

DESIGN INSPO

Table setting ideas for every day and special occasions

Get tons of table setting ideas and inspo in this comprehensive article. Learn where your dishes go + design your own beautiful tablescapes for free.



By Ari Cochran



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Sometimes relegated as the catch-all for junk mail, extra winter coats, and the occasional sleeping cat, dining room tables tend to support every function in the house *but* dining. But it doesn't have to be that way. Making just a few thoughtful choices in your decor will not only make



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Table setting ideas for every day and special occasions | SpOak
your dinner table more beautiful and functional,
it'll make getting ready for special occasions so
much easier.

Today, we're going to look at the basics of a table
setting, including where your serving bowls,
drinking glasses, plates, and other accouterments
should go. After that, we'll give you tons of table
setting ideas for each holiday on the calendar.

One small note before we get started: this post
may include affiliate links, which means we earn a
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clicking on the link in our post.

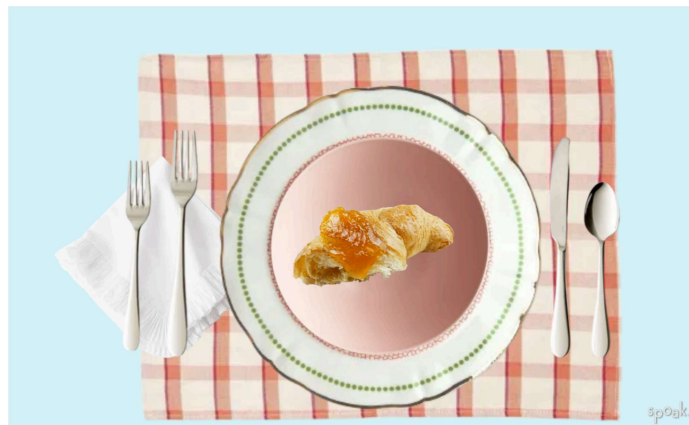
With that out of the way, let's jump into what a
normal table setting is and isn't.



What is a normal table setting and what does it look like?

A basic table setting consists of a dinner plate,
serving bowl, drinking glass, napkin, and flatware.
All of these things sit on top of a placemat or
tablecloth, or the slightly more feral option of a
bare table. This can be as elaborate and expensive
as your heart's imagination, or as bare bones as a
red solo cup and the to-go container dinner came
in.

Your basic table setting for an everyday meal
should look like this:



[Source](#)

Forks go on the left, the rest goes on the right. Napkins can go on top of your plate or under your forks. Layer your bowls and salad plates on top of your dinner plates—not only does it make a more elegant table, but it also conserves space. Plus, the varying heights of the dishes make the space more visually interesting.

Cloth napkins add a special and sustainable touch, but if a paper towel ends up on the table, we get it.

If you want to make the setting feel really special, add a few more details beyond your basic dishware. We love candle holder centerpieces to make a dinner table feel warm and a little rustic. You can also opt for simple white dishes, but if you do, consider livening things up with some gold flatware or a funky placemat—your meals deserve a little pizzazz.

One easy way to make a place setting feel cohesive is to keep the metal accents in the same family. You can get away with deviating for your table centerpieces—think bronze and brass, not gold and silver—but when it comes to individual place settings, matching metals is best.

You can peep an example in the tablescape below, where shiny gold is mixed with bronze.

[Source](#)

Floral arrangements are another popular choice for the dining table, but note that they get dusty, so

keep in mind you'll need to clean them often if they're artificial, or deal with their deadfall and pollen if they're not.

Generally, your centerpiece doesn't have to be elaborate to be effective, and if you're working with a small table, it shouldn't be. For a smaller table, we recommend leaning into candles over a formal centerpiece. There's a candle for every occasion—taper candles, pillar candles, and votive candles just to name a few—and put together on the same table, they can take the place of a centerpiece.

That said, fire hazards have their downsides, and LED candles have come far in the last few years. If you have pets or small children and want to skip the flames but not the coziness, look for LED candles made with real candlewax. It'll give you a lot of the same vibe, plus they'll last forever.

Finally, don't knock a simple decorative bowl and a few personal touches to create a gorgeous table.

If you're looking for more table setting inspo, keep reading on or check out our [interior design trend report](#) to see what other design lovers added to their tables this year.

Every day table setting ideas and inspo

So you've decided that you're going to have a set table every day. It might feel like a big commitment at first, but once you have a system down, the hard part is over. Here's some inspo and some of our favorite products for making an everyday dining table pop.

Skip the centerpiece and enjoy a simple dinner table with a few candles



[Source](#)

If you're someone who craves simplicity in your home, this everyday table design is perfect for you. Between simple white dishes, a few thoughtfully placed candles, and the playful napkins, this table will feel comfortable all year long. Add seasonal touches by swapping the napkins and candles for something more holiday specific. (Can you imagine how cute mini pumpkins would be on this table? We can!)

Here's the shopping list if you see something that tickles your fancy:

- [Big Plates by Year & Day](#) (\$64)
- [Linen Napkins by Madre Linen](#) (\$90)
- [20-piece Rush Brushed Gold Flatware Set by CB2](#) (\$99.95)

Elevate your everyday table with colorful table decorations



[Source](#)

This table design works great for your everyday dining table or any future dinner parties—just look how adorable those place cards are on the plates.

Rather than using one big centerpiece, this table uses smaller pieces of fresh decor, creating elegant vibes with a modest price tag. Plus, small details like different colored drinking glasses and candles bring it all together, making this table feel eclectic without becoming cluttered.

To get this look for yourself, check these out:

- [10.5" Square Sided Entrée Plate](#) by Jono Pandolfi (\$54)
- [2-Pack Linen Napkins](#) by H&M (\$12.99)
- [Rope Taper Candles](#) in various colors by Greentree Home (\$30)
- [Moroccan Cone Glassware](#) by Verve Culture (\$42)
- Fresh flowers by [Chatham Flowers](#)

Make every day cottage core with a beautiful centerpiece



[Source](#)

A simple centerpiece with artificial flowers and girly touches make this table design feel fresh, fun, and approachable. Despite having multiple patterns and motifs, all of the colors in this tablescape are pastel, which unifies the overall design.

Shop this look your own dining table:

- [BowKnot Plates](#) by Noon & Moon (\$94)
- [Light Woven Placemat](#) by Williams Sonoma (\$24.95)
- [Crochet Edge Placemats](#) by Boutross imports (\$30)

- [Camille Peony Candle Holder](#) by Mrs. Alice (\$56-\$94)
- [Artificial Flowers \(Various\)](#) by Afloral (\$20-\$84)
- [Bridgerton X Williams Sonoma Mixed Dessert Plates](#) by Williams Sonoma (\$59.95)

P.S.: You can discover all of these products and more inside Spoak. [Sign up today for a free account and start designing your own beautiful dining room tables.](#)

Special occasion table ideas and inspo

Changing out your table decorations is one of the easiest ways to make your home feel festive all year round. Here are a few table setting ideas for all of your favorite holidays.

New Year's Eve dinner table ideas



[Source](#)

Flocked with champagne flutes, lingering Christmas decorations, and bad party hats, New Year's Eve marks the end of one era and beginning of the next. It's also a fabulous time to break out your gold, black, and blue decor for a festive touch.

Typical decorations you might see in a New Year's Eve tablescape include champagne glasses, firework motifs, and metallic ribbons. Expect lots of metallic accents—think gold table runners, silver

charger plates, and glittery confetti. No New Year's Eve celebration would be complete without a clock or two to watch, either.

Some fun, less traditional ways to incorporate New Year's decorations include changing your Christmas tree ornaments to match the theme and adding in some mini disco balls to scatter the light. You might also consider using fairy lights, incorporating a countdown theme, and decorating with clock faces or vintage clocks. Thrift stores are great for finding the latter.

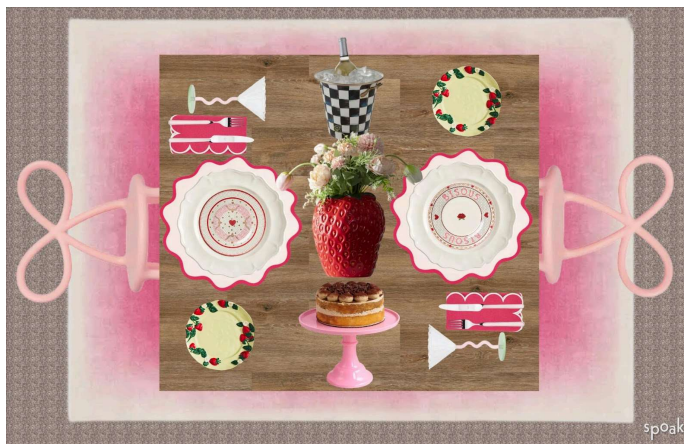
Ideally, a New Year's table setting should have that opulent look without making party guests feel bad if they overindulge just a little bit. But just because you're going for the luxe look doesn't mean you have to spend luxe prices. While the 'easiest' way to make things look more expensive is to buy the highest quality you can, we've seen plenty of fun tablescape come together with a little help from the Dollar Tree or similar discount retailers. Home Goods is a great source, too.

Above all, a New Year's party should be fun, whatever that means for you. If that means delicate, artisanal grade items or plastic silver chargers and cups, we hope you're in for a wonderful evening.

If you want to shop from the tablescapes design above, here's the breakdown:

- [Iris Hammered Metal Charger](#) by west elm (\$18)
- [Regency Gold Salad Plates](#) by Williams Sonoma (\$79.95)
- [Natura Flatware](#) by Williams Sonoma (\$89.95)
- [AERIN Scalloped Placemats](#) by Williams Sonoma (\$55.96)
- [Deco Coupe Glass](#) by Sur La Table (\$12.95)
- [Chateau Champagne Glass](#) by Sur La Table (\$12.95)
- [Puro Napkin Ring](#) by Juliska (\$28)
- [Faux Gold Bay Leaf Swag](#) by Pottery Barn (\$58)

Valentine's Day table setting ideas



[Source](#)

Whether you're setting up for a romantic dinner or want a pretty table for Galentine's Day, there's a lot to love about February 14th. Besides being one of the most forwardly feminine holidays, it's a great time to transition out the last of your wintry decor and move into spring vibes.

While pink and red are the most obvious color scheme for creating a romantic table, there's no rule that says you *have* to use them. Indeed, there's not even a rule that you have to use heart shapes, though it never hurts to be on theme. Some of the most typical Valentine's Day table decorations include fresh flowers, berries, chocolates, champagne, and candles. More trendy decor options include disco balls, heart-shaped candy, flower shapes, and doilies.

Don't want to buy anything new but still want to create a romantic vibe for your Valentine's table? Paper crafts are a great idea here—everything from paper hearts to bows and handwritten love notes will fit the theme and can be put together in just a few hours. Add a few tea lights and bam, you've got a romantic ambiance for your special dinner.

Shop the Valentine's Day tablescape above with these links, or create your own Valentine's Day table setting [by signing up for a free Spoak account today:](#)

- [Heirloom Stoneware Dinner Plates](#) by Pottery Barn (\$40)

- [Scallop Edge Circle Placemats](#) by Matouk (\$117)
- [Scalloped Hem Napkin](#) by Saro Lifestyle (\$59)
- [Fantasia Italian Color Handled Flatware Sets](#) by Pottery Barn (\$109)
- [The Bistro Tile Stoneware Dessert Plate: Valentine's Edition](#) by Anthropologie (\$16)
- [Strawberry Bliss Ceramic Vase](#) by BLISOME (\$99)
- [Coupe Glasses Set](#) by &Klevering (\$48)
- [Foster Stoneware Dessert Plate](#) by Anthropologie (\$18)
- [Courtly Check Enamel Wine Cooler](#) by MacKenzie-Childs (\$119)

Easter table settings and spring table settings



[Source](#)

Easter eggs, fresh spring flowers, pastel colors, and bunny ears—these are some of our favorite things. Whether you're decorating for Easter brunch or just want to flex some creative ideas this spring, the theme of this season's design is growth.

With a delicate color palette, Easter decorations usually incorporate a lot of fresh blooms—white tulips, yellow daffodils, and purple hydrangeas are just the start of it. In addition to the floral theme, there's the ubiquitous bunnies and eggs, a holdover from the days when Easter was Ostara.

For the more secularly or nature inclined, it's not unusual to see a few bees, butterflies, and other pollinators too.

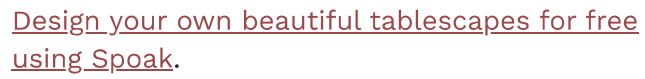
Floral centerpieces are the most popular choice for the Easter brunch table, though far from the only Easter centerpiece on the market. After months of moody, candlelit dinners, Easter is the perfect time to brighten things up with lots of flowers. We strongly prefer fresh flowers for this, but we love an artificial floral moment, too. [Our friends at Afloral are a great place to look for them.](#)

Baskets, both Easter baskets and more generally woven baskets, are also a popular motif for Easter table decorations, and make an easy centerpiece with a few florals and wooden eggs. We love going to the thrift store for our baskets, but you can also often find them in the grocery store during this time of year. Bonus, the grocery store usually also has chocolate bunnies.

Shop our Easter tablescape with the links below:

- [Rectangular White Marble Platter](#) by Sur La Table (\$49.95)
- [Faux Daffodil Spring Centerpiece](#) by Pottery Barn (\$73.99)
- [Sisal Placemats](#) by Year & Day (\$176)
- [Heirloom Stoneware Dinner Plates](#) by Pottery Barn (\$40)
- [RHODE Dinner Plate Sets](#) by west elm
- [Connoisseur Laguiole 20-Piece Flatware Set](#) by French Home Laguiole (\$119.95)
- [Carrots Linen Napkin](#) by Bertoli By Thyme (\$35)
- [Botanical Bunny Stoneware Egg Cups - Mixed Set of 4](#) by Pottery Barn (\$32)

Bookmark this article for more holiday designs and check back often for updates on your favorite holidays! Good luck, and happy holidays for whatever you might be celebrating.



12/13