

## SECTION 10.3 SERVICE STYLES, SET-UPS, AND STAFF

The style an operation uses to serve its guests can very well define how people come to think of that operation as a whole. In fact, sometimes the service style is more of a factor in determining the identity of an operation than the food itself. For example, customers might be able to order a hamburger at a fine-dining establishment or a local diner, and although there might be a difference in the quality of the burger, their takeaway from the experience may well have more to do with the style in which they were served the burger than the burger itself. Was it on a plastic platter or a silver platter? Were they using linen or paper napkins? Was the server dressed in formal or casual attire? These are just a few of the many factors that work toward defining a restaurant and foodservice operation's service style.

This section discusses contemporary and traditional service styles and the various types of table set-ups used in traditional service styles, as well as the different roles and responsibilities service staff members have.

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### Study Questions

After studying Section 10.3, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the contemporary style of service?
  - What is the traditional style of service?
  - What are the traditional utensils and table set-ups?
  - What are traditional staff responsibilities?
  - What are standard service tools and stations?
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# Contemporary Service

Quick-service is an easy and fast way to dine and typically involves no servers. Instead, guests help themselves to food set up in food bars or order at a counter. Other forms of quick-service include drive-through service, buffet service, carry-out service, vending service, and cafeteria service.

# Traditional Service

Traditional service style reflects four main influences: American, French, English, and Russian. Each service style varies depending on the menu, theme, and décor. See Figure 10.13 for examples of table settings for each.

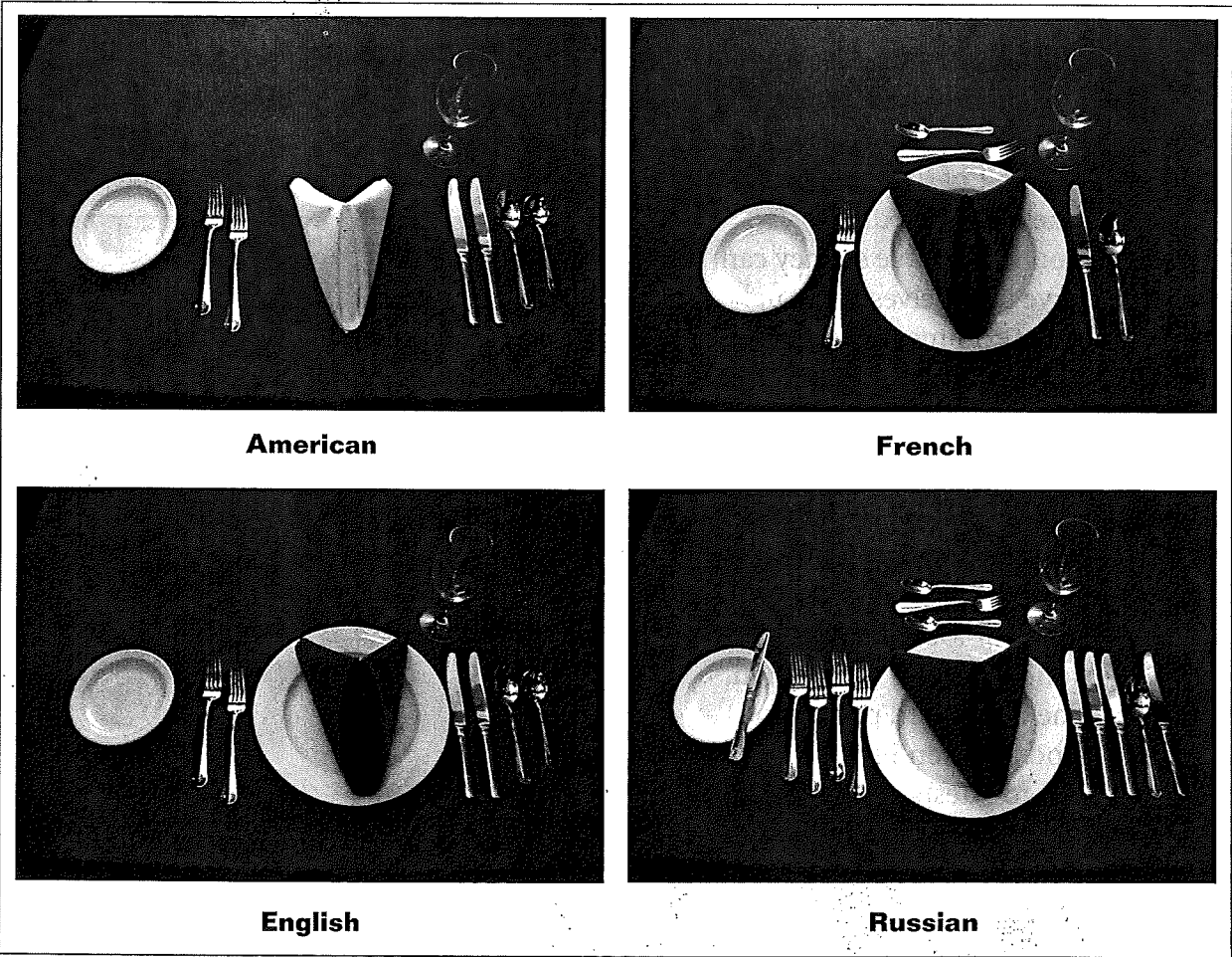


Figure 10.13: American, French, English, and Russian table settings.

**American service:** Food is arranged on plates in the kitchen by cooks and brought directly to the guests' table by the server. The meal is complete on one plate. American service has quickly been adopted by many operations because it is one of the easiest service styles and uses the fewest tools and utensils.

**French service:** This style is typically considered the most elegant, but it is very expensive. Servers present the food to guests from a tableside cart, called a *guéridon*. A **guéridon** (gay-ree-DAH-N) holds food or liquid items that will be served to guests, as well as serving dishes and other utensils the servers and guests may need. The food is kept hot by a warming unit in the cart, called a *rechaud* (ray-SHOW). The finishing touch to the food is done tableside to create a memorable moment for the customer. Tableside cooking is the art of showing great craftsmanship in both culinary arts and service skills. This type of service is expensive to implement because of the cost of the carts and the additional skills required of the servers

**English service:** Also known as **family-style dining**, English service is the simplest and least expensive. In English service, bowls and platters of food are placed on the table, and a seated host or hostess places the food onto plates. The host of the table then serves the meal on the plates for the other diners, or diners pass the dishes around the table so they can serve themselves. Although not as common as American service, family-style dining is gaining in popularity due to its simplicity.

**Russian service:** This style is the most formal service style. All food preparation is done in the kitchen. The bowls and platters of food are then brought on a cart to guests at the table. Servers hold the bowls and platters as they serve the food to each guest (see Figure 10.14). Service platters hold food for tables of up to eight guests but are very heavy (in previous times they were made of pure silver) and very hot. Servers need to go through



**Figure 10.14:** The server is illustrating the Russian style of service.

substantial training before being able to serve Russian style. The server is essentially in charge of making the plate look perfect. Not surprisingly, crowding customers during service is a problem in Russian service.

[on the job]

### Table Settings

Every operation has its way of setting a table. However, virtually all the place settings mentioned in this section contain several items. In a traditional table setting, the server places the napkin in the middle of the setting; the dinner knife to the right of the setting with its sharp edge facing the middle of the setting; a spoon to the right of the knife; the dinner fork to the left of the setting; a water or wine glass above the knife point on the right side of the setting; and a bread plate to the left, next to the fork.

Although many restaurants use this traditional setting, other full-service operations use a specific place setting that matches its service style. For example, the French, Russian, and American service styles all have different place settings. Refer to Figure 10.13 to see the various settings.

Many of the utensils used in the more unique service styles and settings are also found in the traditional service setting. Though differences may be small, it is important to recognize the various table settings available and to use the most appropriate one.

## Traditional Service Set-ups

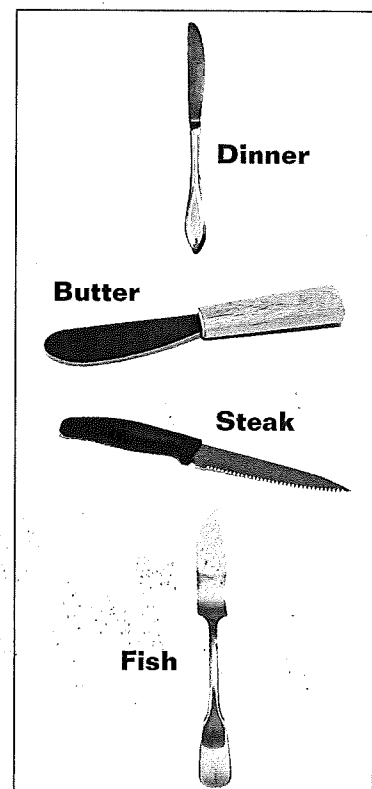
Understanding the many types of silverware that an operation uses is very important. Use specific utensils for certain foods and set each table accordingly. The variety of knives, forks, and spoons used in any given operation can be huge. Some of the most necessary and widely-used utensils are discussed in this section.

The basic knives used most often when dining include the following:

- **Dinner knife:** This is used for all entrées and main courses.
- **Butter knife:** This is smaller than a dinner knife and used to butter bread or cut breakfast foods, fruit, and other softer foods.
- **Steak knife:** This is used to cut beef.
- **Fish knife:** This is used only to filet and cut fish.

Present fish and steak knives to guests who order those specific dishes.

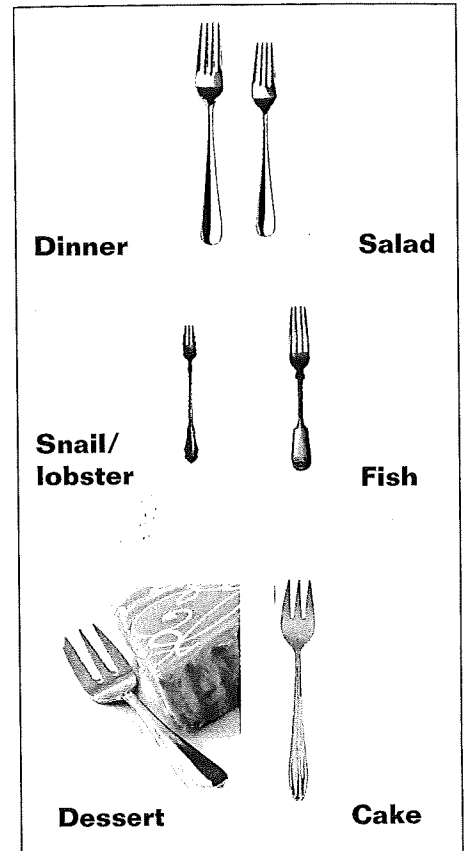
See Figure 10.15 for pictures of various types of knives.



**Figure 10.15:** Various types of knives.

Use a number of different forks when dining in a full-service operation, including the following:

- **Dinner fork:** This is used to eat main courses, vegetables, and pasta.
- **Salad fork:** This is smaller than the dinner fork and used for salads, appetizers, desserts, fruit, smoked fish, and other delicate foods.
- **Fish fork:** This is used only for eating fish.
- **Snail fork and lobster fork:** These are small, thin forks used only to eat those shellfish. A small, round **oyster fork** is served with both oysters and clams.
- **Cake fork:** This has only three tines and is used to eat cakes, tortes, pies, and pastries.
- **Dessert forks:** These often have a broader tine and can cut through a soft cake or other pastry like a knife.



**Figure 10.16:** Various types of forks.

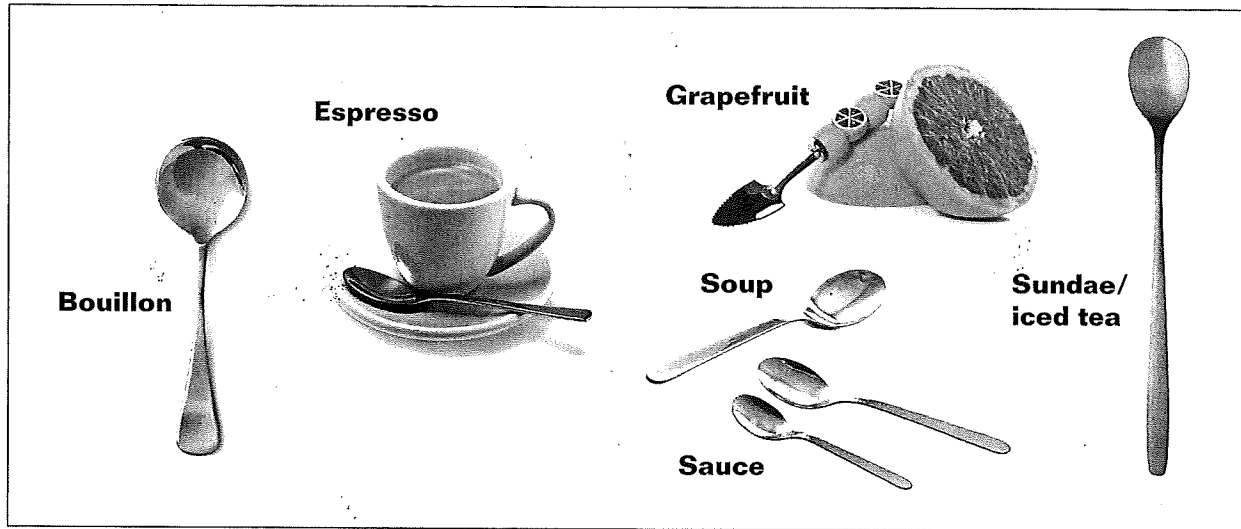
See Figure 10.16 for pictures of various types of forks.

Just as with knives and forks, different spoons match different courses and foods:

- The two types of soup spoons are the bouillon spoon and soup spoon. Use a **bouillon spoon** for clear soups or broths. The bouillon spoon has a rounded spoon head. Use a larger **soup spoon**, with an oval spoon head, for cream soups and long strands of pasta.
- Use a **sauce spoon** with dishes served with sauce on the side.
- Use a **coffee spoon**, which is smaller than a soup or sauce spoon, not only with coffee, tea, and hot chocolate, but also for fruit cocktails and ice cream.
- An **espresso spoon**, or **demitasse spoon**, is much smaller than a coffee spoon and matches small espresso cups.

- The **sundae** or **iced tea spoon** has an especially long handle to dip into a deep sundae or stir large glasses of tea.
- A **grapefruit spoon** has jagged edges for carving into the grapefruit.

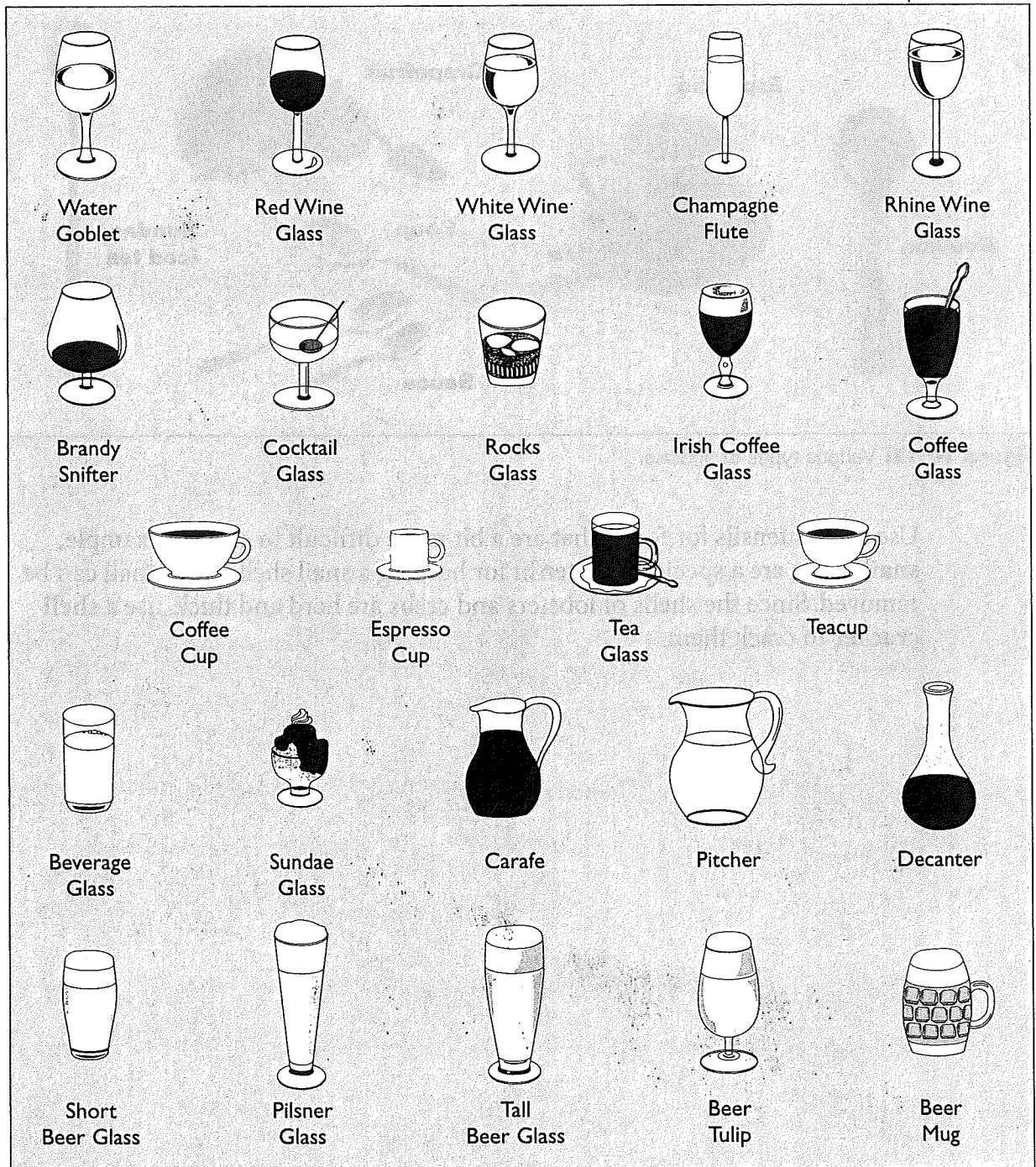
See Figure 10.17 for pictures of various types of spoons.



**Figure 10.17:** Various types of spoons.

Use other utensils for foods that are a bit more difficult to eat. For example, **snail tongs** are a specialized utensil for holding a snail shell so the snail can be removed. Since the shells of lobsters and crabs are hard and thick, use a **shell cracker** to crack them.

**Drinking glasses** (including mugs and cups) come in many shapes and sizes and often use either clear glass, plastic, or a thicker, solid ceramic. Generally, if a drink is cold, like soda, water, or iced tea, it will come in a clear glass. Serve hot drinks, like coffee, tea, and cocoa, in cups or **mugs** made from thick glass, or ceramic. This helps drinks stay hot. See Figure 10.18 for various types of drinking glasses.

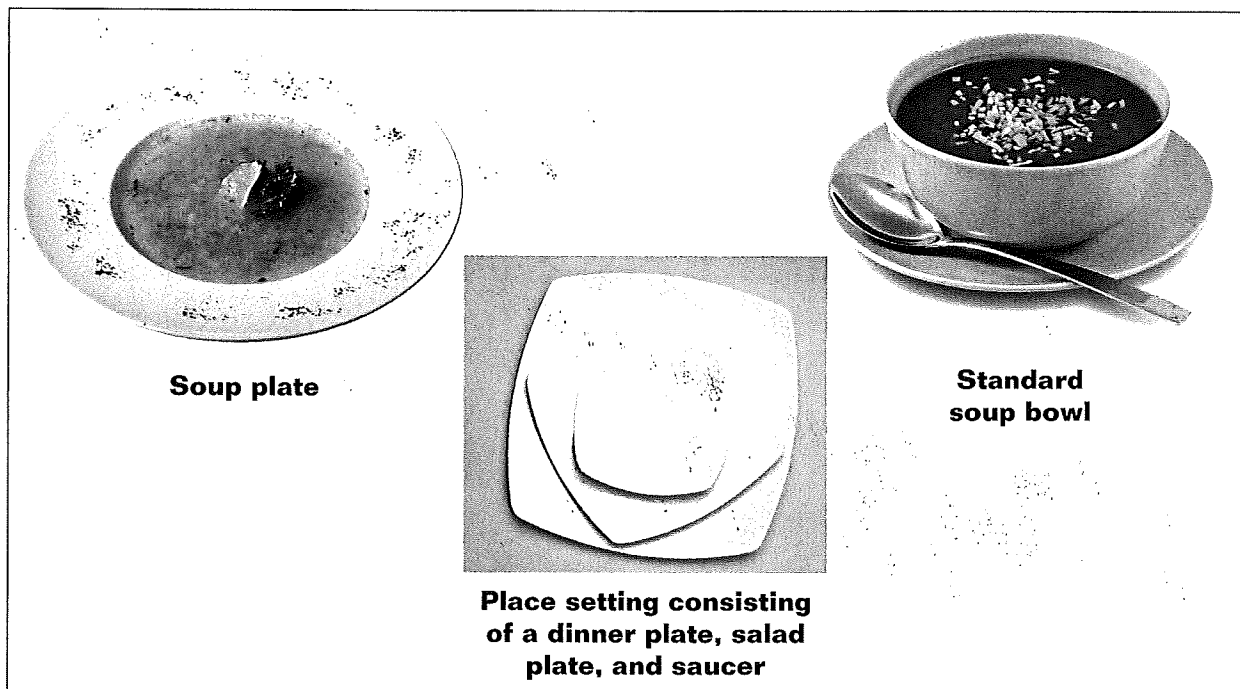


**Figure 10.18:** Different types of glassware.

Perhaps the most important part of the table setting is the **china**, which is also referred to as dinnerware. Like glasses, cups, and silverware, plates have adapted to fit the various types of food:

- An **underliner plate**, or **charger**, is a larger decorative plate used underneath the plate on which food is served.
- A **dinner plate** is 10 to 12 inches across. Use dinner plates for all kinds of main courses and meals and as a base plate for smaller plates and bowls.
- A **salad plate** is much smaller than a dinner plate (7 or 8 inches across). Use it for desserts and appetizers as well as salads and as a base plate for gravy and sauce boats and sundae glasses that are served with a napkin or paper doily to prevent slipping.
- Use a **bread and butter plate** for more than bread and butter. Use it as a base for jams and other condiments that may spill easily.
- A **soup plate** is flat around the edge but has a dip in the center to hold soup, pastas, and even mussels, shrimp, and clams.
- A **soup bowl** is smaller and deeper with no flat edge, and unlike the soup plate, is used only for soup. Soup bowls or cups are sometimes equipped with lids (individual tureen) or a single handle for easier service. Serve these bowls and cups on **chargers**, service plates that don't directly touch the food.
- A **monkey dish** is a shallow bowl, often used for relishes or dipping sauces.

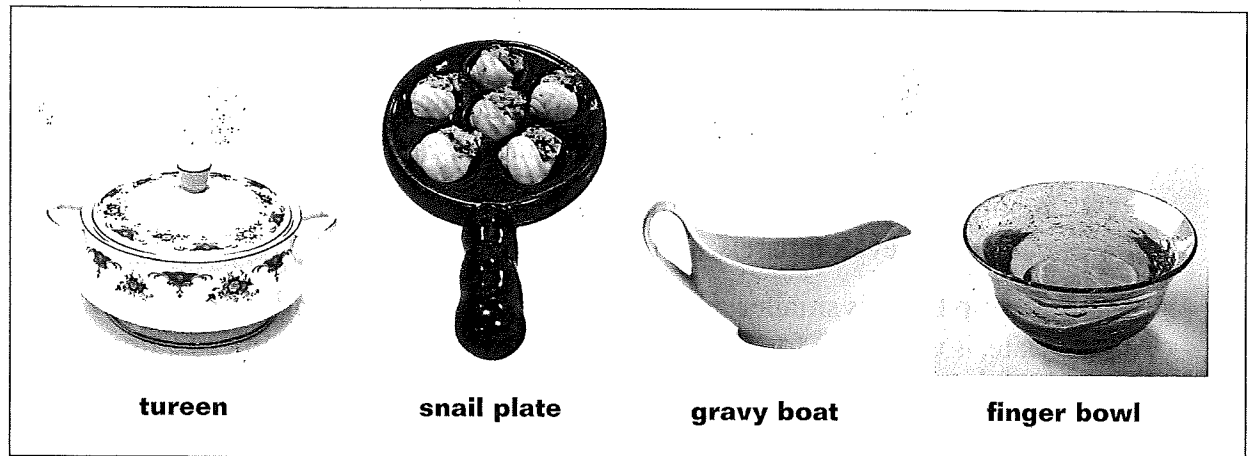
See Figure 10.19 for pictures of various types of plates.



**Figure 10.19:** Sample dinnerware.



Though the pieces mentioned previously can be served with many foods, a number of china pieces are used for only one purpose. For example, use a **tureen**, a large covered bowl, to serve soup for up to eight people. The **snail plate** has six or twelve indentions for holding snails. A **gravy boat** has a special lip or spout to prevent spilling when pouring the sauce onto the plate. Use a **finger bowl**, a small bowl filled with water and often a citrus fruit slice (lemon or orange), to clean the fingers after eating, especially with messier meals such as shellfish and ribs. See Figure 10.20 for pictures of various types of one-purpose china.



**Figure 10.20:** Various types of china.

[fast fact]

**Did You Know...?**

The fork has origins dating back to the ancient Greeks more than 2,000 years ago. They were larger than the forks we use today and had two tines rather than three or four tines, which are more common today.

## ***Traditional Service Staff Responsibilities***

Many large, traditional, full-service restaurants have a formal service organization—a group of servers who perform service-related tasks. Every one of the servers in the front of the house works together to ensure that guests enjoy themselves.

One of the people involved in the formal service organization is the **maitre d'hotel** (MAY-tra doe-TEL), who is responsible for the overall management of service. The **headwaiter** is responsible for service in a particular area, such as a banquet room or dining room, while the **captain** is responsible for a server area of about 15 to 25 guests, and is assisted by the front waiter or an apprentice. Working with the captain, the **front waiter** has only 1 to 2 years of experience. An **apprentice** is a server in training.

In less formal service structures, a **floor manager** might run the dining room. The floor manager is in charge of the operation during a particular shift and supervises a team of servers. Each individual **server** is responsible for a specific section of the dining room. **Food runners** are sometimes employed to assist with bringing food from the kitchen to the tables. **Busers** assist with the cleaning up and resetting of tables.

No matter how an operation organizes its employees, it is important that each person know their roles and their specific tasks and responsibilities.