

Creative

Personal Dining

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With today's hectic lifestyle, formal dining is often pushed aside. However, good food and good company are two of life's greatest pleasures, and the dining room is where these two come together. From formal dining rooms to outdoor patios, today's dining spaces are all about reflecting your personality and accommodating the challenges of your unique space. No matter the size of your home, you can dine with style and comfort anywhere and anytime.

Dining Al Fresco

Don't have room for a group of friends inside? Think outdoors. You can create terrific dining settings outdoors from mid-March to mid-October. You can use standard outdoor pieces, but why not bring some indoor furniture outside? A set of mis-matched chairs around a skirted table can make for a comfortable, homey setting. If your outdoor space is partially covered, try hanging a candle-lit chandelier and add some art to the

whatever is in season to provide a simple table decoration; leaves, branches, flowers or even grasses can help pull the outdoors into your new dining area. Throw down an inexpensive indoor/outdoor rug, and you have a decorated, pulled-together dining space right outside your back door.

A Study in Fine Dining

Perhaps you need indoor space, but can not devote an entire room for occasional dining. Then the key is to combine your dining space with another room, allowing one room to function in a complementary capacity. Think about a home office/study that is also a unique dining room. Or what about a spare bedroom, on the main floor of course, which could be a romantic eating spot? The key to making one room act as two is choosing furniture that is multi-functional. For example, the study may have a 36"- 48" round table for daily conferences and work, which acts as a dining table at night. The

desk then becomes a serving buffet when redesigned with beautiful candlesticks and a table runner filled with delicious dishes. The dark, warm wood of a study filled with books, art, and even a fireplace makes a cozy and relaxing room in which to spend hours with friends. As for a spare bedroom, make it perform double duty by using a daybed or sleeper sofa against the wall and incorporate a dining table that acts as a writing desk for your guests; or use a gate-leg console along one wall that opens up to become a full dining table. Again, a dining room does not have to be a dedicated space that gets used only a few times a year.

An Impromptu Dining Room

Finally, even if you have no other place to dine but your breakfast table right next to or even inside the kitchen, you can still make an evening or weekend dinner special. Use a pair of chairs from elsewhere in the house as host and hostess chairs. Use candles instead of lights to illuminate your setting. Use slip covers on your breakfast chairs to give them a brand new look. To visually separate this area from your kitchen use a screen of fabric or if there is a peninsula, use the peninsula as your buffet with a back row of green plants to separate yourself and guests from the kitchen.

Remember — with a little creativity and imagination, you can find and create a dining space for family and friends in the most unlikely places...right inside your home.

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