

Lori airs her pet peeves on etiquette

The pumpkin pie you see today was served at our Thanksgiving dinner last week. I realize we are a bit late to help you make the pie for your Thanksgiving meal, but we thought you might appreciate it for Christmas.

I don't know about you, but my family will eat a pumpkin pie at just about any time. My husband and older son declare it is one of the best breakfast foods available!

A little hint though— if you plan to make the pie in an off season, then stock up on the pure pumpkin at the grocery store now, because you can't always get it in the off season. And remember, you are looking for pure pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling. You want to add fresh cream and your own spices, etc.

Since the recipe was inspired by our Thanksgiving dinner, we thought the column should be as well. We had an interesting discussion about etiquette, manners, table settings, etc at our table. This, of course, is one of my favourite subjects/biggest pet peeves. So, this column is not for most of you, who look after these things very well—it is for the minority who need a little brush-up on some of these topics.

Table settings: the general rule of thumb is that when selecting the proper piece of cutlery to use, you eat from the outside in. Meaning that you use the cutlery furthest from your plate first and work your way towards the centre— on both sides. So, your salad fork is on the outside (assuming you eat salad first), then your dinner fork is closer to the plate and then the dessert fork is the closest to the plate. Your dinner knife should be on the right

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



and the forks on the left. Your dinner knife is also turned with the blade facing in towards the plate.

This comes from the days when dinner knives were more like weapons and the blade was set facing in so that as you reached for the knife, there was no chance of you accidentally cutting your hand. The bread and butter plate is to the left of your fork.

So when you sit down at a round dinner table and all the cutlery and plates and glasses are in a big ring, think carefully before you select yours, because if you select the wrong one, you will throw off the whole table.

I have fond memories of catering weddings where the guests would sit down to eat and all of a sudden, several people at different tables would claim to be missing wine glasses, bread and butter plates, forks, etc. Well, of course, we ran off and fetched immediately, but they were not missing, they were just on the other side of the table because everyone had grabbed for the wrong one when they started eating.

My husband's family uses the older European tradition of seating guests in order of importance. The male host sits at the head of the table.

The female host sits at the foot. Then, the most important female guest sits to the right of the male host. The second most important female sits to the left of the host. The most important male guest sits to the right of the female host and the second most important male guest sits to the left of the female host. And it carries on down the table until you get to the middle.

The importance of the guests changes with the occasion. For example, on someone's birthday, they would occupy one of the most important seats— or if you have an out-of-town traveler, etc. But for the most part, importance is determined by age.

What does R.S.V.P. mean? It is a short form for a French saying "repondez si vous plait". The literal translation is respond if you please. But it really doesn't mean respond if you please; it means respond— right away— the host wants to know if you are coming or not so they can plan accordingly and if you don't respond, you are a jerk.

Who is invited? When you receive an invitation, the host will tell you who is invited. If you get an invitation in the mail addressed to you and your spouse, then that is who is invited. If you get a phone call asking you and your spouse to dinner, then that is who is invited. And you cannot bring anyone else. If the host wanted your children, dog, ex-boyfriend, etc, they would have let you know.

Enough ranting for one column! Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com)

Pumpkin Pie Ingredients

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp mace
- 4 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1-28oz can pure pumpkin
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup 18% cream
- 2 unbaked pie shells

Method

Mix together the brown sugar, salt, cinnamon and mace. Stir in eggs. Add pumpkin, taking care that mixture is well blended. Stir in milk and cream.

Pour filling into two unbaked pie crusts.

Bake at 450 degrees F for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees F and continue baking 25 minutes longer or until filling is firm and crust is browned.

Pie Pastry

Makes one double-crust pie or two single crust pies.

Ingredients

- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 lb shortening
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup ice water (approximately)

Pastry Method

Add salt to flour and blend.

Break up the shortening into the flour with a pastry blender, two knives or your fingers. You should have pea-sized pieces of shortening in the mixture when it is ready for the next step.

Add water very slowly mixing with a fork or your fingers, until pastry comes together.

Roll out pastry until approximately one-quarter inch thick. Cut pastry and line pie plate.



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