

The adab of eating

Lawful first, then grateful, then moderate. The sunnah adds the small mechanics: the name of Allah, the right hand, and the part of the dish nearest you.



★ Lawful and good

كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ

“Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Shaytan.” Halal and tayyib are two conditions, not one.

Qur'an 2:168

★ And be grateful

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ

“Eat of the good things We have provided you, and be grateful to Allah.” The thanks is part of the meal, not an extra.

Qur'an 2:172

★ Do not overdo it

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

“Eat and drink, but be not excessive.” He does not love those who are excessive — said of food in the same verse as dress.

Qur'an 7:31

★ Three instructions to a boy

يَا غُلَامُ سَمِ اللَّهَ، وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلَيْكَ

“O boy, name Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is nearest you.” ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah said he ate that way ever after.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5376

★ If you forgot

فَلْيَقُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَوَّلَهُ وَآخِرَهُ

“If he forgets to mention the name of Allah at the start, let him say: in the name of Allah, at its beginning and its end.”

Sunan Abi Dawud 3767 • sahih

★ The right hand

إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِيَمِينِهِ وَإِذَا شَرِبَ فَلْيَشْرَبْ بِيَمِينِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَأْكُلُ بِشِمَالِهِ وَيَشْرَبُ بِشِمَالِهِ

“When one of you eats, let him eat with his right hand, and when he drinks, let him drink with his right hand.”

Sunan Abi Dawud 3776 • sahih

★ A third, a third, a third

فَثَلْثٌ لَطْعَامِهِ وَثَلْثٌ لَشْرَابِهِ وَثَلْثٌ لِنَفْسِهِ

“No vessel a man fills is worse than his stomach.” If he must fill it: a third for food, a third for drink, a third for his breath.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 2380 • Sunan Ibn Majah 3349 • sahih

★ He never found fault

مَا عَابَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَعَامًا قَطُّ، إِنْ اِسْتَبَاهُ أَكَلَهُ، وَإِنْ كَرِهَهُ

Abu Hurayrah: he ﷺ never criticised a dish. If he wanted it he ate it, and if he disliked it he left it — and said nothing.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5409

★ When the table is cleared

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ، غَيْرَ مَكْنِيٍّ، وَلَا مُودَعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ، رَبَّنَا

“Much praise belongs to Allah, good and blessed — not to be refused, nor bidden farewell, nor done without, our Lord.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 5458