

Good LIVING

HOME, STYLE, BEAUTY, HEALTH

/ THE WELL-KEPT HOME /

CHECK MATES

Meet the softer side of plaid: madras. This classic, lightweight fabric is one part prep school and another part camp lodge, but when reimagined in sophisticated hues, it's altogether perfect for summering up your place. Sign up for these simple ideas, and feel the breeze.

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Named for the city in India where it originated, madras is traditionally made of cotton tinted with vegetable dyes.

Peaceful Pillows

A bed covered in a riot of different patterns can look busy, but this inviting tumble of easy-to-sew pillows is serene. To create a cohesive mix, stick to weaves in the same palette (ours share quiet neutral shades), and use a solid linen spread and shams as the backdrop.

THE DETAILS: Fabrics, from left: **Mood Designer Fabrics #326671** (similar to shown), \$14 a yd., moodfabrics.com. **B&J Fabrics #120526** (similar to shown), \$27 a yd.; and **#76092672**, \$27 a yd., bandjfabrics.com. For the how-to and additional credits, see page 105.

Cool Coasters

Frosty beverages never had more dashing places to sit. Get inexpensive cork coasters, trace them onto a few different fabrics, and cut the shapes out. Brush glossy *découpage* sealant onto the coasters, smooth on the fabric circles, and let them sit for 15 minutes.

Then apply a liberal second coat directly onto the fabric and let it dry.

THE DETAILS: Thirstystone cork coasters, \$10 for 8, bedbathandbeyond.com. For a selection of similar fabrics, visit **B&J Fabrics**, bandfabrics.com.



Bold Baselines

A madras tablecloth can set a modern scene. It's a quick, straight-line stitch: Buy enough yardage to allow for about six inches of overhang, then zip the edges through a sewing machine to hem them.

THE DETAILS: Fabric Wholesale Direct #16114, \$5 a yd., fabricwholesaledirect.com. Vintage ceramic bowls and pitchers.



TABLE TOPPERS

These quick DIY ideas have all the qualities of a well-tailored button-down—they're polished enough for a dinner party, but so comfortable you'll be tempted to pull them out every day.



Talented Trays

Carry drinks to the patio on a madras-lined tray, and you'll feel like you're on vacation. Measure and cut fabric to fit the bottom, then brush the tray with matte *découpage* sealant and place the fabric on top. Press gently to adhere and leave for 15 minutes, then do a top coat and let it dry.

THE DETAILS: Fabric Wholesale Direct #15980 (left), \$5 a yd.; and #15981, \$5 a yd., fabricwholesaledirect.com. Muji wooden trays, \$28 each, muji.us. Vintage ceramic bowl.



Laid-Back Linens

To fold some personality into a neutral place setting, just add colorful madras napkins. They're beautiful and sturdy, whether you're serving a special brunch or some messy (in the best way) burgers.

THE DETAILS: Auntie Oti madras napkin, \$12, auntieoti.com. Jenni Kayne Sierra dinner plate, \$60; and salad plate, \$45, jennikayne.com. Pottery Barn Modern Farmhouse flatware set, in Honey (similar to shown), \$40, potterybarn.com.

Lovely Lighting

Cover a lampshade in a subtle plaid, and give your living room or den a dose of style. Choose a smooth drum shape: The straight and flat sides make it easiest to work with, because you can wrap fabric around it rather than tailoring to fit. Cut out a rectangle long enough to encircle it, with an extra inch at the top and bottom. Lay it on an even surface, coat the shade with spray adhesive, place it in the middle of the fabric, and pull the cloth up and around, pressing to adhere and ensuring that the lines on the material stay parallel to the top and bottom of the shade. Hot-glue the excess fabric to the inside of the shade, and let dry.

THE DETAILS: Theory cotton plaid, \$14 a yd., Mood Designer Fabrics, 212-730-5003. Lamps Plus white hardback drum lampshade, 16" by 16" by 12", \$50, lampsplus.com. Lostine Bella Skirt lamp, \$665, lostine.com. Vintage wicker vase.



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Airy Accessories

Don't toss out any leftover fabric; use it to spiff up a summer hat or bag. Snip a scrap into a square, and fray the edges by gently pulling a few loose threads. Then tuck it into a basket, which you can carry as a purse or a chic lunch bag. To customize a sun hat (or tote, or keychain, or suitcase handle), fold over a narrow length of fabric and hem the unfolded edge, fray the ends, and tie it on like a ribbon. Just like that, you'll be able to spot your stuff in seconds at the neighborhood pool—or airport baggage claim.

THE DETAILS: B&J Fabrics #710083172 (on hat), \$27 a yd.; and #120516 (in basket), \$27 a yd., bandfabrics.com. Intiearth Cajamarca hat, \$140, intiearth.com. Olli Ella Big Apple basket, \$49, us.oliella.com.

