

ideas

home made better

PROP STYLING BY
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anatomy of



A WELL-DRESSED TABLE

When you're hosting your nearest and dearest, exactly nobody cares about matching china or "perfect" place settings. What your family sees is a hostess who's having fun, expressing herself, and making spirits (her own and everyone else's) bright. Whether you're able to safely host a few friends or it's just the immediate family this year, follow these tips and get ready for a joyful, stress-free dinner *party*!

BY HANNAH BAKER | PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER TESTANI

PATTERN PLAY

Make your tabletop pop by mixing patterns. Start by picking a color scheme with no more than two to three bold hues; here we chose reds and blues with hits of green. Don't be afraid to experiment! With a tight enough palette, pattern on pattern can work harmoniously. If you do want to tone things down, layer in solid napkins and neutral plates for balance.

GREEN PARTY

Grab your clippers and head to the yard to forage for pretty sculptural branches and greenery. They take less effort than flowers to arrange and look fresh and seasonal scattered in bud vases down the center of your table. Or buy small potted herbs at the nursery and send guests home with them.

KNOW YOUR PLACE

Even if your party isn't formal, place cards are a great way to make dinner—and your guests—feel special. Use what you have on hand to DIY something seasonal. The ones we made from craft paper and sprigs of holly double as napkin rings. Fresh herbs, a small wildflower, or other natural element would work well, too.

MIX IT UP

There's no rule that says you can't put out Grandma's china with plates you scored off the Target clearance rack. Mixing styles is a great way to avoid a cookie-cutter table. Try layering vintage dinner plates with scalloped edges under modern, colorful salad plates; or use heirloom crystal next to sleek brass flatware for effortless cool.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Finish off your table with some repurposed accessories from around your house—keep your table from feeling "been there, done that." A (well-washed) vintage ring dish works as a salt cellar, or a shallow planter as a fruit-bowl centerpiece. Get creative! These reimagined handmade and vintage pieces will add another layer of personalization and charm.

CREDITS: Amaya Tablecloth by Marigold Living, \$115, marigoldliving.com; Blue Bay Dessert Plate by Lenox, \$72 for set of 4, zola.com; Five Two Stoneware Dinnerware Sunburst Plate, \$59 for set of 4, food52.com; Thorn Dessert Plate by Cabana Magazine, \$99, cabanamagazine.com; Gems Short Tumbler by LSA International, \$50 for 4, zola.com