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Registry Style Inspo: How to Ace Tablescapes

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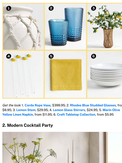
Inspiration for every event, from backyard BBQs to sophisticated soirees, plus some helpful tips and tricks along the way.

by Sarah Fine · Updated Dec 18, 2020

We're willing to bet that wedding planning has taught you a thing or two about place settings and how to set a table. Whether you're having a formal affair or a more casual brunch, it might not be the vibe you're going for on a daily basis. So when you think about the not-so-distant future after "I do," what kind of aesthetic do you envision? Maybe you want to host a dinner party for your friends and family on a regular basis, or when it comes to entertaining and the types of events you might want to host—or avoid hosting. Whether you're the day-to-day tablehost hold or the type to pull out all the stops, we've got tablescape inspo and tips for every kind of get-together.

1. Bright & Bold Brunch

When it comes to brunch, your tablescape should be an extension of the vibe you're channeling. For a casual, fun gathering, decorative vases, whimsical drink stirrers and colorful tableware are a must. For a more sophisticated affair, opt for a few classic seasonal elements like fresh fruit and wildflowers with backdrops and colorful accents to create a playful, vibrant setting. Just make sure your arrangements are low enough that your guests are still able to converse with ease.



Get the look: 1 Carole Glass Vase, $399.99; 2 Phoebe Blue Studded Glasses, from $8.95; 3 Linen Napkin, $29.95; 4 Linen Gloss Stirrers, $24.95; 5 Mark Blue Twine Linen Napkin, from $12.95; 6 Cloth Tablemap Collection, from $5.95

2. Modern Cocktail Party

When hosting friends for cocktails and light bites, it's all about elevated comfort. The key to pulling off this subtly elegant aesthetic? Mixing and matching colored dinnerware with subtle geometric prints and textures like ribbed glassware to create a cohesive, yet eclectic, vibe. Pro tip: Don't be afraid to mix and match—you can even make a couple of different dip bowls in shapes or patterns you prefer to serve themselves.

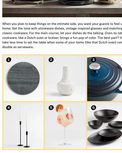
Get the look: 1 Beaded Tapered Chrome Candlesticks, from $30.00 & 2" White Tapered Candles, $6.95; 2 Marin Light Blue Linen Napkin, from $12.95; 3 Mesh Ribbed Vase, $29.95; 4 Ribbed Cocktail Glass, $12.95; 5 Marin Light Blue Linen Napkin, from $12.95; 6 Tulip Glass Stirrers, $24.95; 6 Chinwick Cross Optic White Placemat, $20

3. Backyard Chill & Grill

For a laid-back barbecue that's still polished and pulled together, it's all about the details. Think: coordinating tablecloths and napkins, a few fun, but not too bright-hue potens, natural wood accents and a touch of fresh and lush greenery. Let your menu inform the design of your table—if you'll be eating family-style, make sure serving ware and platters, tongs and serving spoons are supposed to kick off little outdoor clutter and flavor.

Get the look: 1 Linen Eyelet Fringe Natural Table Runner, $79.95; 2 Linen Eyelet Fringe Warm Plum Napkin, $12.95; 3 Bass Wine Coasters, $29.95; 4 Gaby Cotton Woven Placemat, $29.95; 5 Gaby Cotton Woven Placemat, $29.95; 6 Pitcher Flatware Set, $60.95; Catalogue Wooden Bowl with Handle, $39.95

4. Cozy Dinner Party



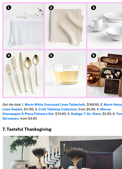
When you plan to keep things on the intimate side, you seed your guests to feel at home. Set the tone with cinnamon dishes, vintage-inspired glassware and textured linens to create coziness. For the main course, let your dinner do the talking. Down to a table-sized family-style platter or a few smaller serving dishes, it's up to you. Just make sure there's ample table space to set the table when some of your items like that Dutch oven is on double as an heater.

Take your standard backyard BBQ to the next level once it's warm enough (Texans! or continuing vibe with a neutral, earthy palette and textural details like wicker placemats, travertine napkin rings, flax table linens and wooden set vessels. Pro tip: Don't be afraid to mix and match. Pair a few different textures and shades of white or ivory with fresh herbs and branches or flowers for a natural pop of color. (Cute!

Get the look: 1 Wood and Marble Salad Servers, $39.95; 2 Stack Square 3.5 Qt. Cocotte, $399.95; 3 Marin Warm Natural Oversized Linen Tablecloth, $189.95; 4 Hudson Natural Napkin, from $13.95; 5 Travertine Napkin Rings, $8.95; 6 Sabre Iron 3 Piece Flatware Set, $80; 6 Antique Terracotta Vase, $49.95

6. Everyday Dinner, Elevated

Even if it's just the two of you, it doesn't mean every night has to be the same old song and dance. Take your dinner game to the next level by adding a few elevated, but still cozy touches. Sleek gold tonal cutlery and minimalist stoneware offer a modern look that's still durable enough for everyday use. Simple additions like a linen tablecloth and scarce wood accessories keep things classic and cozy for a night in.



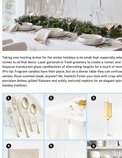
Get the look: 1 Marin White Oversized Linen Tablecloth, $189.95; 2 Marin Natural Oversized Linen Tablecloth, $189.95; 3 Hudson Natural Napkin, $13.95; 4 Champagne 5 Piece Flatware Set, $79.95; 5 Rudder 7 Qt. Oven, $195; 6 Tools Serveware, from $4.95

7. Tasteful Thanksgiving

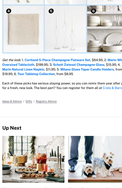
There's no better time for seasonal touches than around the holidays, but this sophisticated tablescape is a far cry from your ma's homemade turkey decor. Bring in a few fall-inspired accents like a pumpkin centerpiece, a few pinecones and a little bit of fall-ish flowers. Pro tip: Don't forget about the little details like the charming Buffalo plaid. Balance your festive pieces with minimalist accents like dried flowers, ebony chargers and mostly candelabras. Remember: When in doubt, go for a pop of your table accessories to the holiday themed, and you can't go wrong.

Get the look: 1 Marin White Recycled Dinnerware Dinnerware, from $10.95; 2 Sabre Turquoise 5 Piece Flatware Set, $80; 3 Canada Brushed Wood Charger, $24.95; 4 Marin Antiqued Tabletop Linen, from $7.95; 5 French Oil Ox. Wine Glass, $9.95; 6 Candelabra, from $39.95

8. Chic Holiday Hosting



Taking over hosting duties for the winter holidays is no small feat, especially when it comes to the tablescape. Keep things simple and classic with a few fun, festive touches: dangle translucent glass ornaments of alternating heights for a touch of twinkle (Pro tip: Fragrant candles have their place, but on a dinner table they can confuse the palate and overpower the food, so keep them to a minimum). Add a few metallic accents, porcelain dishes, gilded flatware and subtly textured napkins for an elegant spin on holiday tradition.



Get the look: 1 Cortland 5 Piece Flatware Set, $79.95; 2 Marin White Oversized Tablecloth, $189.95; 3 Sedan Dessert Champagne Glass, $15.95; 4 Marin Natural Linen Napkin, $13.95; 5 Milano Glass Tape Candle Holders, from $10.95; 6 Tool Tableware Collection, from $4.95

Each of these picks has serious staying power, so you can mess them year after year for a fresh, new look. The best part? You can register for them at at Crate & Barrel.

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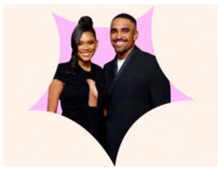

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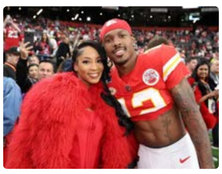

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