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Tricks to Saving More Money This Fall

Picking the right decorations on a budget can be a challenge.



A new season means a different set of decorations.

By Kendal Perez

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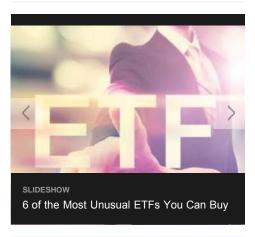


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Decorating for autumn represents an interesting challenge. Some people launch immediately into Halloween decorations while others go harvest-heavy, adorning mantels and doorsteps with pumpkins, hay bales and scarecrows. Others skip autumn completely, saving their efforts for the decor-drenched holiday season.

While squash and warm tones tend to dominate fall color themes, they don't represent the only way to stylize your space. What's more, you don't have to spend a ton of money to showcase the latest trends. I consulted with professional interior decorators, designers and home stagers from around the country to offer their insight into what's hot this season and how to incorporate these trends for less.

Rich hues and shiny metallics are in.

Metallics are huge this year, according to several designers. Karen Gray Plaisted, owner of Design Solutions KGP in Warwick, N.Y., suggests pairing metallics with another feminine hue. "The dulled brass that is trending along with warm pink is beautiful with pops of oranges or warm browns in a room," she says.

Alena Capra, owner of Alena Capra Designs in South Florida, agrees. "I am seeing more and more types of decorative pumpkins in everything from silver metallics, golds, grey velours, chevron prints and even bedazzled with crystals," she says. "The cool thing about these pieces is that you can buy a few for accents, and they can really allow your fall look to match your current decor."

While burnt orange is a trending (and fairly typical) color for fall, brass, deep purple and navy blue are also having a moment this season. "Jewel tones are back in a big way," says Coco Peterson, director of merchandising for deqor.com, an online furniture store. "I feel they are warmer and create a more relaxing atmosphere than the brights that have been everywhere," she adds.

Simplicity, sales and versatility are key to staying within your budget.

Professionals agree that a little goes a long way when it comes to decorating for fall. Arianne Bellizaire, interior designer in Baton Rouge, L.A., is a fan of keeping it simple. "Your house shouldn't look like you bought the entire seasonal section at your local craft store," she says. "Touches of dried stems and burlap ribbons here and there can add just the right touch of fall to your year-round decor items."

As luck would have it, autumn decor is currently on sale. Jennifer Weinmann of Weinmann Home Staging in Indianapolis suggests taking advantage of these timely discounts. "Hone in on places like Michaels where, for example, they're having a half-off sale on their floral," she advises. In addition, Pier 1 is offering 20 percent off select fall decor items, while JoAnn Fabrics is currently discounting pumpkin decor items by 50 percent.

The non-traditional autumn decor trends are best showcased through accessories like blankets, throw pillows, rugs and even table lamps. "Buy a couple of cute accent pillows in jewel tones," Peterson suggestions. "Pillows are the most flexible item in your home to change up." You can also purchase metallic spray paint to cheaply transform traditional autumn accents like pumpkins and pinecones into on-trend statement pieces.

For those seeking a more rustic look, decorating on a budget can be as simple as foraging your garden or nearby natural area. Sam Jernigan, Interior Designer for Renaissance Design Consultations in Grass Valley, Calif., is a big fan of this strategy. "Gather plump pine cones and soak them in a solution of water and bleach," she says. "They turn this gorgeous and very unexpected blonde hue."

Bea Pile, an HGTV award-winning designer and owner of B. Pila Design, is also an advocate of this approach. "When it comes to design, you can't compete with nature," she says. "Pine cones, branches, colored corns, curly willows, pumpkins and squash: These elements are timeless and can be obtained at a minimal cost."

Mark Cutler, chief designer for nousDECOR in Los Angeles, reminds consumers to keep autumn holidays in mind as they shop. "My advice to people is to have a long-term plan," he says. "The fall decorations should be capable of being augmented and turned into Halloween, and then pared down

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and turned into Thanksgiving."

Splurge strategically.

When it comes to splurging on autumn decor pieces, most designers suggest investing in pieces that are versatile and can transition through other seasons. Bellizaire especially likes ginger jars and hurricane vases because they transform based on what you choose to fill them with, she says. Peterson suggests purchasing items that will last for several years. "Do splurge on a thick and cozy cable-knit throws, chunky rugs or big bowls and candlestick holders," she advises.

Avoid clutter and over-theming.

Designers have just as many opinions about what you shouldn't buy this season, and for good reason: it's easy to go overboard in the decor department. "I don't like tchotchkes," Pile says. "If you're going to buy something, go big on one or a few things versus a bunch of little things that don't deliver design impact."

Items that are too obvious to one autumn season, like turkeys, are also best avoided, or at least purchased sparingly. "It's so specific to the season that you'll be constantly swapping out your decor to stay on top of the holiday at hand," Weinmann says. "Warm colors set the fall tone and are much easier to incorporate into your existing decor, plus they'll last for months!"

Ultimately, fall is a great time to cozy up your space for cooler temperatures, a feat that can be achieved without scorching your budget.

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Kendal Perez is a spokeswoman for CouponSherpa.com, a popular source for online, instore and mobile coupons. She also blogs at Hassle-Free Savings and enjoys yoga, decluttering, craft brew and obsessing over her dogs.

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