

Dining Room Furniture Buying Guide

Your dining room is a place where family and friends gather for special occasions. The dining room furniture you choose will show that everyone is welcome in your home. When the room feels comfortable, looks stylish and accommodates all your guests, every meal you eat there will feel like a celebration.

Chances are the dining room furniture you buy now will be the furniture you will have for many years to come. Knowing a few key facts will help you shop intelligently and purchase dining room furniture that will meet your needs and last for years. This dining room furniture buying guide includes some basic information to help you sort through the options and choose the dining furniture that will work best for you.

What you need to know

Common Dining Room Furniture questions

Buy Dining Room Furniture here

What you need to know

Dining Tables

Size

Before choosing a dining room table, measure your dining room. Remember that you will need space to walk around the table and pull out the chairs. A round table or a bistro table will feel right in a smaller room, while a rectangular table fills a larger room better. Generally, try to leave 48 inches between the edge of the table and the wall or closest piece of furniture.

When you are considering size, also think about how many people will usually be sitting at your table. If you have a small family, a large dining table would feel impersonal. Most dining tables are 36 to 42 inches wide to accommodate food and place settings. Adjustable tables such as drop-leaf tables give you the option of expanding the length when necessary.

Style

Next, think about the overall feel you want the room to have. To give your home a cohesive feel, choose dining room furniture which reflects the architecture of your house and the style of other rooms in your house. The materials your dining table is made of will affect this, but not all rules are hard and fast. For example, a mahogany table may feel formal, but an oak dining table or pine dining table will feel casual, even though they are also made out of wood. The table legs can also change the style. When you think of a metal table, it's often very modern and sleek, but if the legs are curved, it can feel more elegant.

Dining Table care

When choosing your table, consider the care that you are willing to put into it. Many wood dining tables are durable and may need only occasional furniture polish, but softer woods may be more susceptible to scratches and could benefit from use of a tablecloth. Glass dining tables may not scratch or stain, but fingerprints show up easily. Generally, any window cleaner can be used to clean glass dining tables.

Dining Chairs

If you purchase your dining chairs separately from your dining table, be sure the sizes work together. Most dining tables are 29 to 30 inches tall, and you want about 12 inches from seat to the top of the table. Look for dining chairs that are 18 to 19 inches tall for standard height tables. A seat width of 20 to 24 inches will be most comfortable, but other width sizes can be stylish if they fit the scale of your table.

Remember to think about who will be sitting in your dining chairs. A narrow chair with a low back won't work if your family or guests are very tall. Heavy dining room chairs will be frustrating for children to pull out from the table.

Dining Chair care

Many dining chairs come with upholstered seats, which are comfortable, but are also likely to be spilled on eventually. If you want a material that can be cleaned easily, consider buying upholstered dining chairs in fabrics such as leather, microsuede, or cotton. Heavier fabrics like velvet look and feel luxurious, but will require more work to clean. Wood chairs can usually be cleaned with commercial furniture polish.

Dining Set Pricing

Many dining room tables and chairs are sold together as dining sets. This is an easy way to furnish your dining room so you can start using it. It can also save you the trouble of figuring out whether or not the chairs fit the table.

The prices of dining tables, chairs, or dining sets can be influenced by a few factors. First, the materials of the dining table and chairs may affect the price. Hard woods are often the most expensive, but these are quite durable and beautiful. Engineered woods--particle board or veneered woods--are often less expensive but can last a long time if cared for correctly. Second, the price can be affected by whether or not you assemble the dining room furniture yourself. Pre-assembled pieces can cost a bit more and may take a little longer to be shipped, but if you don't have the time or patience to assemble furniture, the cost may be worth it to you.

Remember that you will probably have your dining room furniture for many years. Choosing the style and size you like now will matter years from now, long after you've forgotten the price.

Filling Your Dining Room with Furniture

Once you've chosen your dining table and chairs, you can sit down and eat in your dining room. But don't stop there! Including other furniture in the room will make it feel complete.

If you are limited on space or want to add a small table to another room in your house, consider using bar furniture. Although smaller, bar tables are still functional, and they take up much less space. Remember to buy bar stools that fit the height of the table by following the twelve-inch rule: twelve inches between the table top and the chair's seat.

Are you looking for a kitchen table and chairs? Follow the same suggestions regarding size, but feel free to choose a kitchen set that is more casual than a dining set.

If you have a collection of china dishware, show it off in a china cabinet. Choose one in a coordinating material to your dining table. In addition to your dishes, you can also use your cabinet to display figurines or other collectibles.

Adding a wine rack to your dining room can be elegant--not to mention convenient when you are entertaining. Storage of your wine collection can be a decorative element in a wood wine rack or an iron wine rack. Wine racks come in many different styles: some hang on the wall, some are integrated into pieces of furniture, others sit on the table. A buffet, also known as a sideboard, is a great place to set your wine rack.

Common Dining Room Furniture questions

What size rug should I put under my dining room table?

Ideally, a rug will be large enough that when a dining chair is pulled out far enough to comfortably seat a person, all the chair legs will still be on the rug. Consider choosing your dining set first and the rug later if you are unsure. If your dining room is carpeted, you don't need an area rug, but layering one over the carpet will define the area and be very attractive.

What size table should I buy?

Here's a basic guide to how many people you can fit at your dining table. Remember to consider the size of the people to ensure personal comfort. These sizes are approximate; available dining tables may not be in these exact dimensions.

Four people:

28-inch to 40-inch square

36-inch to 48-inch round

Four to six people:

28-inch by 46-inch to 40-inch by 58-inch rectangle

58-inch to 78-inch round

Six to eight people:

36-inch by 60-inch to 48-inch by 72-inch rectangle or oval

Eight to ten people:

36-inch by 80-inch to 48-inch by 92-inch rectangle

36-inch by 36-inch to 80-inch by 92-inch oval

Ten to twelve people:

36-inch by 96-inch to 48-inch by 108-inch rectangle

Fourteen to sixteen people:

36-inch by 124-inch to 48-inch by 126-inch rectangle

