

Preparations ...
The difference between a highly
successful and an average event.

- Ten minutes before you serve you should light the candles. Do this with a lighter so the room doesn't smell of sulfur. Get the pets out of the way if required.
- Put three ice cubes (if used) in the water glasses and fill with water. If you are using bottled water make the ice from the same type of water. Put butter pats on the bread plates.
- Have the lady of the house get everybody to the table. Put an empty garbage can in a convenient spot in the kitchen, for the scraps.
- Pour the first wine. You will have discussed what wines that you are going to serve with your employer. If you are serving a three course meal there may be only one or two wines. If there are five or six courses there may be six or seven wines. The more courses that you have the less wine you pour in the glass. Never mix wines in the glass. Let the person finish the glass they have and then pour from a new bottle.
- While they are eating you should get the next course ready. If there is call buzzer in the dining room have the lady of the house ring it once when the course is almost over and twice for the next course. If there is no buzzer carry the water pitcher and the wine around the table to see how fast they are eating and who needs a refill. Start plating the next course. Potatoes and rice hold their temperature very well. A meat with sauce does also. Vegetables without sauce go cold very fast. You'll have to do this part by instinct. Put the hot plates on a bath towel, they will stay warmer longer.
- Remove the cover and salad plates.
- Plate the next course and serve. Pour the next wine and remove the old wine glass. Check water and butter. Put the flatware in a plastic container filled with warm water, soap and silver polish. Scrap the waste into the empty garbage, do not to run the disposal while the guests are in the house. Rinse the dishes. Put the glassware out of harm's way.
- Repeat as necessary.
- During the main course duck into the living room and remove the glasses and wipe the ashtrays out. Fluff the cushions. The room should look like there has been no one there. Set out the after dinner drinks and glasses. Light/Stoke fire as needed.
- When serving dessert the only things that are on the table are the flatware for the course, the wine glass for the course, water glass, candles and the flowers. Everything else is removed. If there are crumbs from the bread wipe these off with a folded napkin onto a small plate.
- Present the dessert if required. Show it at every corner. Have two of what you are serving with a slice cut from one to show the inside if possible. If it's a slice of something the point goes toward the diner. If its in a bowl, the bowl goes on a plate with a doily.
- If coffee is served at the table put the cups where the knives use to be. The handle will be to toward the right. Make both regular and decaffeinated. Try to have a selection of sweeteners and creamers on a small silver tray that you may pass. Have a boiling pot of water and a tea bag at the ready.
- After the meal is over and they have left the dining room extinguish the candles. Have a small bowl of ice water ready. Put you thumb and forefinger in the cold water and then pinch the wick near the top. The trick is keep the wick from smoking. Dip your fingers in the water between each candle or push the wick into the molten wax.
- Back in the kitchen it is time to start washing the dishes. Fill the pots and pans with water. Put them on the stove and put a tablespoon of dishwasher powder and they wash them selves. If they start to boil turn off the heat. Fill any roasting pans with hot water and soap and let soak. Cover the flat areas of the kitchen with towels and set the dish racks out.
- Make sure that you have plenty of drying towels on hand. A couple of dozen will do. Wash the dishes first. Let them air dry in the racks. If you have dishwasher safe rinse the plates well and load the washer. Don't run it until the guests have left.

- Change the wash and rinse water. I usually have a plastic cup filled with warm water and some liquid soap. This cuts down on the time for filling the sink and I have more hot water to rinse with. The glasses are next. Pour the excess wine down the drain and wash inside the bowl. Watch out for lipstick on the rims. If the rims are very thin you may want to use you finger tips to remove any muck form the sides of the bowl. Rinse well and place bowl side up out of the way and let the water drip off.
- The flatware should have soaked enough now and can be washed. Never use a scouring pad on flatware. Wash each piece and place it in some fresh hot water. Rinse it off again and lay it on the towels. Separate and count it to make sure that all the pieces are there.
- The plates should be dry and can be put away. Dry the flatware next and return to it's chest or drawers.
- Tidy the kitchen. Remove the wet towels. Put the dish racks away. Move the garbage can out of the way. Open the window and get some fresh air. If possible change uniforms. This will get you out of the kitchen, let you stretch and use the restroom.
- The glasses are last. Have plenty of towels ready. Drape a towel over one of your hands, palm up. The longer side will hang over your little finger. Tip out the excess water. Grab the stem of the glass with the towel The towel is now hanging down from the bottom of the bowl and over the base. Gather the bottom of the towel and gently insert it into the glass. Your thumb and little finger will be outside the glass and the other fingers inside. Hold the glass horizontally. Dry the stem and base of the glass. Rotate the glass and dry the bowl.
- The rest of the evening you will have to play by ear. If the guests leave one by one be at the door to help them with their coats. Usually when this happens the lady of the house will let you go for the night. After all the guests have left you tidy up the living room again and at least rinse out the cups and glasses before going to bed. If they all leave at once, try and get everything washed that night. Take out the trash. Soak the linens overnight in the washer. I try to get all the washing up done that night unless it gets to be too late (after 2 A.M.). Get everything out of the public rooms and into the kitchen. Don't neglect your morning duties but try to get as much cleaning done as possible.

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