HOW TO: PAINT YOUR OWN TABLECLOTH

- Light coloured cotton or linen tablecloth (or hemmed piece of fabric)
- Acrylic paint (or a sample pot of wall paint)
- Jar for paint mixing
- Paint Brush
- Dropcloth or old sheet
- Iron

Allow 1.5-2hrs to create your tablecloth design. WATCH EVIE'S VIDEO GUIDE HERE!

- Lay drop cloth over your table to protect it (you may want to iron it for a smooth painting surface).
- Spread tablecloth over table. Paint from the middle out as it's easiest to see your finished design this way.
- Mix your paint. Acrylic & house paints have a plastic feel when applied to fabric directly, but with some water they'll soften and soak into the fabric for a nicer finish.
- You want to find the balance between being nice to paint with but not so watery the paint soaks and bleeds through the fabric. Test the consistency on a corner of your drop cloth first!
- Paint your design - Evie chose simplistic dinner party motifs like glasses, bowls of pasta, baguettes etc but you can do anything! Don't over think it, the sketchy quality of the paint strokes is all part of the charm.
- Let it dry fully and then iron each motif well on the reverse on a low heat to set the paint. You could also throw it in the dryer on a short spin.
- Your custom tablecloth is ready to use!
- To keep your tablecloth clean, ideally just spot clean - if you have set the paint with an iron you could do a cool machine wash and line dry.

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PREPARATION – TABLE SETTING

"Ultimately your table should complement the food and drink you are serving. For this relaxed, rustic Italian inspired fare, I've gone for linens in natural tones, with hand-made touches." – Evie Kemp

TABLE LINEN

The humble tablecloth doesn't get enough credit for its ability to transform the kitchen / work from home desk / dumping ground into a beautiful dining space!

- Layering fabrics is an easy way to add texture and interest to your table. Lengths of fabric cut to size work just as well as a tablecloth and give you a custom look.
- Start with a larger piece covering the whole table, then drape the second cloth across the middle of the table - just be sure it's flat so you can put glasses on top!
- For Yealands #supperclub, Evie used a neutral striped linen base, and created a hand painted foodie tablecloth to layer on top – watch her video here.
- Placemats used in addition to a tablecloth add a visual layer, helps save your tablecloth, and gives guests a place to rest their cutlery.
- Cloth napkins are a must unless you're hosting a large group. They signify effort and show you care! To make it easier at the end of the night, throw them into hot water and detergent to soak. They'll come out nicely, ready for next time.

TABLEWARE

- Use what you have! You can tie the setting together with other elements, for example, if you have blue plates, bring in some of that colour in the table accessories to make it look intentional.
- Similarly, if you have mismatched pieces, just make that part of your look! Don't buy a whole new dinner set - unless this is the perfect excuse you've been waiting for!
- Think ahead about what you'll be serving and what dishes you'll need.
- Pre-set the table before you start cooking to avoid accidentally using pieces you need while cooking (like all the spoons!).

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PREPARATION – TABLE SETTING

"When serving different wines with each course, it's a nice touch to change glasses to really appreciate each wine. You don't need to go overboard but aim to have a glass for white wine, red wine and water for each guest." – Evie Kemp

DECOR

- This comes back to the style of the food you're serving and matching the vibe. Get creative with decorations and take direct inspiration from the food - I repurposed tomato tins as pots and vases to work perfectly with our theme.
- There's a real trend for using fruit & vegetables in styling – they're beautiful, so why not?
- Keep it practical, everything should be below head height to allow for conversation and leave space for dishes and plates.
- The term "table centrepiece" tends to make you think of a single large arrangement, but instead think of a still life that looks different and lovely from every angle of the table.
- Fresh flowers are a must but keep it functional - use small posies or decorative herbs.
- Handwritten menus and place cards are a special touch so be sure to print out our templates!

LIGHTING

- Lighting is key for setting the mood, so move some lamps into the room and turn those overhead lights off!
- Candles are great but again, keep it simple and don't overdo it - you don't want to be moving lit candles around when food comes out.

ENJOY!

- Most importantly, hosting a dinner party should be as fun so make it what you want it to be!
- Use the good china! Put on your favourite music and enjoy yourself - if you're having a good time, you can be sure everyone else is too!