HOST THOUGHTFULLY 016

Choose the Setting for the Evening



CONSIDER THE WHOLE VISIT, NOT JUST THE TABLE.

Picture the evening from arrival through the last conversation. Choose where guests will gather and eat, then check that the setting works for the meal you plan to serve.

1 Choose the dinner location

Consider chairs, lighting, temperature and the route from the kitchen. Make sure everyone has a comfortable place for an individual plate.

Why: The setting needs to support both eating and serving.

2 Test it at dinner time

Look at the room when you expect to use it. Sit in different seats and check the light on faces and plates.

Why: A space can feel quite different in the evening than it does during the day.

3 Keep a practical alternative

If planning to eat outdoors, decide where dinner can move if conditions change. Check that the alternative fits the same guests.

Why: An agreed plan is easier to use than rearranging the house during dinner.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Light the food as well as the room

Aim for a warm atmosphere with enough light to see the meal. Adjust glare or a bright light shining into someone's eyes.

Keep decorations low

Let people see one another across the table. Leave a clear place for the plated meal and each guest's glasses.

Think about comfort

Try the chairs yourself. Notice a draft, direct sun or a seat that makes reaching the table awkward.

Keep the meal in mind

A setting that looks lovely still needs a usable route for carrying dinner plates. Check the route before choosing the final arrangement.

THE PLATING MINDSET

Choose a setting that feels welcoming throughout the visit and makes your individually plated dinner easy to enjoy.