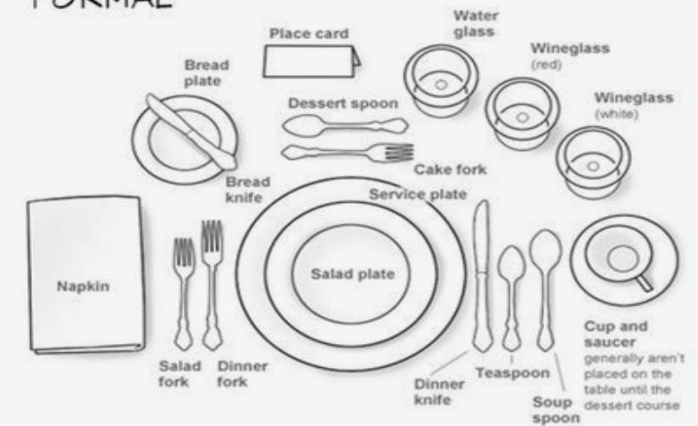
## TABLE SETTING DIAGRAM

### INFORMAL



Utensils are placed one inch from the edge of the table

### FORMAL



Cup and saucer generally aren't placed on the table until the dessert course

# Common mistakes to avoid

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- Linens not fitting properly & or not touching the floor.
- Chargers that are too big for the table leaving no room for anything else.
- Flatware being placed wrong and in the wrong place.
- Glassware not being placed correctly.
- Chairs pushed all the way in.
- Napkins that have wrinkles.



# Quick tips for plated meals

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- Steak knives are ugly- steak should be able to be cut with a butter knife.
- Cut your meat horizontally it's better presentation.
- Don't use dark colored sauces on white China- Brown is not pretty.
- Add Height to your plate, it always leads to wow's.
- Choose the right plate for the meal size.
- Garnish is edible so don't be afraid to use it.









## Food Presentation Matters

- How are you showing that your different?
- Will your guests remember the food you did?
- Is it interactive?
- How are you leaving a lasting impression?
- How will the presentation elevate your craft?







# Family Style Vs Plated

- What's your take?
- Family style takes a lot of landscape away and florals can not really fit unless small.
- Who hates family style more caterer or florists?
- Are the food stations a good thing or a bad thing?
- How are you elevating your craft with current times?





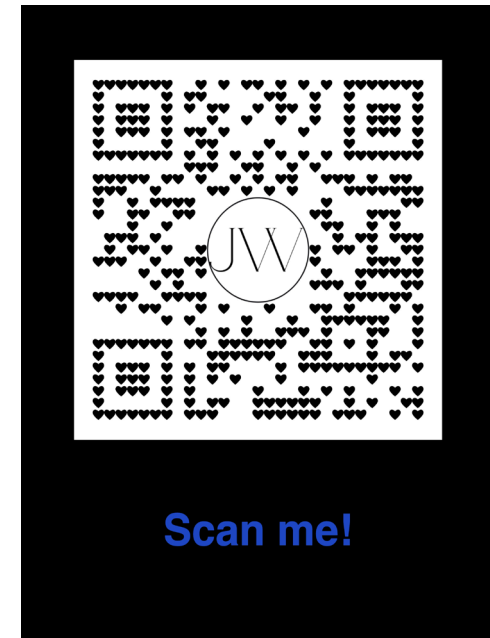


## That takes the cake

- The cake should be centered in the middle of the table.
- Use the bridal party flowers to add texture and depth.
- Make sure the flowers match
- Quick Tip: Do a fake cake & Sheet cakes in back make your life easier.

# Continue the Conversation

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