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## Setting A Festive Table - Tips For A Striking Presentation

By Bob Kiefer

You'll be slaving over a hot stove for hours, preparing a feast fit for kings this Christmas. From the turkey to the desserts, you put love into every recipe, and your family digs in with gusto. Why not add some festive touches to the table as well, and make the presentation as breathtaking as the dishes you'll be serving? It doesn't take much time or money to transform your table from humbug to very merry.

**Choosing a Theme** The easiest way to coordinate your decor is to choose a theme. Your theme can be as specific as a single Christmas carol, or as broad as a certain style or colors. For example, you could choose "Jingle Bells" as your theme, making the centerpiece a miniature one-horse open sleigh, and attaching bells to everything that doesn't voluntarily move. Or, choose a "Country Christmas" theme and add lots of country touches to your table, like felt cut-outs and cross-stitched napkins.

If you're planning on selecting colors for your table, stick with one main color and a maximum of two accent colors. Holiday colors of green, red, and white look very festive, or accent with silver or gold for a more elegant touch. Blue and white work nicely together for a winter theme.

**Table Coverings** You may have your great-great-grandmother's handmade lace tablecloth stowed away, ready to use for your Christmas dinner. There's nothing wrong with this, of course, but if spillage and possible staining are a major worry for you, save the lace for accenting your decorative holiday displays instead and pick up some inexpensive cotton or other fabric to cover your table with, or use clean sheets in various colors. You can even use two contrasting colors of fabric, and use the second, smaller piece to hang at an angle over the larger one. Christmas prints are cute and charming, but try to steer clear of anything too busy or bright, as the fabric will overshadow any other accents you add.

For a children's table, cover the surface with butcher paper or inverted wrapping paper and provide crayons at each setting. Christmas crackers are also great fun for kids, and look cute sitting on each dinner plate.

**Centerpieces** Centerpieces can be as simple as a small grouping of different sized candles. You needn't go overboard and spend hundreds of dollars on fresh flowers and a beautiful decorator's vase

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to hold them in. Potted Poinsettias make a pretty centerpiece, as do small baskets filled with pine sprigs and pinecones, or clear glass bowls full of bright Christmas tree balls.

Keeping your chosen theme in mind, choose a centerpiece that will stand out among your dishes of food, and become a conversation piece for guests. If you plan to use lit candles, never leave them unattended, and choose unscented candles wherever possible.

**Napkins** You don't have to limit yourself to simple linen napkins, although these work perfectly well. Use facecloths, small hand towels, or handkerchiefs instead if you prefer. Roll your napkins and fold the roll in half, securing with a pretty bow, or fold them origami style into an interesting shape.

**Napkin rings** can be made from pipe cleaners, mini wreaths, licorice strings, ribbons, artificial flower stems, or anything else you can think of that will look festive and do the job. Tie bells, small ornaments, pinecones, silk flowers, or even small toys onto each napkin ring for added decoration.

**Serving Dishes and Platters** Your serving dishes don't need to match each other to look pretty. A mixture of different styles and colors add whimsy and a country feel to your presentation. If you don't have enough trivets for all of your dishes, cover pre-cut pieces of thick cardboard with aluminum foil and use these as shiny mats that will protect your table and still look nice.

**Place Cards** If you want to use place cards to prearrange the seating at your table, use your theme to come up with imaginative ways to create or display them. Gift tags are an easy idea, and they can be attached to each napkin or wine glass with ribbon or pipe cleaners. Miniature artificial poinsettia pots are available at many dollar stores, and they make gorgeous place card holders. Simply fashion your cards and attach them to straws or toothpicks, then secure them into the pots.

Pinecones can hold name cards as well, if you maneuver the cards so that the 'teeth' of the cones hold them in place. Create shapes out of clay or dough, thread the cards through candy cane sticks, or simply place your cards on the top of each dinner plate. The possibilities here are endless.

**Extras and Finishing Touches** Adding candles of varying heights and colors will add warmth to your table setting. Scatter tea lights, votives, pillars, and tapers around the center of the table, making sure that they are secure and not interfering with anything that could be flammable.

You can also decorate the stems on wine glasses with purchased wine charms or pipe cleaners, or tie small bells to each one with ribbon. Tie cutlery together in a similar fashion if you wish, or tuck utensils securely inside rolled napkins.

For an added touch, decorate each chair with bows, bits of garland, or pretty fabric. Anything goes as long as it doesn't scratch or otherwise interfere with your guests' enjoyment of your wonderful meal.

With a bit of extra effort, you can take a plain and boring table and create a stunning masterpiece that will impress your guests even before the first course is served.

Author is a webmaster of 10 sites. Vist

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for more exciting holiday ideas.

## **Ideas For Your Interior Christmas Decorating**

**By Adam Peters**

There are many different ideas for interior Christmas decorating. Interior Christmas decorating is an important part of most people's holiday festivities. For many people, the interior decorations are what defines the season of Christmas. Your home will feel warm with the proper interior Christmas decorating scheme. There are a variety of decorating ideas on the market today, but the best way to complete your interior Christmas decorating is to make the items yourself or with your family. The holiday season is about spending time together, and making things to warm your home will only help signify that to your family. There are several great ideas for your interior Christmas decorating needs.

Make yours the perfect holiday home with interior Christmas decorating

· First, create a diorama of bears or dolls dressed in festive seasonal clothes. You could put a small tree with little presents in your display. This is a great way to get your kids involved in the decorating process. Just be sure you don't use a favorite security object, as it might prove difficult to disassemble the diorama throughout the course of the season.

· Second, meet your interior Christmas decorating needs by creating bows from Christmas print ribbon and putting them in various places around your house including your curtains. · Third, hang stockings throughout your house, even if you know they aren't your stuffing stockings. It offers a festive feel to your home.

Next, use fabric paint and a traditional white table cloth to make a holiday patterned table cloth. This is another great activity to do with your little ones. Just be sure to express to them that they are not allowed to paint on the tablecloth on a year round basis. Next, dress your bathroom for the holidays by attaching ornaments and other decorations(of the unbreakable type) to a clear shower curtain with a hot glue gun. Another decorating idea is to get your houseplants into the swing of the season by hanging ornaments on them after you decorate your tree. For a quick ornament idea, try hanging a cookie cutter with a bit of Christmas ribbon. To help with your decoration as well as your Christmas trivia knowledge, place a basket of seasonal books on your coffee table or end table. It will look festive, and it may just help you win a quick family game sometime.

Interior Christmas decorating does not have to be difficult or expensive with ideas like these.

Adam Peters writes regularly for

<http://www.home-decorating-reviews.com>

. Peters contributes adding

reviews very often on decorating and design topics. You can also reach interesting articles on easter and christmas decorations at his site (

<http://www.home-decorating-reviews.com/christmas/christmas-decoration.html>

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