

## Dining In – The Latest Trend in Dining

Home entertaining has become more popular than ever, and essential pieces like cabinets, home bars, or even utensils are taken into great account to make a guest's in-home dining experience perfect. However, the centerpiece of every home entertaining venture is the dining room set.

While dining out is still a very popular practice, the home dining gathering experience is quickly catching its momentum back even in smaller, confined spaces like condos, as trends in design, color, and functionality have caught up with today's lifestyle of back-to-basic, simplified living.

The demand for smaller furniture has risen since limited area spaces have boomed within the last few years. However, the allure and glamour of standard sized furniture, particularly dining room sets, continues to draw people to decorate and keep up trends on their dining or gathering rooms.

Matching one's preference with available space, family and guest's preference, functionality, and overall considerations may be a challenge but today's wider range of designs, size, and technical features should help ease purchasing decisions

### The Right Table Top

The dining table is the focal point in every dining area, and the chairs should compliment each other to bring out the personality of not only the host, but the room as well, giving the experience the perfect tone to establish the mood.

- The shape of the table top is usually the first thing that comes into mind when deciding on the look and this is usually dependent on the size and shape of the room. While the most common and popular shapes like rectangular or round may be a safe choice, consider the function and practicality as well.
- Rectangular or oval tops are ideal for larger capacity dining, usually accommodating up to six people comfortably. This shape is the most popular when it comes to larger gatherings as most manufacturers develop the majority of them with extension pieces or "leafs". Nowadays, smaller scale rectangular dining tables have become popular, especially in condos and apartment settings.
- Round tops tend to be more versatile as it adds contrast to a room's line, using its shape to be the focal point. A very popular choice for smaller dining areas, it is a flexible choice as it can seat a certain number of people depending on the diameter. As with rectangular tables, the round tables have developed their own extension pieces via the drop leaf pieces which potentially give the room more space when the table is not in full use. There are also round tables with center leafs to convert them into oval shaped ones for more seating capacity.
- Square tops are more suitable for use with smaller four-person gathering and spaces. The straight lines should be able to compliment each room giving a more parallel visual, which also holds true for rectangular tables. Some square tables will also have extension leafs available and this feature has been gaining more popularity today because of its versatility.

### Consider the Base

In choosing the right dining table base, consider not only the aesthetics but the functionality as well. While the table top is the focal point of the dining room, the base should not only

compliment the top and the chairs, but they need to be able to accommodate people comfortably with its base type and height.

A four-leg assembly gives a secured support for the table top as weight is distributed in four corners or areas, however, a pedestal base, which is most popular for circular ones, has more versatility in terms of seating capacity as chairs can easily move around.

### **Material and Look**

These choices are most often driven by personal taste and use. Popular choices are wood because of its classic appeal, warmth, and elegance, while finished stone like travertine or marble are preferred by people who look more into durability and a traditional look. Metal tables combined with glass reflect more contemporary and casual settings.

### **Dining Table Seat Heights**

Correct seat height is essential not only for the look but for the seating comfort of the person as it contributes a lot to the dining experience.

Generally, as a rule, there should be a 10" to 12" clearance between the seat height and the bottom surface of the table top.

Capacities will always depend on the size of the table and how each are spaced. A 21" to 25" overall space for each individual is often advisable as this should be enough room to comfortably move the arms about. To determine the actual number of chairs, consider the number of people that will use the set routinely; then add more chairs – to store when not in use - if a leaf is available.

### **Arms and Sides**

Arm chairs are often used for ends of the table settings. Frequently used for rectangular or square shaped tables where specific seating arrangements are done while side chairs, which have no arms, tend to be used for sides of rectangular tables and round or oval tables to maximize capacity potential.

While choosing the right dining room set may be a weighty and lengthy decision as these are pieces that are neither easy nor inexpensive to change or update, it should not be a stressful process. Always remember that whatever guidelines are suggested, the important thing is to have fun while decorating and to listen to one's intuition rather than following trends.

The look should suit the personality... let your furniture compliment *you* and not the other way around!