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WELCOME HOME



A Cozy Minimalist
Guide to Decorating
and Hosting
All Year Round

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK



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Stacked Cider Bar

Supplies

- Apple cider (heated)
- Skewers (I use wooden kabob skewers.)
- Mini pecan pies, mini donuts, or mini cupcakes (Our Walmart carries little 1.5 inch pecan pies which are delightful on a skewer.)
- Apple slices
- Orange slices
- Caramels (Put them at the bottom of the skewer so they melt in the cider. You're welcome.)
- Glass mugs or mason jars (something heavy so the filled skewers don't tip the drink)
- Coffee carafe, crock pot, or Dutch oven to heat and serve the cider
- A ladle to serve the cider
- Optional rosemary for garnish if you want to feel extra fancy

Fill each mug with hot cider, thread the treats on a skewer, and serve with the skewer as a garnish.





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Christmas Drink Bar

Mocktail Bar for the Whole Family

Supplies

- Clear glasses (mason jars or wine glasses are ideal)
- Ice bucket and ice
- Platter, tray, or wood board to hold fruit
- Clear decanters to hold the juice
- Fun paper straws
- Any type of clear citrus soda
- Two or three types of fruit juice (I try to incorporate different colors.)
- Slices of citrus to squeeze into the drink and use for embellishment
- If you want, set out a chilled crisp or sweet white wine for the adults to mix in.





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Iced-Coffee Bar

Supplies

- The coffee. This is *the* most important part. You can buy store-bought cold-brew concentrate, you can make a batch of overnight cold brew in your refrigerator (you don't need me to tell you how, just google it), or if you have an espresso machine and are hosting a few friends, you can make two shots of espresso per person. Please note iced coffee is not the same thing as a pot of regular coffee that you let cool off.
- Ice bucket and ice
- Milk and or creamer. I like to provide a few choices like heavy cream, coconut milk, and almond milk.
- Sweetener. Again, if you have lots of guests, it's nice to have a few options like sugar in the raw, Splenda, and honey, or get fancy and make simple syrup.
- Clear glasses
- Straws
- Embellishments like whipped cream, chocolate shavings, and sprinkles if you are feeling extra fancy

I like to make a practice drink before my guests arrive so I can figure out the best ratio and let my guests know what works. Cold brew concentrate and espresso are usually stronger than the overnight cold brew I make at home.





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Summer Lemonade Bar

Supplies

- Glass decanter to hold the lemonade
- Lemonade (I buy ours from Chick-fil-A, but you are welcome to make homemade lemonade.)
- An abundance of lemon wedges
- Strawberries, blackberries, blueberries (any berry really)
- Crushed ice and an ice bucket
- An abundance of mint leaves for garnish
- Glasses or mason jars to hold lemonade (Sometimes I load the glasses with a sprig of mint and a wedge of lemon ahead of time.)
- Paper straws to make it feel special

Want some extra fanciness? Set out some bottles of sparkling water.

I like a ratio of two parts lemonade to one part sparkling water.

Like all of our seasonal drink bars, this is a serve-yourself setup.



In addition to looking at these photos and seeing a fun back yard, I hope you also see our heart behind it, which is a commitment to gathering people.





Uncovered areas are wonderful because you can have real fires, see the stars at night, and feel like you are really outside—because you are!



When we first got our wood table, I placed it in the middle of the patio, but it was visually lost without any contrast with the background. But doesn't it look really nice against a white wall?



Covered areas give you an opportunity to use all sorts of stuff you wouldn't want to use if it were exposed to the weather.



APPENDIX 1

HOSTING BASICS



The other day I was at Target and noticed a lovely platter with the word *Grateful* written on it in cursive. I did what I always do when I see something I love—I put it in my cart and then walked around and thought about whether I would really use it.

I ended up deciding against the platter for two reasons. First, even though we should be grateful all year around, it felt very Thanksgivingy and I didn't want to buy a huge platter I would want to use only at Thanksgiving. Second, the words were in the center of the platter, so once food was on it, no one would be able to read it, which kind of defeated the point of that particular platter. I already had plain white platters that would look just like it once covered with food.

No platter for me.

Being purposeful with my serveware has allowed me to create spreads that look pulled together no matter the occasion, even if I'm serving corn dogs and Tater Tots. Because I'm picky about my serveware, my platters, trays, dishes, and stands all make sense together and help my simple food to look elegant and purposeful. And that's the goal—to have serving pieces that work together all year round. That means you don't need seasonally specific stuff. Instead, you want to invest in things you can use at the bridal shower as well as on Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July.

I focus mainly on white and wood pieces and sometimes fill in the gaps with a few things in black, metals, and natural stone. If it doesn't fit into one of those categories, I don't buy it. Trust me, I have bought beautiful pieces that don't fit into that category. (I'm looking at you, Pioneer Woman cake stand in green milk glass.) But they end up feeling like misfits with my existing collection, and I end up not using them.

For color, I rely on the food, fresh flowers, and linens.

When you focus on a few common materials for your serving pieces—no matter what size or shape you need—it will always look cohesive because it's all meant to work together like a little family. This is a very Cozy Minimalist way to stock your cabinet full of things that are guaranteed to work hard for you every day of the year.

I've found that while most of us manage to end up with decorative yard art and door wreaths for every season, we are somehow missing the basics needed for year-round hosting and decorating. I created a list of items that will serve you every day of the year, most in more ways than one.

These are the basics every home should have, like a capsule wardrobe for your home. If you set a few limitations for yourself when it comes to colors and materials, you'll end up with a collection of hosting supplies you can use in any combination for every possible celebration during any season.

You probably already have a lot of this stuff. Just make sure that you can use it all together without it looking like you are serving a luncheon for clowns.

Serviceware

- Assorted platters in various sizes
- Assorted bowls in various sizes
- Eight to twelve place settings of plain dishes (Mine are from Target.)
- Eight to twelve sets of cutlery
- Serving utensils: scoops, ladles, pie server, slotted spoons
- Mugs you aren't embarrassed to use
- Wine glasses
- Regular glasses
- Decanters, pitchers, carafes
- Creamer, sugar bowl, ice bucket
- Bottle opener, corkscrew, wine stopper
- Wooden boards (Not for cutting on but for serving on. You can get one to cut on too if you want.)
- Cake stand with cover
- Tiered stand
- Season neutral tablecloth
- Cloth napkins

- Paper napkins
- Dish towels (that are preserved and pretty to line bread baskets)
- Small bowls
- Bread knife
- Cheese knives
- Beverage tub

Special Pieces That Can Be Mixed with Your Basics

- Vases (narrow mouth and wide mouth, short and tall)
- Planters and baskets
- Candlesticks
- Candles, scented and unscented
- Throws
- Down inserts
- Pillow covers

I hope you enjoy the process of collecting some hosting items that you can use for any occasion. When you create some basic limitations (for me, white, wood, and metal), it makes the hunt fun but also ensures that your serveware will look like one happy family that's been collected over time. I love scouring antique malls for vintage items, and festivals for handmade lovelies to add to my collection. Over time, as you focus on making sure your home is stocked with the basics, you'll need to add only a few seasonal supplies to create instant atmosphere, and your home will always be minutes away from ready to host.



WELCOME HOME

APPENDIX 2

MY HOUSE
THROUGH
THE SEASONS

FALL



WINTER



SPRING



SUMMER

