

HELLO
February



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"The only difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra."
- jimmy Johnson

SIMPLIFYING THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING PAINT COLORS

Compared to many of the ways you can update your home, new paint on the walls is one of the easiest and most affordable ways to make a big impact. A new paint color can make it a brand-new room without even changing furniture, accessories, artwork, or built-in features. In fact, the hardest part is usually picking the right color. Not to worry, we've collected some tips below to help you choose your next paint color and create a fresh new space.



Find your inspiration

You can look for inspiration anywhere – magazines, Pinterest, nature, your favorite restaurant – but the best place to find your inspiration may already be right there in your home. Start with what you have. Think of your favorite rug, those amazing throw pillows, the furniture, the tile or brick, or the artwork on your walls; what colors would go great with what you have?

Create flow

Pay attention to how the house feels as a whole, and consider whether the new living room color will look from the kitchen, etc. It's common to carry the same trim and door colors throughout the house or choose shades from a common color palette. The rooms don't need to match but try to create flow between spaces. There are several online color tools that can help you choose a palette you love.

Work with what you have

Make the most of your house by thoughtfully complimenting architectural features, cabinets, countertops, fireplaces, and built-ins. Think about the size of the room, the height of the ceilings, and the windows. Lighter colors tend to open a space and make it feel larger, while darker colors can make a space feel cozy and intimate. High contrast can make a dramatic impact and draw attention, while low contrast can feel softer and more subtle.

Color psychology

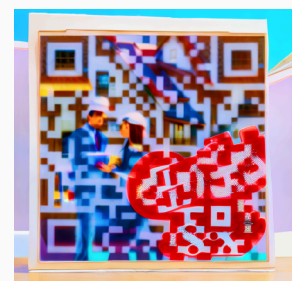
Think about how you want to feel in your room and what you'll be doing while you're in there. Social areas like the kitchen and dining room might be best served with warm, energetic colors in the yellow and red families, while private areas like the bedroom and bathroom may feel more calming and relaxing in cool blues and greens.

Lighting makes all the difference

Bring those paint chips home and look at them in the space you'll be painting. Look at them at all times of the day and in natural and artificial light. Colors appear incredibly different to us based on the light we see them in. After you've narrowed it down to a couple of choices, go the extra step and get paint samples of the finalists so you can paint a larger area and view it in your space. Using boards for this instead of your walls is a great way to view the colors in various places around your room.

Sources: sherwin-williams.com & marthastewart.com

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NEW RECIPE Homemade Top Tarts

Cooking Time: 10 Minutes
Servings: 8 Servings

Ingredients:

- o 1 (15 ounce) package refrigerated pie crusts
- o ¼ cup strawberry jam, divided
- o 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- o 2 tablespoons milk
- o ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- o 1 tablespoon colored decorating sugar, or as needed

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Unroll pie crusts, place on a lightly floured work surface, and roll slightly with a rolling pin to square the edges. Cut each crust into 8 equal-sized rectangles.
3. Place about 2 teaspoons strawberry jam in the center of 8 squares. Spread jam out to within 1/4-inch of the edge. Top each with another pastry square and use a fork to crimp together, sealing in jam. Use a knife to trim pastries, if desired. Transfer filled pastries to the prepared baking sheets.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until edges are lightly golden brown, about 7 minutes. Allow to cool on the baking sheets.
5. Stir together confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla extract in a bowl to make a spreadable frosting. Spread cooled tarts with frosting and sprinkle with colored sugar.

Source: allrecipes.com

START PLANNING A SUMMER VACATION NOW

Dreaming up a summer vacation is the perfect way to warm up as winter wears on. Planning early will give you the best chance to find great deals, coordinate with your travel mates, and have your pick of accommodations and time off work.

Putting together your well-deserved break this winter will give you something to look forward to and starting now will make the planning much easier. Answer these questions below and you'll be well on your way to the perfect vacation!

What do you want to get from your trip? Are you focused on rest and relaxation? Connection with your friends or family? Fun? Luxury? Adventure? Romance? Entertainment? Get clear on this before you start anything else.

Who's going? Kids? Pets? Friends? Do you want to visit someone at your destination? Choose companions who will match your goals for this trip, who will match your level of activity and adventure, and who will match your desires for connection on this trip.

What? When? Where? Now that you know your priorities and who's involved, plan together to decide on location, primary activities, time frame, and budget. If connection for you and your sweetheart is your main priority, you may choose someplace quiet with a spa. Alternatively, if the most important thing is that the vacation needs to happen between summer school and football camp, you'll want to check timing on every idea you have.

Using your priorities to guide your decisions, nail down your budget, location, time, people, and list of awesome things to do.



How are you going to do all this? The best thing about planning early is that you have a better opportunity to choose your travel and accommodations and to snag the best deals. Set your vacation time at work and book your flights, rooms, RVs, and rental cars. Make sure you check ahead of time for policies and accessibility that suit your needs. If you can, get a decent cancellation policy because life happens.

Depending on where you'll travel to, make sure your passports, IDs, vaccinations, or other travel requirements are in place well in advance of your dates.

What else? Once you have your travel and stay booked, consider purchasing tickets now to reserve your place at shows, theme parks, tours, or any special activities that may be sold out if you wait till the last minute. Research your destination, purchase travel guides or maps, and note places you may want to visit. Try to plan one or two experiences that let you really immerse yourself in your main reasons for this trip.

Arrange care for pets, house-sitting, forwarded mail, and make sure you're prepared for your time off at work. If you're going to drive your vehicle, schedule it for routine maintenance ahead of time.

Do you like lists? Even if you don't, lists are invaluable for travel. Make lists for packing, reservations and confirmation numbers, itineraries, restaurants, and anything else you can think of.