HOST THOUGHTFULLY 012

Set the Table Before You Cook



FINISH THE ROOM BEFORE THE FINAL RUSH.

Set the table before the busiest part of cooking begins. Count the plates, glasses and utensils, then leave the kitchen ready for arranging each guest's meal.

1 Set one complete place

Choose the dinner plate, napkin, cutlery and glasses each guest will actually use. Repeat the setting around the table.

Why: A complete example helps you notice missing pieces before guests arrive.

2 Keep dinner plates ready

If you will plate in the kitchen, reserve the dinner plates there. Use a charger at the table only if you want one.

Why: You avoid collecting plates from around seated guests when dinner is nearly ready.

3 Check the practical details

Sit in a chair, reach for a glass and check elbow room. Move decorations that interfere with conversation or service.

Why: A beautiful place setting should also be comfortable to use.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Count for the whole meal

Include utensils for dessert or another course if planned. Put later-course items somewhere easy to reach.

Keep the tabletop useful

Leave room for glasses and the finished dinner plates. Choose a low arrangement that does not block faces.

Reserve a plating area

Clear a section of counter for all the dinner plates. Keep the sauce spoon and finishing ingredients close by.

Do one final walk-through

Check the table from a guest's seat and the kitchen from the cook's position. Make adjustments before you need both spaces.

THE PLATING MINDSET

A prepared table and a clear plating area let you concentrate on the food when timing matters most.