Basic Napkin Folding Techniques

A VISUAL GUIDE FOR F&B LEARNERS



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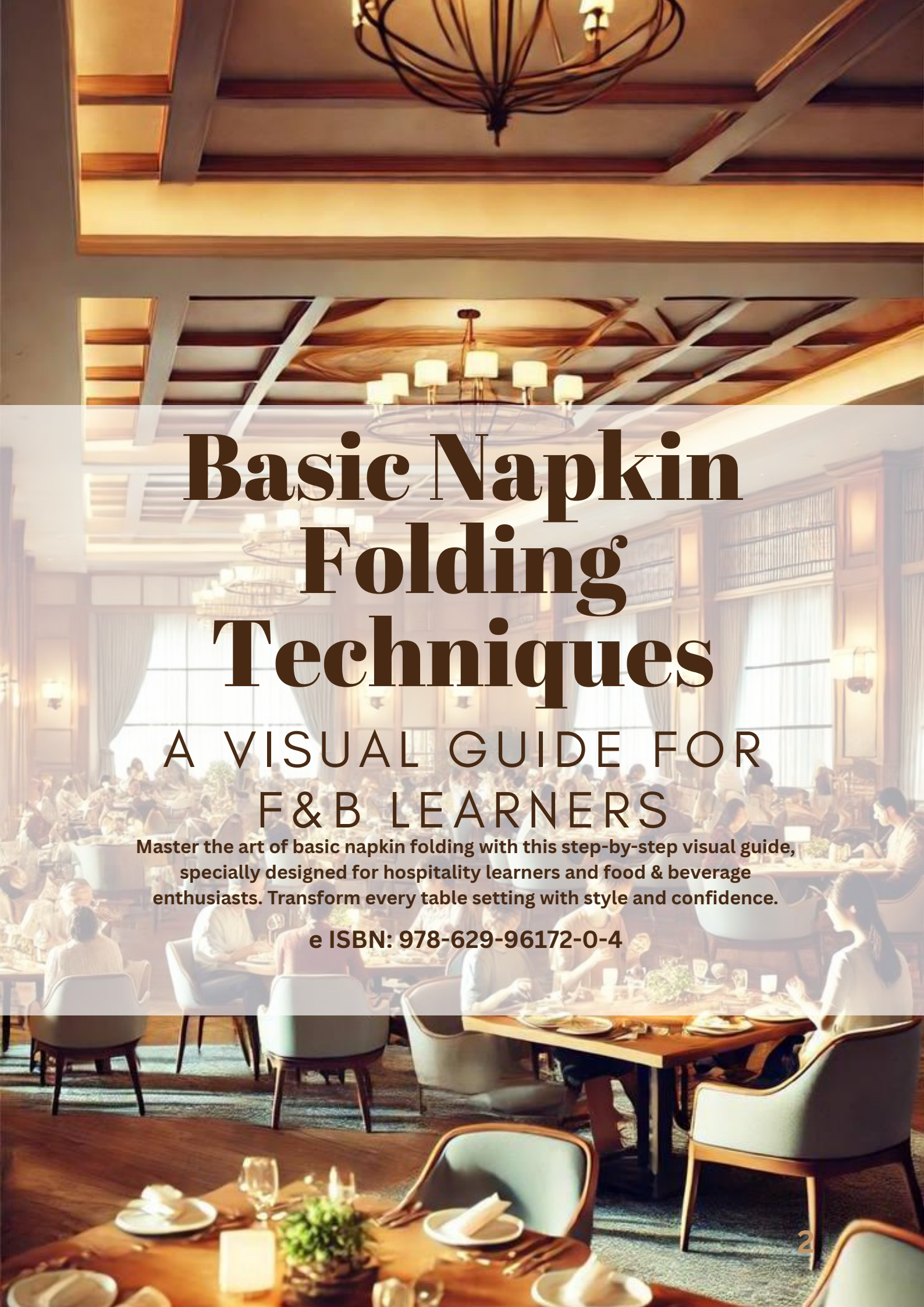

Basic Napkin Folding Techniques

A VISUAL GUIDE FOR F&B LEARNERS

Master the art of basic napkin folding with this step-by-step visual guide, specially designed for hospitality learners and food & beverage enthusiasts. Transform every table setting with style and confidence.

e ISBN: 978-629-96172-0-4

LANGKAWI TOURISM ACADEMY @KOLEJ KOMUNITI LANGKAWI
FIRST PRINTING 2025

TITLE: **BASIC NAPKIN FOLDING TECHNIQUES: A VISUAL GUIDE FOR F&B LEARNERS**
e ISBN: 978-629-96172-0-4

Published by:

LANGKAWI TOURISM ACADEMY@KOLEJ KOMUNITI LANGKAWI
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Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Malaysia

eISBN 978-629-96172-0-4

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The e-book titled; **BASIC NAPKIN FOLDING TECHNIQUES: A VISUAL GUIDE FOR F&B LEARNERS** is published online in 2025.

This e-book is the original work of Nor Zairina Binti Zainal Abidin, Izzati Firdiana Binti Kamarol Bahrin, and Nurfarah Adilah Binti Zuppri.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



1.0 Introduction.....7
- 1.1 Purpose of the e-book
- 1.2 Importance of napkin folding in hospitality
- 1.3 Tips before you start folding

2.0 Materials and preparation.....9
- 2.1 Types of napkins suitable for folding
- 2.2 Basic folding techniques
- 2.3 Hygiene and handling practices
- 2.4 Key skills of professional napkin folding
- 2.5 Key knowledge of professional napkin folding

3.0 Mise en place.....12
- 3.1 Preparation before you start
- 3.2 Work area setup
- 3.3 Preparation steps

4.0 Napkin folding: step by step tutorial.....13
- 4.1 Style 1: Artichoke AR
- 4.2 Style 2: Bread Basket 1 AR
- 4.3 Style 3: Bread Basket 2 AR
- 4.4 Style 4: Pocket Cutleries
- 4.5 Style 5: Water Pitcher
- 4.6 Style 6: Pyramid AR
- 4.7 Style 7: Bishop Hat AR
- 4.8 Style 8: Candle

5.0 Closing remarks.....52

6.0 References.....53



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE E-BOOK

This e-book is designed as a foundational guide to napkin folding for hospitality students and food & beverage service trainees. It offers step-by-step instructions and visual references for 8 elegant yet basic napkin designs commonly used in hotels, restaurants, and banquet settings.

Whether you're preparing for buffet service, fine dining, or a themed event, mastering these folds will help enhance your table presentation and elevate the guest experience. Each fold is presented in a clear, learner-friendly format to build confidence and precision.

To further enrich the learning experience, selected tutorials in this e-book are enhanced with Augmented Reality (AR) tools. These AR features allow learners to visualize the folding process in 3D, providing a more interactive, immersive, and effective way to understand each step in real time.

This integration of traditional instruction with digital innovation supports hands-on learning and prepares students for the evolving demands of modern hospitality service.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF NAPKIN FOLDING IN HOSPITALITY

Napkin folding is more than just a decorative skill—it reflects attention to detail, elegance, and professionalism in table setting. A well-folded napkin:

- Enhances the dining experience.
- Complements the overall table design and theme.
- Signals quality service and care.
- Demonstrates a server's or host's competence in presentation skills.

In the competitive world of hospitality, mastering the art of napkin folding can help create lasting impressions on guests.

1.3 TIPS BEFORE YOU START FOLDING

Before practicing, keep in mind these important tips:

- Use a clean, wrinkle-free napkin. Iron or press the napkin beforehand if necessary.
- Fold on a flat, clean surface with enough space.
- Practice each fold slowly, following the diagrams and photo steps.
- Maintain symmetry—a professional fold is balanced and sharp.
- Repeat each fold multiple times to build muscle memory and confidence.

2.0 MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

2.1 TYPES OF NAPKINS SUITABLE FOR FOLDING

The best napkin folds are achieved using fabric napkins rather than disposable ones. Here are some ideal choices:

- Cotton – Easy to fold, holds shape well.
- Polyester blends – Less prone to wrinkling.
- Damask – Elegant, textured, suitable for formal setups.
- Linen – High-end look but needs precise folding and maintenance.

Napkins should be square (e.g., 40cm x 40cm) and moderately stiff to hold the shapes well.

2.2 BASIC FOLDING TECHNIQUES

Before diving into complex designs, practice these fundamental folds:

- Half fold (vertical and horizontal)
- Diagonal fold
- Tri-fold
- Envelope fold

These techniques are the building blocks for more advanced shapes like the Bishop's Hat or Artichoke.

2.3 HYGIENE AND HANDLING PRACTICES

In hospitality, hygiene is essential. Follow these guidelines:

- Always wash hands before handling napkins.
- Use sanitized surfaces when folding.
- Avoid placing folded napkins directly on the floor or dirty surfaces.
- Napkins should be laundered, ironed, and stored in a clean, dry area.
- If folding well in advance, store folded napkins in covered trays or containers to avoid dust and contamination.

2.4 KEY SKILLS OF PROFESSIONAL NAPKIN FOLDING

TECHNICAL SKILLS

PRECISION & NEATNESS

Ability to create clean, symmetrical folds with sharp edges.

FABRIC HANDLING

Understanding different types of napkin materials (cotton, linen, polyester) and how they hold shapes.

SPEED & EFFICIENCY

Ability to fold multiple napkins quickly while maintaining consistency.



COTTON



LINEN



POLYESTER

2.5 KEY KNOWLEDGE OF PROFESSIONAL NAPKIN FOLDING

KNOWLEDGE

THEME & AESTHETIC

Matching napkin folds to themes, color schemes, and occasions.

TABLE SETTING ETIQUETTE

Understanding how napkins complement different table settings (formal, casual, banquet, wedding).

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Knowing how napkin presentation varies across different cultures and traditions.



FORMAL DINING



CASUAL DINING



WEDDING DINING



3.0 MISE EN PLACE

3.1 PREPARATION BEFORE YOU START

Before folding napkins, it's important to prepare everything you need. This includes clean, ironed napkins and a tidy, flat surface to work on. Proper preparation helps you fold faster and more neatly.

Get any decorations ready too—like napkin rings or ribbons—so you won't need to stop halfway. A well-organized setup also keeps things hygienic and makes the table look more professional and attractive.

3.2 WORK AREA SETUP

- Ensure the work surface is free from dust, water, or any debris.
- Arrange napkins in stack for easy access.
- Have enough space to fold napkins without crumpling them.

3.3 PREPARATION STEPS

- Check napkins: ensure they are clean, wrinkle free, and properly ironed
- Choose the folding style: based on the table setting theme or event
- Practice basic folds: if necessary, practice before setting up multiple napkins



4.0 NAPKIN FOLDING

STEP BY STEP

TUTORIALS



4.1 STYLE 1

ARTICHOKE

Scan the QR code or click the link below to access the AR tool

SCAN HERE

URL: https://flowcode.com/p/exB5ufJZH2

STYLE 1: ARTICHOKE

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/EfHb

STEP 1

Start with a square napkin



STEP 2

Fold all four corners into the center



STEP 3

Repeat the corner fold.



STYLE 1: ARTICHOKE

STEP 4

Flip the napkin



STEP 5

Once again fold each corner to the center



STEP 6

Fold each corner to the center again



STYLE 1: ARTICHOKE

STEP 7

Once all 4 corners are folded to the center, hold down the center where all the corners meet with your finger



STEP 8

Next reach under each corner and pull the each corner out from underneath



STEP 9

Keep reaching underneath and pulling the corners out upward while pressing



STYLE 1: ARTICHOKE

STEP 10

Keep reaching underneath and pulling the corners out upward while pressing



STEP 11

To make the corners up nicely. gently give each corner a tug upward while still pressing down in the center



STEP 12

Final product





4.2 STYLE 2

BREAD BASKET 1

Scan the QR code or click the link below to access the AR tool

SCAN HERE

URL: https://flowcode.com/p/exB5z2RLwt

STYLE 2:
BREAD BASKET 1

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/cgWc

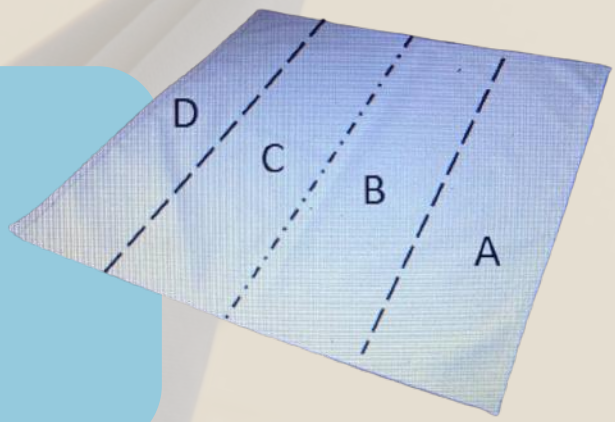
STEP 1

Take a napkin and place one edge in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up



STEP 2

Divide the napkin in 4 sections



STEP 3

Fold A down in half



STYLE 2:
BREAD BASKET 1

STEP 4

Fold bottom edge up to the center.



STEP 5

Fold D up in half



STEP 6

Fold edge down to the center



STYLE 2:
BREAD BASKET 1

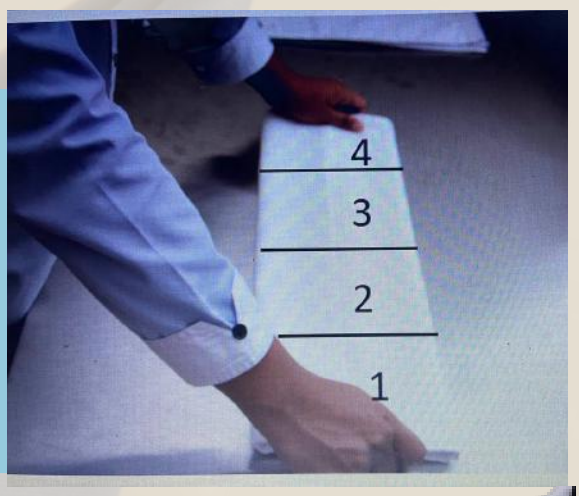
STEP 7

Hold and flip



STEP 8

Visualize 4 sections



STEP 9

Fold 1 on 2



STYLE 2:
BREAD BASKET 1

STEP 10

Fold 4 on 3



STEP 11

Hold and flip



STEP 12

Final product





4.3 STYLE 3

BREAD BASKET 2

Scan the QR code or click the link below to access the AR tool

SCAN HERE

URL: https://flowcode.com/p/exB5z2RLwt

STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/cgWc

STEP 1

Lay the napkin flat on a clean surface with the right side facing down.



STEP 2

Fold the bottom edge upward to meet the top edge.



STEP 3

Fold the napkin in half vertically (right edge to left edge) to create a smaller square.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 4

Open up the top layer and fold the top right corner diagonally toward the bottom left corner to create a triangle.



STEP 5

Repeat by folding the bottom left corner diagonally toward the top right to form an “X” shape with two triangle flaps.



STEP 6

Flip the napkin over carefully.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 7

Fold the bottom right corner diagonally up to the center.



STEP 8

You should now have a smaller square with all corners folded inward.



STEP 9

Hold the center down, and gently pull out the flaps from underneath the napkin, one by one.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 10

Gently lift one corner flap and fold it outward, away from the center.



STEP 11

Repeat for the other three corner flaps. You should now have four outward-facing corners.



STEP 12

Turn the napkin over carefully, keeping the shape intact.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 13

Locate the triangular flaps hidden underneath. Gently pull them outward one at a time.



STEP 14

Continue pulling the flaps to form layered petals or edges of the “basket.”



STEP 15

Gently flip the napkin over to the reverse side, keeping all folds in place.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 16

Lift one corner flap and fold it outward to start shaping the “petal” or side wall of the basket.



STEP 17

Tuck in any uneven folds under the base to maintain the basket’s shape.



STEP 18

Tuck the small triangle flaps from underneath to form a secure base, helping the basket hold its shape.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 19

Flip the napkin over carefully, keeping the folded structure intact. You should now see four tucked corners from the previous step.



STEP 20

Gently pull out the small triangular flaps hidden beneath each corner—one at a time. These will form soft outward curves that define the decorative edges of the basket.



STEP 21

Gently flip the napkin over again, keeping the basket shape intact. The folded side should now be facing up again.



STYLE 3:
BREAD BASKET 2

STEP 22

Lift and gently open up the four corner flaps one by one to form the basket “walls.” These will rise and frame the inside of the basket.



STEP 23

Tuck the outer corner tips gently underneath the napkin to secure the walls and form a rounded shape.



STEP 24

Adjust the folds and edges of the basket so that it looks symmetrical and holds its form neatly.

Final product







4.4 STYLE 4

POCKET CUTLERIES

STYLE 4:
POCKET CUTLERIES

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/Q9MH

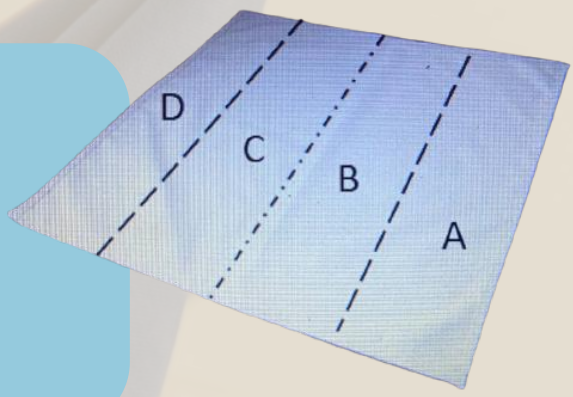
STEP 1

Take a napkin and place one edge in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up



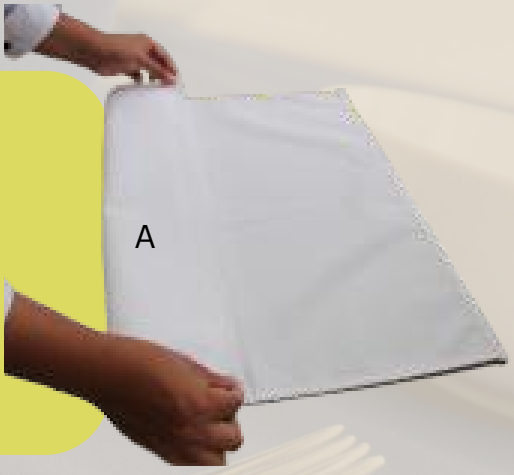
STEP 2

Divide the napkin in 4 sections.



STEP 3

Fold down section A, on section B



STYLE 4: POCKET CUTLERIES

STEP 4

Fold up section D on section B



STEP 5

Fold top layer back twice (1 thumb)



STEP 6

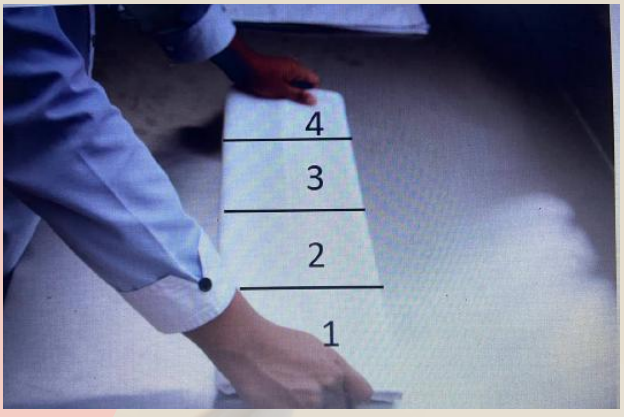
Hold and flip napkin



STYLE 4:
POCKET CUTLERIES

STEP 7

Visualize 4 sections



STEP 8

Fold 1 on 2



STEP 9

Fold 4 on 3



STYLE 4:
POCKET CUTLERIES

STEP 10

Hold and flip



STEP 11

Check folding by placing one hand in. The napkin should cover half the palm



STEP 12

Final product





4.5 STYLE 5

WATER PITCHER

STYLE 5:
WATER PITCHER

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/rPcL

STEP 1

Take a napkin and place 1 corner in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up



STEP 2

Hold bottom corner, and fold it up (until top corner)

Tips: Always press on fold, to maintain shape



STEP 3

Fold top layer back twice (1 thumb)



1 thumb

STYLE 5:
WATER PITCHER

STEP 4

Wrap napkin around pitcher.



STEP 5

and tie above handle



STEP 6

final product





4.6 STYLE 6

PYRAMID

Scan the QR code or click the link below to access the AR tool

SCAN HERE

URL: https://flowcode.com/p/exBkBltwgN

STYLE 6: PYRAMID

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/ttkf

STEP 1

Take a napkin and place 1 corner in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up



STEP 2

Hold top corner, and fold it up (until top corner)

Tips: Always press on fold, to maintain shape



STEP 3

Take right and left corner and fold up (until bottom corner)



STYLE 6: PYRAMID

STEP 4

Flip the napkin



STEP 5

Take top corner, and fold down



STEP 6

Hold right and left corner



STYLE 6: PYRAMID

STEP 7

Lift and close the napkin using clapping movement



STEP 8

Stand the triangle upright.



STEP 9

Final product.





4.7 STYLE 7

BISHOP HAT

Scan the QR code or click the link below to access the AR tool

SCAN HERE

URL: https://flowcode.com/p/exBkdZFydr_

STYLE 7:
BISHOP HAT

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/AENs

STEP 1

Take a napkin and place 1 corner in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up.



STEP 2

Fold the far-right corner diagonally towards you, resting the point in the center of the side closest to you.



STEP 3

Fold the near-left corner diagonally away from you, resting it so that it lays right next to the previous fold.



STYLE 7: BISHOP HAT

STEP 4

Flip the napkin over and orient it so it points to the far-left and to the near-right.



STEP 5

Fold the bottom half of the napkin up and away from you, laying it so the far edges run on top of one other.



STEP 6

Gently roll the left half of the left triangle over and tuck it's end underneath the right triangle.



STYLE 7: BISHOP HAT

STEP 7

Flip the napkin over, points pointing away from you.

Fold the right-triangle to the left, tucking it's end into the other triangle.



STEP 8

Open up the hat and press the material inside down to fill it out so that it becomes circular, this may take a little fidgeting.



STEP 9

Final product





4.8 STYLE 8

CANDLE

STYLE 8: CANDLE

watch the tutorial video

https://gqr.sh/RdUt

STEP 1

Take a napkin and place 1 corner in front of you. Please be ensure the napkin is always seam up.



STEP 2

Fold the napkin in half diagonally, creating a triangle.



STEP 3

Fold the bottom edge up, about 1/3 of the way.



STYLE 8: CANDLE

STEP 4

Turn the napkin over: so the flat side is facing up.



STEP 5

Roll the napkin tightly:
from one side to the other.



STEP 6

Tuck the pointed end: into the fold or cuff created by the rolling process to secure it.

Final product





5.0 CLOSING REMARKS

Well done! You've reached the end of Basic Napkin Folding Techniques: A Visual Guide for F&B Learners. This guide was created with the goal of making napkin folding approachable, enjoyable, and practical for students and trainees in the food and beverage industry.

By combining step-by-step visuals with clear instructions—and enhancing selected tutorials with Augmented Reality (AR) technology—we hope to bridge traditional skills with modern learning tools. Napkin folding may seem simple, but it carries great significance in creating an inviting dining experience and reflecting professionalism in service.

As you continue your learning journey, remember: a well-folded napkin is more than a decorative element—it's a sign of attention to detail, care, and hospitality excellence.

Thank you for using this guide. Keep folding, keep impressing, and keep growing!

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