

## Dining etiquette

Small talk is an invaluable tool for breaking the ice at a business meal. Good topics to open the conversation include vacations; sports; a new house or apartment; and the latest play, movie, or bestseller. Avoid discussing politics and other controversial issues. Once your guests are at ease, you can address business matters.

- ◆ Be careful about alcohol consumption. Don't feel pressured to drink if you don't wish to do so.
- ◆ If you are a guest, wait for your host to begin eating before starting yourself.
- ◆ If toasts are part of the occasion
  - go well prepared if you are to make the toast
  - remain seated and don't drink to the toast if *you* are being toasted