

The Dinnerware Buyer's Guide

by Caterer's Warehouse

Before you start building up your dinnerware collection, make sure you are educated and fully informed of all of the options that are available to you. We found the best and most accurate dinnerware information and have compiled it for you here in this buyer's guide.

This buyer's guide will break down everything you need to know about dinnerware, from the pros and cons of various materials to the differences between a soup/cereal bowl and a rim soup bowl. Use this dinnerware buyer's guide to find the dinnerware that is right for you!

MATERIALS

Today, both fine china and everyday dinnerware have a place at the table. Materials may vary, but how you use them is not set in stone. Feel free to cross the line – serve a family-style pasta in porcelain or a sizzling steak on bold earthenware. It's simply a matter of taste!



Chinaware

Lightweight, lustrous and the strongest of china materials. A double-fired blend of porcelain and bone ash, bone china boasts a slightly translucent milky-white tone.

Enamelware

Enamelware is an excellent lightweight alternative to porcelain dinnerware. It's light weight and durability make it excellent for any barbeque or other catered event. Enamelware is dishwasher safe, and often comes in a multitude of colors, so you can mix and match to create a fun and unique setting.



Melamine

The versatility of melamine dinnerware makes it suitable for nearly any occasion. Melamine dinnerware is break and scratch resistant and dishwasher safe, making it perfect for the children's table. It's great feel and look also make it suitable for any fine dining experience as well. Melamine is also heat safe up to 200°F, so you can serve at very high temperatures without worrying about your dinnerware.

Glass

Glass dinnerware is a great addition to any tabletop and can be used across a wide variety of applications. It is easy to play glass items up or down depending on the ambience of the setting. Pairing glass dinnerware items with other materials, such as porcelain, often makes a great combination as well. In addition to the cosmetic versatility of glass dinnerware, glass is also very durable and is dishwasher and microwave safe!



Plastic

Plastic dinnerware is perfect for outdoor barbeques and other casual get togethers. Plastic dinnerware is cheap and durable, so it is the perfect choice for an event when you need function and quantity over looks. When you need a large number of functional and reliable dinnerware, you cannot find a better deal than plastic dinnerware. Many plastic dinnerware items are disposable, but you can choose to wash and reuse other plastic dinnerware items as well.

THE ESSENTIAL PLACE SETTING

There can be many different pieces that make up a place setting. These are the absolute essentials that you will need for a beautiful one.

Dinner Plate

Generously sized, the dinner plate is the meat and potatoes of the table setting. Generally the largest plate, it's perfect for main courses at any meal, from a formal brunch to a weeknight supper.



Salad Plate

Anywhere from 4 to 8 inches in diameter, the salad plate is great for appetizers, crudité and – you guessed it – salads. It does double-duty as a terrific dessert plate, and is a handy size for casual breakfasts.

Bread & Butter Plate

Slightly smaller than the salad plate, this plate is traditionally reserved for bread and rolls. Also great for drizzling olive oil and balsamic vinegar for dipping bread.



Soup/Cereal Bowl

Like a jack-of-all-trades, the soup/cereal bowl (also called an all-purpose bowl) is a go-to choice for hearty chili, homemade ice cream, rice, oatmeal, fresh fruit, salad – anything you can think of.

Teacup & Saucer

Traditionally round in shape with an elegant handle, the teacup fits snugly in the recessed center of its coordinating saucer for a drip-free tea or coffee service.

PLACE SETTING EXTRAS

When setting the scene for formal occasions or holiday dinners, you never want to come up short. Transform a standard table setting into a truly elegant presentation with these practical additional pieces. Versatile and beautiful, you'll probably end up using them every day!



Rim Soup Bowl

This popular dish is crafted with a wide rim, making it perfect for main courses like pasta, stew or a sauce-drenched chop like Osso Buco.

Charger Plate

Slightly larger than a dinner plate, the charger is stacked underneath a place setting for added pop. Its peek-a-boo rim lends tasteful contrast to your dinnerware pattern.



Accent Plate

True to its name, the accent plate stands out. Featuring subtle to dramatic variations in color or pattern, it beautifully serves up sides or small cakes.

Mug

With a more generous capacity than a teacup and an easy-grip handle, the mug is instant warm beverage satisfaction. Use it from morning to evening for coffee, cocoa, hot toddies – even soup!



SERVEWARE

Platters matter. From fruit bowls and pickle dishes to turkey plates and teapots, serveware makes entertaining easier – and in a colorful array of shapes and sizes, a little more elegant to boot.



Platter

Oval, round, embellished or embossed, a good platter is needed at every feast. Consider size, material and other features – like handles – that'll serve your purposes best.

Vegetable Bowl

A classic piece for warm vegetables, mashed potatoes or meaty main-course stews, this dish often comes with a lid or an elegant base for heat retention and easy serving.

Serving Bowl

Varying in size, the serving bowl is an all-purpose dish for family-style salads, rice, couscous – even snacks like popcorn or fresh fruit for display.



Gravy Boat & Stand

Graceful and easy to pour, the aptly named gravy boat is handy for sauces both savory and sweet. Its accompanying stand catches drips and helps make any occasion look a little more formal.



Creamer

A teatime tradition, the creamer lends richness to any meal. When not in use, it makes a lovely permanent fixture for the table.

Covered Sugar Bowl

Put a lid on it! Easily identifiable by shape, the covered sugar bowl is a charming home accessory and an indispensable part of coffee breaks and everyday breakfasts.



Teapot

The classic teapot has a beautiful stout shape that's perfect for steeping. Cherished for ages in both the East and West, it's an entertaining essential.



Coffeepot

Taller than a teapot, this carafe is a coffee lover's must. Its large capacity and heat-retaining qualities let you enjoy that third cup of joe in style.

