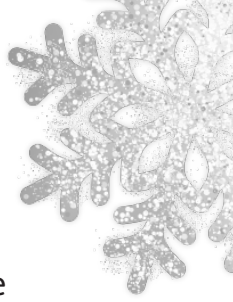




DESIGNS BY *Gia*

# 10 TIPS

*Designing  
the Perfect  
Holiday Table*



Gia Milazzo Smith

As a professional interior designer, I have had the opportunity to assist many clients with their holiday decorating and entertaining. Designing the holiday table has always been one of my favorite decorating projects, from elegant formal parties to casual holiday gatherings the holiday table always sets the tone for the event. I've prepared some of my top design tips that can help you to bring a designer look to your holiday table.



## 1 SELECT YOUR CHINA

Creating a beautiful holiday table starts with choosing china or dishware. You can mix a few patterns or choose just one, I love mixing old and new. Vintage items, mixed with contemporary pieces will give your table a unique and personal look. Look for items with similar colors and patterns with a similar scale. Hunt flea markets for vintage china and unique serving pieces. This will add personality and pattern to your table. If you are starting from scratch, white plates are a great choice because they are so versatile. You can use white plates and dishware with so many different tablecloths and flower options to create different looks for every holiday throughout the year.



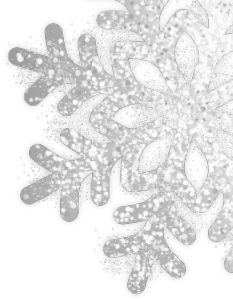
## 2 COLOR SCHEME

After choosing your china, create a color scheme using complementary colors, a single pop of color, or a monochromatic color scheme. Develop your table's color scheme to complement the color scheme of your home's existing decor. As you can see in this photo my blue and white china was the inspiration for this Holiday table. I added silver and gold and disbursed the colors evenly across the entire tablescape.



## 3 DESIGN YOUR CENTERPIECE

Here is where you can have some fun! Play with various items, check to see if the size and proportion of your centerpiece or arrangement will work with the size of your table. Use groupings or single items to bring your unique style to the table. Also, remember to create a centerpiece that allows you to see everyone at the table.



## 4 ADD SOMETHING FROM NATURE

I've made centerpieces from so many natural elements, including pinecones, fruit, vegetables, branches, tree bark, and every nut, berry and greenery variety that I could find. Add paint, ribbon and candles but don't forget to clean everything thoroughly before bringing it in from the yard. A little goes a long way with natural elements, stick with one or 2 items in multiples.



## 5 ADD THE GLOW OF CANDLELIGHT

Candlelight is a great way to illuminate the holiday table. A soft glow will bounce off glassware and china and will add sparkle to your tablescape. Use vary heights and sizes for a more interesting arrangement.



## 6 USE PLACE CARDS

A great way to make your guests feel welcome is to personalize their place seating by adding a custom place card. Simple homemade place cards are great, so involve the kids and use your imagination!



## 7 TABLE LINENS

Use a solid color or a boldly patterned fabric that will complement your dishes. Don't be afraid to experiment. If you don't want to use a tablecloth, look for some inexpensive placemats. You could also add color and texture with a table runner. You could even use a beautiful wool blanket, a scarf, some crisp casual dish towels if the colors coordinate with your scheme.





## 8 DECORATIVE DETAILS

Add personality to your table by adding decorative details. Use what you have, heirloom salt and pepper shakers, napkin rings, unique items that pull together the entire look of your table. It can be fun to incorporate meaningful items from family members, like great grandma's crystal bowl, filled with candy or flowers. Just be sure it all ties in together in theme, color and proportion, too many different things together will look cluttered and messy. Layer your table carefully, and just like putting on jewelry, if you are not sure, remove a piece. A little decorative detail goes a long way when mixed with the other elements of your table.



## 9 CHOOSE GLASSWARE

We can't forget about the glassware. I believe that glassware is one of the most important details of your whole table design. Whether you are doing a simple table setting for a casual gathering with just one piece of glassware per table setting, or a formal dinner with numerous pieces, this adds sparkle and dimension to your table design. If numerous pieces of glassware are being used, I like to vary the heights as much as possible, but be sure to keep all glassware pieces proportioned to each other, this creates movement and balance across your table. Choose clear glassware or a color that complements your table, I like to mix colors to create a nice balanced yet interesting look. Glassware doesn't have to be expensive, there are so many options to choose from when purchasing, think about your china colors and coordinate your selections with items that you already own. You might only have 3 glasses of one style and 3 of another but if you alternate each place setting, it will look cohesive.



## 10 DRESS THE CHANDELIER

Consider decorating the chandelier if you have one over your table. Hang ornaments or greenery! Even if you incorporate a few of these ideas in your home you will have great results!

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