

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI
Feng Shui by Maria
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Dining Rooms – Nurturing Gathering Places

While on a recent, fabulous trip to Italy I was made keenly aware of the importance of dining areas for nurturing the inner and outer you.

At each hotel we visited, lavish breakfasts were served alongside beautiful views and inspiring art and decorations, setting a pleasurable tone for our day. Our dining experiences with our European families were always within well-appointed dining rooms with whimsical table settings, candles, centerpieces and colorful food; all together creating nurturing five element displays, and leading to a sense of closeness.

Our dining rooms become places where we nourish and renew our bodies, hearts and spirits. It is important to note the importance the dining room has on your energy flow. Because nourishment is so vital to our health and wellbeing, Feng Shui encourages us to design a pleasant and serene dining environment; turn off the telephone and TV, play soft music, set the table, light candles and dine at a leisurely pace. Arrange furniture, plants, rugs and other Ch'i enhancers to slow the body down, aiding digestion and stimulating conversation.

Whether you have a formal dining room, a breakfast nook or a kitchen counter there are a few enhancements that help make your dining experience a pleasant one and make us more aware of the Ch'i qualities in our food. There are also a few things that are NOT recommended for enjoyable dining.

Here are a few general Dos and Don'ts to ensure your dining room is following the Feng Shui guides of Comfort and Safety:

- Comfort is inherent in the positive flow of Ch'i. Make sure your furniture is comfortable, if not, replace or pad the chairs.
- Ensure safety by making sure that there are no sharp edges on the table or chairs. Soften sharp edges glass tables with cloths or table runners. Round and oval tables are more Feng Shui friendly.
- Make sure your dining area is defined enough to have its own identity; screens, plants, lighting, area rugs and furniture placement can help define the space.
- Choose art that relaxes, inspires you and is related to the Bagua area where the room resides.
- Give each chair a pleasant view.

Dining Room Don'ts:

- Mirrors, especially when large, can over activate a room meant to be tranquil, and make your guests uncomfortable. If possible, avoid mirrors in dining rooms, or break the reflection with plants, screens, candles, vases etc.

Dining Rooms and the Bagua

The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors, which comes from the Chinese philosophy, "The I Ching," and literally means "eight trigrams" with the center for grounding.

WEALTH AND PROSPERITY	FAME AND REPUTATION	LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP
HEALTH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS	CENTER AND GROUNDING	CHILDREN AND CREATIVITY
KNOWLEDGE AND SELF- CULTIVATION	CAREER	HELPFUL PEOPLE AND TRAVEL
↑	↑	↑

ENTRANCE QUADRANT

Dining Rooms should take on the qualities of the Bagua area they reside in. Here are some examples of using the Bagua enhancements for Dining Rooms:

Dining Rooms in Career Area

- * Items in items in black or very dark colors, glass/crystal items
- * Water features, (fountains, waterfalls or aquariums)
- * Art depicting water scenes

Dining Rooms in Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area

- * Items in wood, the colors of blues, greens, or black and in the shape of columns or stripes
- * Healthy plants with rounded soft leaves
- * Art depicting nature scenes

Dining Rooms in Friends/Family/Health Area

- * Healthy floral arrangements or art depicting vibrant flowers
- * Photos of family, friends or representing perfect health
- * Items in wood and the colors of blues, greens, or black

Dining Rooms in Wealth Area

- * Opulent items in the purple color spectrum
- * Art representing wealth such as luxurious vacation spots, stunning architectural homes etc.
- * Healthy, round leaf plants

Dining Rooms in Fame Area

- * Photos or art representing achievements or inspiration
- * Items in the colors red
- * Items representing the fire element with candles and lighting

Dining Rooms in Love and Marriage Area

- * Pairs of items (candles, love birds, vases)
- * Art or photos depicting romance
- * Colors of reds, pinks and white

Dining Rooms in Children and Creativity Area

- * Photos of children or items made by children
- * Items in metal and the colors of white and pastels
- * Whimsical art

Dining Rooms in Helpful People and Travel Area

- * Art or figures pertaining to spiritual guides, and/or mentors, helpful people or places where you have traveled or want to travel
- * Items in metal and colors of white, black or grey

Dining Rooms in Center Area

- * An auspicious location for the dining room because food is associated with the Earth Element.
- * Items in ceramics, the colors yellow, earth tones, and rectangle shapes
- * Art depicting earth tone scenes such as fields, deserts, sunflowers etc.

Feng Shui at Work

I often tell my clients looking for love to leave their dining room table set beautifully for two, with fine china, and crystal. I encourage them to eat there, even by themselves a few times a week. A recent client was sad because the man she had been dating had become aloof, and it looked to her as if the relationship was ending. One of my recommendations was to remove all the piles of papers from her dining room table and set it elegantly as if two people were dining. I was impressed with the picture she sent me of her opulent dining table in her wealth area, set for two. Soon after she texted me that this gentleman had contacted her, wanted to reconnect, and now the relationship has taken a turn for the better.

One of the greatest Dining Room transformations was with another client who had her dining room in the Wealth Area. At the time of our initial consultation she had a very large mirror overlooking the table. I told her this was too active of a feature for restful dining. In fact, I had to keep resisting the urge to check my hair while we were talking. I would have hated to be facing it during a meal. After her transformation she sent me a picture of the room; she chose to paint the walls a shade of light purple and added purple and gold accents creating an opulent table setting, replaced the mirror with a stunning painting of gold and purple flowers, and placed a small bubbling fountain on the sideboard. She later reported that her life had indeed become more prosperous in many ways, including reconnecting with her estranged family members.

Affirmations and Inner Work:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. Intent is the inner work that leads you to a more harmonious life. This inner work is about nurturing your body, heart and spirit. If you are hungry on any level, decide how you can create a nurturing atmosphere that feeds that part of you.

LIFE IS A FEAST! Make sure you're enjoying every bite.

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. Setting a pretty table and turning off the TV makes a huge difference in the flow of your Ch'i at mealtimes.

Don't let your dining room be just a place to store piles of papers and clutter, instead make it a place of beauty. Your dining room represents the nurturing of all aspects of your life. Once you have enhanced the space enjoy a great meal, feel the nurturing energy and express your gratitude for all your blessings.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING! I give thanks to all of my readers.

For questions or home consultations email at mtmccull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, (where you can read past columns), or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria", where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

* **Check out my BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

Until then...Blessings!

Maria McCullough is the owner / founder of Feng Shui by Maria (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 20 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."

