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How to create a welcoming entertaining space at home

The lasting effects of the pandemic that swept across the globe in 2020 will be studied for years to come. Though some consequences have yet to be discovered, others, including a heightened desire to entertain loved ones at home, were already apparent even before the world emerged from the darkest days of the pandemic.

A 2021 study from Butcher-Box™ found that 46 percent of survey respondents were excited to host and entertain guests in their home when it was deemed safe to do so. Such gatherings were given the green light years ago, and homeowners have maintained their en-

thusiasm for entertaining.

With that in mind, homeowners looking to upgrade their entertaining spaces can look to these tips as they prepare to welcome guests into their homes.

- *Establish various seating areas.* Ample seating is a must when welcoming guests into your home. Open layouts make it easier to add seating without feeling cramped, so homeowners whose properties feature such design schemes may find it easier to accommodate more guests than homes with more traditional, compartmentalized layouts.

When arranging seating, aim to create multiple seating areas

so guests can speak privately to one another if they so desire. Multiple seating areas also ensure more than one conversation can take place at a time. That's especially useful when hosting a game watch, as some guests may come for the game while others may be more interested in socializing than the score.

- *Designate spaces for children.* Kids are typically part of the equation when entertaining at home, so it's important that hosts create spaces for them as well. A basement or children's playroom can do the trick. If the weather outside is welcoming, a fenced-in backyard with games and a trampoline can provide the perfect

space for kids to have fun while the adults get to engage in conversation and catch up with friends and family apart from boisterous youngsters.

- *Add lighting.* Dimly lit rooms may be a homeowner's desired aesthetic when no one's visiting, but lack of light can give the impression certain rooms are off limits or lead to muted conversations. Adjust recessed lighting so bulbs provide a warm but well-lit space for guests to relax and converse. In rooms without such lighting, open blinds or curtains or add some floor lamps before the party so rooms are well lit when guests arrive. Avoid lighting candles during the gathering,

as flickering flames pose a fire hazard.

- *Utilize Florida rooms or outdoor spaces when possible.* Afford access to a Florida room or a deck or patio if the weather allows. The great outdoors tends to be a natural mood enhancer, and even some brief breaks in the fresh air can do guests some good. If guests will be spending ample time in a Florida room or outdoors, ensure ample seating is available and make sure those spaces are well lit as well.

Entertaining at home is wildly popular, and homeowners can employ some simple strategies to make their homes welcoming spaces for friends and family.