

Setting the Scene: Creating the Perfect Holiday Table

BY HELEN MITTERNIGHT / PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHELL ROYSTER | NOVEMBER 14, 2017



If you're hosting for the holidays, it might just occur to you that those cute little paper plates with the turkeys on them aren't going to cut it. The holiday table reflects celebration and tradition, and can even reflect the city where the host lives.

"One of the joys of the holidays is being able to bring out your finery. A day or two before, you're polishing the silver and it's just a beautiful disaster, with gleaming things all around the kitchen. Anticipation and the joy of getting everything prepared to entertain your guests is a huge part of the fun," according to Paige Crone.

Crone is the owner of the lifestyle brand company Charleston Protocol. She recently presented a workshop with Tanya Gurrieri, the co-owner of Salthouse Catering, called "Setting the Table" for the initial Charleston Culinary Academy, hosted by the city's chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier, a female food, beverage and hospitality group that funds culinary and hospitality scholarships for area women.

"When I'm throwing a party, I want it to look like I created it from my own kitchen, even if I've purchased some of the menu items. I lean more toward a self-serve buffet since people tend to drop in versus commit to a dinner party" explains Gurrieri.

To make it look festive, yet remain simple, she suggests adding some loose ornaments or spreading fresh greenery around for color, noting that bringing some height and elevation to the display makes for a more bountiful and beautiful look. Also, using items such as shoeboxes covered with wrapping paper or tucked under a tablecloth come in handy to elevate a cheese board.

If you are leaning toward a seated dinner, place cards can help guests find their place at the table – and having a serving cart near the hostess' chair is a must. It can contain easy-to-pass items like wine, water, or warm biscuits. "I think a lot of times, hosts tend to over think and place items where guests can't reach them," Crone says.

"I love using pieces that have been passed down through generations; what we have is so special in the way we celebrate—there's a gentility and a certain historical perspective. Holiday entertaining is one of the pinnacle South Carolina moments."

Create a tablescape as memorable as the holiday goodies:

Put some thought into the kind of holiday gathering it will be and let your guests in on it.

A day or two before the festivities, bring out the good stuff and allow enough time – and space – to spread the elbow grease and polish. Don't be afraid to mix and match.

Decide on the room layout depending on the kind of meal you're planning.

Think about where your guests should sit if you're having everyone at the table; consider adding place cards to a seated dinner.

Your table should be not only pretty, but should reflect what your guests might need.

If a table is too much, think about a buffet— don't think a buffet means "thrown together." A buffet can look polished, too!

Article from Edible Charleston at <http://ediblecharleston.ediblecommunities.com/things-do/setting-scene-creating-perfect-holiday-table>

Article from Edible Charleston at <http://ediblecharleston.ediblecommunities.com/things-do/setting-scene-creating-perfect-holiday-table>

Copyright ©2018 Edible Charleston. All rights reserved