Trimmings for your Christmas time table

FAMILY AND FRIENDS are going to spend a lot of time in your dining room during the holidays, so it's important to establish the mood by setting a festive-looking table.

A Christmas table should be decorated with as much care as a Christmas tree.

A miniature porcelain cache pot filled with a small Christmus cactus is an easy, inexpensive favor that decorates the table. Or fill porcelain boxes with homemade candies and set them in front of each guest's plate.

Nature's gifts also belong on the table since they are an important part of the season. China with delicate flowers and leafy designs coordinates well with a holiday centerpiece of pine cones, fir, holly and moss set on a large oval platter. Another idea is to fill a bowl with apples and cinnamon sticks, green peppers or limes and mix in gold or silver Christmas ornaments.

It Mother Nature doesn't cooperate. China that depicts scenes of winter can help create the feeling of a white Christmas. This can be combined with a floral arrangement of baby's breath and silver ornaments flecked with artificial snow and topped with tinsel. Suggest the idea of a manger by using straw placemats and Scandinavian straw ornaments hung from a chandelier.

DIFFERENT STYLES of entertaining can be just as fun and successful as a sit-down, formal dinner. One alternative is to invite friends over for a tree-trimming party and a light supper. Ask each guest to bring a handmade ornament. Surprise them and decorate most of the tree yourself before they come — but save the ends of the branches so each can hang his ornament in a prized location. Serve the supper as a buffet, using oversize buffet plates.

If there are children among your invited guests, consider setting a table just for them. The younger generation will enjoy having its own china, and there are many patterns available for children of all ages.

For an Oriental mood, china with

For an Oriental mood, china with touches of red and gold is very effective. Tie red ribbons strung with tiny bells around vases and fasten holly sprigs around napkins and chopsticks.

Let the tabletop be a focal point for your holiday decorating and entertaining.





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