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4 Designer-Approved Ways To Jazz Up Your Eating Space



Eustacia Huen Contributor 

Dining

I cover food, travel, and occasionally tennis (when Nadal is playing).

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Now that many restaurants and bars temporarily close in response to the pandemic, many people must miss eating out.

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True, you can order many dishes and drinks through pick-up and delivery services (even [Marea](#), the Central Park Staple is making their reserved wine selection available through [Caviar](#))—but eating them on the couch while bingeing on Netflix hardly feels the same.

For those who miss the bells and whistles of a restaurant dining experience, there are ways to emulate the décor, music and ambiance as much as possible—using the things you *probably* already have at home.

To help you get started, I asked award-winning interior designer Manuella Moreira—Principal & Founder of [Manuella Moreira Interiors](#)—to share some easy tips.

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Decorate minimally

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Play with colors

Colors can affect your taste more than you think. Consider the brightness of fruits and vegetables and how it represents nutrition, flavor and freshness. To enhance the brightness and freshness of your food, think about tweaking the surrounding colors (walls, lighting, plate setting) in your dining space.

Warmer colors tend to stimulate your appetite and make food appear fresher, while cool tones—like blues—often appear unappetizing. Now, unless you have a random gallon of Benjamin Moore Kendall Charcoal laying around at home, it's not the time to get something new to repaint your kitchen. Instead, place warm bulbs—with a color temperature of around 2700k—on your light fixture. Use dimmers if you have them for a warmer and more relaxing ambiance. And if you have neither, then go for candles. “The flames give a sense of calmness and illuminate the face, which tends to be much more flattering, whereas overhead downlight (like pendants) create more shadows and make you seem more stressed.” For safety sake, remember to place the candle inside a clear glass hurricane.

Set the table

Many people save the best dinnerware for ‘special occasions’ — well, now is the time to use them! Whether you live alone or with loved ones, the dishes you use can directly impact your appetite and overall experience. Set the

table with the proper dishes, utensils and glasses – same as you would expect from a fancy restaurant. This sets the intention of a special and significant occasion.



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Pair your meal with the right music

Beyond color and lighting, music can profoundly affect your appetite and how you feel. Music with a slow tempo creates a calming effect, which can make you eat more slowly. You don't want anything too loud or distracting from conversations—whether it's virtual or in person. For speakers, the designer likes Bang & Olufsen's customizable selection of wireless speakers and modular wall-mounted speakers. If you're looking for a particular restaurant's music, *TimeOut* has a [music playlist](#) from more than 15 New York bars and restaurants—such as Dante, Olmstead and Tokyo Record Bar. Perhaps you can order in and match your meal with the soundtrack too!



Smart speaker GETTY

When in doubt, let the cuisine inspire you on a theme for the dishes, colors, material, décor, setting and background music. “Always aim to create a setting with intention, this will ensure a successful dinner party or simply an enjoyable ‘social distancing’ dinner,” said Moreira. This means turning off the tv, putting away your cellphone, plus allowing yourself to be present to enjoy the moment. If dining alone, consider Facetiming a friend and enjoying a “fancy” meal together.



Eustacia Huen

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