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China on a Budget

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China on a Budget

Jane Willey suggests various designs and essential pieces for your “starter set” of chinaware.

Hold fast to your pocket book and common sense when choosing china for it is easy to be swayed by beauty and ignore practical considerations.

The old fashioned idea that one must have complete dozen sets of plates, soup dishes or finger bowls has been abandoned. It is best to begin with a good small dinnerware set, and add as one can afford it.

Why not consider a “starter set?” Decide on the probable budget and then check the pieces of chinaware which will be needed most. “Starter sets” may begin with only four pieces. Add a few pieces to the original set as often as possible. When you select your starter set beware of sales and bargains on chinaware which offer the last few pieces of an open stock pattern.

In choosing a desirable pattern observe the body or paste from which it is made. Examine the glaze that covers its surface, the shape of the individual pieces and the design or decoration.

Decide what pieces in the dinnerware set are most essential. Select a medium size plate that can serve either as a breakfast or dinner plate. Buy a smaller plate appropriate for salads or desserts.

Cups and saucers are naturally essential pieces. The average size cup will best fit the occasion whether serving breakfast coffee or tea. A medium size meat platter, sugar and creamer should also be included in the starter set.

Two round serving dishes can be used for vegetables, gravy, fruit sauces or as berry serving dishes. Round dishes are more useful as they serve several purposes while oval dishes are suited especially to vegetables.

Smaller bowls for serving cereals, puddings and soups should complete the necessary essentials for the beginning set. If the budget permits, a few accessories might be added such as an extra bread plate, jelly and jam dish or a combination dish for spreads and relishes.

Porcelain alone is used for the formal dinner, but it is not necessary to have all the china alike at informal dinners or buffet luncheons. Why not brighten up the table with colored dessert plates? If salad is served as a separate course, it can be served on colored plates too.

Present day variety in table settings provides an opportunity for combining harmonious types of chinaware. Use some porcelain, pottery, glassware or semi-porcelain.

Choose chinaware in keeping with the theme of the home. The choice of pattern can be governed by almost the same rules which concern selection of furniture. Chinaware should be related in scale, color and detail to all the table service and to other furnishings in the room.

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