



ASHLEY GARMON

I Will Now Perform A Trick Called “The Balancing Act.”

Hear ye! Hear ye! Come one, come all! It's The Greatest Show on Earth! Watch as the Magical Splendini balances a cocktail plate in one hand and a fork in another!

Okay, Houston party people. It's time to get down to business. Let's talk plates.

I've recently become aware of a frightening trend at parties: the itty bitty cocktail plate. Now, I don't know who's to blame for this. The caterers? The hosts? Oprah Winfrey?

Who came up with the idea of the diminutive party plate? A plate so microscopic it requires a NASA engineer to determine whether it will hold a chicken skewer.

There is no room to set your fork on these plates, much less food. You have to cup the plate in the palm of your hand while balancing your wine glass, your fork, your napkin, and your dignity.

Trust me when I tell you that I'm not good at balancing acts. I don't work for Cirque du Soleil. I've been known to trip over invisible “bumps” in the floor in broad daylight. So I ask you this question, dear Houston:


What is so offensive about providing guests with regular, dinner-sized plates? Is there a fear that actual eating will take place?

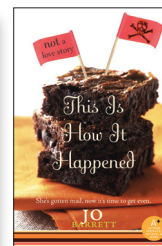
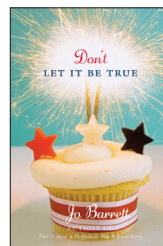
Of course, there are certain scenarios where petite cocktail plates make sense. Say, at a Weight Watchers convention. Or perhaps, at a large, thousand-person event where people are meant to “nibble,” as opposed to “chow down.”

In these instances, the miniature cocktail plate sets the tone. The tone of: “Hey, folks. We're not serving a meal, here. These are just mini-quiches.”

(And yet, isn't there always that one guy in the crowd piling his plate as high as the Tower of Babel. Uh, pardon me, Sir. This is not Luby's.)

However, when you serve an entire fajita dinner complete with rice, beans, chips and queso, dinner-sized plates should be de rigueur!

And now for my next trick! Come see the Magical Splendini as she attempts to eat a fajita without dripping cheese on her stilettos! 



Jo Barrett is a guest columnist for H Texas magazine. Her three fiction novels, “Don't Let It Be True,” “This is How It Happened (not a love story),” and “The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom” are published by HarperCollins and available at bookstores nationwide. “The Men's Guide to the Women's Bathroom” was optioned by CBS and Paramount Pictures with Hollywood actor Hugh Jackman's production company attached.