Using Napkins

Cloth napkins are used at formal meals, whereas paper napkins are used at informal meals.

## Napkin sizes

Cloth napkins are usually square, and come in different sizes for different uses:

* Drinks and starters – about 12.5 cm x 12.5 cm
* Lunches – a few cm larger
* Dinner – the largest

## Napkin etiquette

Seven basic rules of etiquette when using a napkin:

* If you receive a napkin, use it
* Always wait until the host has unfolded his napkin and placed it on his lap, before doing the same with your own napkin
* If it is a really big napkin, fold it so it fits neatly onto your lap
* Handle it gently and discreetly – don’t shake it out with a lot of fanfare, or use it on your face like a washcloth
* Don’t wait until the food is served before opening it and putting it on your lap
* If you should leave the table during the meal, fold it loosely and place it on your chair or on the table, just left of your plate
* Napkins should go on your lap – don’t stuff them into the front of your shirt so they hang down your chest

## Folding a basic cloth napkin

Classic and simple – the basic napkin folded around cutlery

* Unfold the whole napkin
* Fold it in half – from top to bottom – so the ‘open’ side is closest to you
* Fold it again (so it’s quartered) – from left to right – so the ‘fold’ is on your left, and the ‘open sides’ at the bottom right
* Take the lower right corner of the top layer and fold it back diagonally so the tip goes to the top corner
* Turn the napkin over (the diagonal ‘folding side’ should be at the bottom) so the open corner is to your right
* Fold the right side back ⅓
* Fold the left side back ⅓ too
* Turn it over
* Place the cutlery in the ‘envelope’