

# Elegance at the *table..*

*“Dining is and always was a great artistic opportunity.”*

*— Frank Lloyd Wright*

Contrary to what we might be led to believe, elegance at the table is not about stiff rules or performing perfection. Etiquette and manners of course have their place and importance.. But true French-style elegance is really more about ease and intention than wooden formalities...

Whether I am eating with my family, or hosting guests, I try to bring a sense of uncomplicated care to my dinner table, such as adding one small touch that makes it feel more considered.

Even very simple little gestures, like placing a napkin in the plate or pouring water into a pretty glass can shift the tone of a meal entirely! It is not about impressing anyone. It is about creating an atmosphere that feels calm and uplifting.

I often think of my aunt and uncle, who used their silver cutlery and stemmed glasses every day, just for the two of them. It was not extravagant, but their quiet way of honouring the daily moment.

These small habits don't take much time, but they can transform the rhythm of daily life!



# Elegant Table Tips and Checklist

■ Clear the table before setting.. even if it's just a small space for you.

■ Use real dishes or your 'special' ones (avoid plastic or chipped plates) and even stemmed glasses (even with children... It teaches care!).

■ For French-style etiquette, we place the napkin in the plate at lunch, or to the left for dinner, especially if soup is served.

■ Lay cutlery thoughtfully.. In French tradition, forks may be placed facing down, not for display, but from the natural way of dining.

■ Choose a seat and sit down fully.... do not hover or eat standing up, or keep your phone with you. Let it feel like a pause and a time to be present.

■ Add some small touches of delight... It can be as simple as putting on some gentle music, lighting a candle, or having fresh herbs for your dish..

■ Use a pretty tablecloth and linen napkins, as this instantly elevates a table in a beautiful simple way..

■ If it is a family dinner, or dinner with your partner, call others to the table with kindness and presence (not shouting from another room). Or have your children do the same. By announcing meals with respect, this creates a warm, elevated home atmosphere.



*End with gratitude. A smile, a thank you, or a simple clearing of the space in silence.*



# *Elegance Prompts*

These prompts are here to help you explore what elegance at the table means to you. Not as a performance of manners and skills, but as a way of creating calm, care, and deeper connection in daily life.

1. What were meals like in my home growing up, and how has that shaped the way I approach food and the table now?
2. How do I usually feel when I eat? Am I rushed, distracted, present? How would I like to feel instead?
3. What if elegance is not something I have to prove to others, but simply the way I treat myself and those around me, even in small everyday moments? What might that look like?
4. What is one simple change I could make (in my space, my mindset, or my habits) to bring more consideration and enjoyment to daily meals?

I used to think elegance meant more effort.... but over time, I realised it is in fact the opposite. It simplified my home and brought in more energy, lightness, and joy. I hope this for you too!

***Elegance in Action:*** *This week, try preparing one solo meal (it does not matter which, it can be breakfast or dinner, as you wish), with elegance and presence. Even when we are alone, we deserve beauty! Prepare something simple, and set the table for yourself as if you were hosting someone you love and care about.*

### ***Try this:***

- *Choose a time where you won't be interrupted*
- *Set the table with intention (plate, napkin, glass, cutlery)..*
- *Add one element of beauty (music, a nice table linen, a candle)*
- *Eat slowly, with no distractions and no phone checking or scrolling*
- *Take a quiet moment before or after the meal just to breathe*

*Remember... elegance is not about complexity, it's about attention to details and care. And the care you bring to the act of nourishing yourself can play a bigger role in shaping the mood of our home, and our day, than we may realize.*

