



# A CHRISTMAS TABLE

Most who cook Christmas dinner are all too aware of all the hours it takes to prepare the feast, and the minutes it takes to devour it...and suddenly Christmas dinner is over. A table setting can help slow things down by framing your delicious meal, like a beautiful picture frame shows-off a painting and makes it pop. Set to impress, and in so doing, make a statement! This meal is important, one not to be rushed but savoured, valued and appreciated. It can remind people that time and love went into this meal.

I still remember growing up, that on Sunday's mom brought out the 'good China' and set a fancy table. The message was clear -this was an important meal, a time to be together and talk. Now my friends and family know how much I enjoy setting a table, and I've spent years picking up things to dress my tables, adding little touches that have big impact. For me It's a real creative outlet.



**To begin with have fun, be daring, go wild!**

Experiment and have fun. As I put my plan together, I like to be sure that I am adding different layers, colours, textures and patterns.

The table cloth I use will ground the table and in part be determined by the season, the China I use and my mood.

If I want a particular colour table cloth and don't have it at hand or can't find one don't be afraid to buy a twin flat bedsheet in the colour you want.





I then layer the tablecloth with a brightly coloured and often patterned runner.

**Lately I've picked up some inexpensive Japanese Obi's,- long sashes worn around the waste over traditional Japanese garments. They can be as long as twelve feet and often have beautiful embroidery. They really make a statement.**



I then like to add gold or silver plastic chargers- again they add colour, sparkle and help anchor and show off the China.

Speaking of China, I must admit to being a China junky. In this informal, throw away, busy and fast food and fast passed culture, it's too bad that the last and current generation don't set formal dinner tables, slow things down and bring out the good China.

There is no more good China coming out of the cupboards and I think we have lost something as a result. I love certain cultures who make a ritual of some things like dining.

This abandonment of formality means however that there are lots of beautiful porcelain China sets you can pick up at bargain prices. And don't be afraid to use different patterns of China at the same time.

If you choose to, I recommend using chargers with them as they help tie it all together. I like to use silver candlesticks or candelabra -it adds more bling and height to the table and I don't shy away from using coloured candles to match my tablecloth, but not always.

Once again, silver-plated candle sticks are easy to find and pretty inexpensive, so go all Liberace! Having two glasses at each place setting is nice- both wine and water glasses and maybe a third for an aperitif after the meal. I prefer that the water glasses are a different pattern/style than the wine glasses. I am fortunate to have several sets of water glasses that are cranberry and as I often have some red in my table arrangement it seems to work well and add more interest.



My napkins are always cotton as they absorb the best, and they most often have patterns and are a different but complementary colour to the table cloth.



Now, the small detail that adds big impact are **individual salt and pepper shakers** and **knife rests**. The latter is a real blast from the past and pretty cool.



For a Christmas table I sprinkle Christmas tree ornaments about, maybe some type of garland and probably a poinsettia or a festive flower arrangement. Make the arrangement yourself by buying flowers from the local grocery store, add some holly and sprigs of spruce. Remember have fun and go crazy!

Finally, once the table is set you will realize there is no room for the food. Exactly!

I like to serve buffet style rather than people having to constantly be reaching for food, handing it back and forth, trying to figure out where to set the heavy and hot dishes. Its so much simpler and keeps my arrangement intact. Its so much easier and once again, it sets the tone for a relaxed laid-back meal and good conversation.

But most importantly it's the time with family and friends that is too be cherished and remembered. So whether you use fine China or paper plates, silverware or plastic knives, and forks, sit at a dining table or at a TV table, or even with a plate on your lap -enjoy this time together. The table might entertain; the food will nourish but it's the people who fill our heart and soul.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

Tim

"Bingle all Way"

Wall

