

3 Dinner Party Table Settings

1. FORMAL



Look, I'll be honest, I don't know what the official Emily Post-level etiquette is for formal dinner settings.

The only lessons in table décor I've taken came from my grandmothers, a couple of Southern matriarchs who both grew up in tiny houses in the country filled with love but low on money.

Tablecloths and "nice" dishes didn't come out until the holidays, but they made the most of it when the celebration was important.

On those special days, the table setting would look something like this. Wine glass (left) and water goblet (right) were set in the upper right corner of the setting. The knife (facing toward the plate) and large spoon sat to the right of the plate, forks on the left (salad fork on the outside) with the dessert spoon or fork at the top.

I made a pathetic attempt at fan-folding the napkin, but it needed a little more starch and an iron to really stand up to the occasion (see what I did there?). Unfortunately me and the iron only see each other twice a year and today was not one of those days.

It should be noted this setting only works with a table cloth because it's incredibly uncouth (even in the countryside of Alabama) to put the utensils directly on the table!

2. SEMI-FORMAL

For the slightly less formal event, this setting looks classy but doesn't make people feel like they're dining at Downtown Abbey (not that there's anything wrong with that...actually it sounds like a REALLY fun dinner party idea!)

I went with a standard water glass instead of the goblet, triangle folded the napkin and kept the silverware to the three important pieces. I still used a dinner plate, bread plate and salad bowl (I like to keep my food separate) but if you've got a crowded table you might want to remove the bread plate.



3. MODERN/CASUAL



This is more my speed for a great dinner party with friends.

Simple and sweet this setting features three essential utensils, plate, bowl, water glass and wine glass (the water glass really could have been left out because it's really all about the wine glass, but you know, we'll pretend like we drink water, too).

I triangle-folded the napkin, folded the long side up about two inches and wrapped the silverware inside.

If you read the 5 Essentials for Your Crafting Kit, this would be the perfect situation for using some of that leftover ribbon. Napkin rings are expensive, ribbon is cheap and can easily be customized for your special occasion.

I made a pretty crappy bow here but you could do all kinds of designs. For a birthday party, for example, you could use gift ribbon and curl it with scissors.

**Do you have some creative ideas for dinner party place settings?
Give me a shout (author@shannononeil.net) so we can exchange ideas!**