

# *Gracious Style*



THE PERFECT TABLECLOTH



Shelley Table Linens

## WELCOME TO GRACIOUS STYLE

At Gracious Style, we believe that fine linens are the hallmark of every well-appointed household. From classic table linens to intricately embroidered bedding, there is nothing quite as magnificent as a closet full of luxurious linens, carefully stored and bearing memories from years of celebrations.

We understand the importance of selecting the right linens for every occasion. This guide is specifically designed to make your choices easier. While fashions may change, quality and craftsmanship are timeless. For this reason, we work tirelessly to insure that every item we carry has been impeccably crafted using the finest materials so you can enjoy it for years to come.

### **What should I look for in fine linens?**

Fine linens are usually characterized by a combination of beautiful materials, expert construction, fine workmanship, and design. Most fine linens are made from linen or cotton because both are durable, absorbent, and pleasant to the touch.

Fine linens are smooth and soft (no coarse knots or uneven slubs should be visible); they may also be lustrous, but never shiny. Workmanship is key: all designs must be precisely executed, all colors uniform, and all seams must be finished evenly and correctly to ensure they are suitable for a lifetime of use.

### **What material should my table linens be made from?**

Because they are strong and absorbent, we recommend natural materials such as cotton and linen for table linens. While they do require ironing, they are long-lasting and have the most luxurious feel and appearance.

Although easy-care synthetics or synthetic blends are popular, we suggest avoiding them for formal dining because they are not as absorbent and have a tendency to pile over time. Some synthetics are also highly sensitive to heat, causing them to become shiny when they are pressed with a hot iron.

### **What is the difference between linen and cotton?**

Both linen and cotton are natural vegetable fibers. Linen comes from the flax plant, which grows in the cooler climates of western and northern Europe. Cotton comes from the cotton plant, which grows in hot, humid climates throughout the world. Both fabrics are highly absorbent, durable, and become significantly softer with use.

There are some subtle differences, however. Linen feels lighter and crisper and becomes whiter with use. It is also highly absorbent and lint-free. Cotton feels more substantial and is generally prone to more shrinkage than linen. To some, linen is still the ultimate choice for formal occasions, but either is considered appropriate.



Medici Table Linens

### **What determines quality in cotton fabrics?**

Quality in cotton is primarily based on the length of the fibers. This is because longer fibers can be spun into smoother, stronger, and much finer yarns, which can then be woven to create fabrics that are softer and more durable.

### **What is Egyptian cotton?**

By far the finest variety of cotton in the world is Egyptian cotton because the humid weather and rich soil around the Nile delta produce especially delicate and long fibers. Cotton grown in Egypt has a staple length of over 2 1/4", twice the size of that in generic cotton and 60% longer than Pima cotton. For this reason, Egyptian cotton is used to make some of the finest linens in the world.

### **What is organdy?**

Organdy is a crisp and sheer fabric that is often used to evoke a soft and romantic look. All of the cotton organdy tablecloths carried by Gracious Style are constructed using two-ply fabrics for strength and color saturation. Organdy fabrics are very easy care and may be occasionally starched for additional stiffness.



Ashford Table Linens



Chrysanthemum Table Linens



### **What determines quality in linen fabrics?**

Like cotton, higher quality linen fabrics are made from longer fibers because these produce finer and stronger yarns. In addition, these fibers have a very consistent thickness with almost no coarse knots or uneven slubs, resulting in a smooth hand.

### **What is Irish linen?**

Irish linen is widely acknowledged to be among the finest linen in the world, renowned for its fineness and traditional designs. In addition to the fineness of Irish yarns and the weavers' expertise, the softness of the waters in Northern Ireland (used in the finishing processes) produce an unusually soft and fine cloth.

### **What is a damask?**

Unlike a print, a damask or jacquard refers to patterns that are woven into the fabric of the cloth, creating a subtle, yet elegant look. This process requires threads to be woven in contrasting directions, which creates a pattern that is visible when viewed at certain angles. It is a common misconception that the term "damask" refers to a heavy cloth. However, damask patterns may be woven into fabrics of any weight.

### **What is a double damask?**

Double damask is different from ordinary damask in that it is made from finer yarns, resulting in a higher thread count and a softer hand. Certain designs (such as our Fine Scroll double damask) can only be produced in double damask because the higher number of yarns allows for finer details in the design.

### **What design should I choose for my table linens?**

Generally, formal linens are either solid, woven with a damask pattern, or embroidered. Cloths with printed fabric, or with bolder embroidery, are more suitable for informal settings. Should you prefer, Gracious Style offers a large variety of embroidery options to create any look you wish.

### **What colors should my table linens be?**

White is the most popular color for table linens and it is always appropriate for formal dining. Ivory and off-white colors are a popular second, especially in rooms with warmer tones. Beyond these, color is a matter of personal preference. We recommend considering the theme or tone of your event and the colors of your room, furnishings, and tableware.

### **What should I consider in choosing linens for a special event?**

There are several important factors to take into account when choosing table linens for a special event:

The **location** of your event. Choose colors to complement the existing décor of your dining room. For outdoor events, let the setting be your guide. Generally, bright colors look better in sunny locations, while pastels are wonderful in garden settings.

The **season** of the year. Spring and summer colors tend to be lighter, while bolder colors are more appropriate during the colder fall and winter months.

The **theme** of your event. Colorful linens are one of the most effective ways to set the mood you want to create. Vibrant colors add drama, while soft colors evoke a more refined atmosphere.



Camden Pink Table Linens

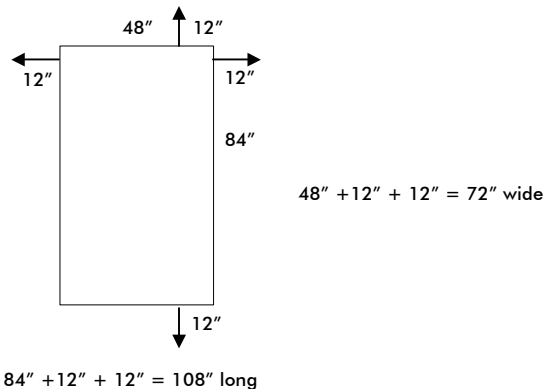
### What size tablecloth should I buy?

For formal settings, Gracious Style recommends that tablecloths should hang down 10" to 12" evenly around the table. More elaborate occasions may call for a drop of anywhere from 15" to 30" (all the way to the floor) and beyond. Keep in mind that the longer the drop, the more dramatic the effect will be on your room. In contrast, casual events call for cloths that have 6" – 8" drops.

To calculate the size of the tablecloth you need, measure the length and width of your table and add twice the desired drop to each dimension. For example, if your table measures 48" wide and 84" long, and you would like a 12" drop on each side, your tablecloth should be:

$$48" + 12" + 12" = 72" \text{ wide}$$

$$84" + 12" + 12" = 92" \text{ long}$$



$$84" + 12" + 12" = 108" \text{ long}$$

For round tables, measure the diameter of your table and add twice the desired drop. Following the example above, 48" round tables would require 70" round tablecloths.

### **My table has several leaves. What size tablecloth should I buy?**

If the table is extended and shortened often, separate tablecloths should be purchased to fit each size. If this is not possible, Gracious Style offers several solutions. The first one is to buy a cloth that fits the size of table that is used most often, and purchasing affordable banquet cloths for larger affairs. Another solution is to simply buy a cloth to fit the largest table, and use it at all times. A third possibility is to purchase a series of smaller square tablecloths, each of which can be draped diagonally over the table.

### **What shape should my tablecloth be?**

On square and rectangular tables, we suggest using the same shape tablecloth. On round tables, either rounds or squares may be used, while on oval tables, either oval or rectangular tablecloths may be used. If you have several tables that you use often and your budget is limited, a nice alternative is to use placemats and napkins, which will work in any situation.

### **What standard tablecloth sizes do you carry?**

Gracious Style is proud to carry a large assortment of standard tablecloths in every collection. For more information, view our basic chart of tablecloth sizes on our website at [www.graciousstyle.com](http://www.graciousstyle.com).

### **Can you do custom sizes?**

Yes. If you can't find a standard size tablecloth that fits your table, Gracious Style is happy to offer custom sizes in many of its collections.





Tudor Napkins with Claridge Monogram

### **How should I monogram my table linens?**

Single-letter monograms usually feature the first initial of the last name. On three-letter monograms, most individuals choose to have their first, middle, and last or first, last, and middle initials embroidered. For married couples, a popular choice is the initials of the couple's first names on either side of their married last name.

Alternatively, embroidered designs such as crowns or wreaths are also ideal for personalizing linens. Gracious Style can custom embroider any design you choose.

### **Where should I monogram my table linens?**

Placement of the monogram on table linens depends entirely on your personal style and how you like to set your table. Tablecloths are usually monogrammed in all four corners, two diagonal corners, or in the center of the cloth. Napkins are generally monogrammed in the lower right hand corner (straight or diagonal) or in the center. Placemats are monogrammed straight in the lower right corner. For more information, please visit Gracious Style's Monogram page at [www.graciousstyle.com](http://www.graciousstyle.com).

### **What style of monogramming do you recommend on table linens?**

We generally recommend choosing a style that is in keeping with the linens themselves. On classic linens, we suggest a timeless font such as the Script or the Diamond. For a more contemporary look, the Delano is a modern take on the classic Script. Fanciful monograms like the Palace Scroll and Claridge appear more prominent on plain linens. Keep in mind that some monograms are only available in one-letter styles while others can be embroidered in two or three-letter styles.

### **Can you do custom monogramming?**

Yes. If you have a particular monogram or design that you would like to have embroidered, please let us know and we will be happy to help you.



Felt Table Liner



### **Why do I need a table liner?**

Although designed to last a lifetime, fine table surfaces are often exposed to excessive wear and tear. To help protect your tables, Gracious Style offers thick felt table liners that are designed to reduce noise and protect your tabletop against heat and scratches. Unlike ordinary liners, these are plush and generously sized (approximately 5" larger than your table) to extend over the edge of your table in order to create a softer drape underneath your fine linens. We are happy to accommodate custom size table liners.

### **How do I care for my table linens?**

Most fine linens can be laundered at home. Cottons and linens should be washed with like colors in cool water using a regular (non-bleach) detergent. Stains should be treated as soon as possible using a stain remover such as our LeBlanc Linen Wash. Bleaching agents such as chlorine, peroxide, or sodium carbonate should not be used.

Linens can be dried, but should be removed from the dryer while slightly damp in order to minimize wrinkles. They should then be spread on a large surface and pressed with a hot iron. When ironing embroideries, place them face down on a towel and press on the reverse side.

Taffetas, silks and laces should generally be dry cleaned, especially if the items are delicate or have decorative fringes.

### **Why do I need LeBlanc Linen Wash?**

LeBlanc Linen Wash is a specially formulated cleaning solution for laundering fine linens. Its gentle, pH-balanced formula may be used on all natural fibers, synthetics, and blends. We particularly like it because it is concentrated, so it is effective on linens (including vintage linens) without the use of bleach, caustics, or phosphates. LeBlanc Linen Wash has been tested to remove lipstick, jam and jelly, fruit juice, coffee, tea, chocolate, red, wine, grease, cola, ink, and oil stains.

### **Do I have to iron my fine table linens?**

For formal dining, we do recommend that you iron your fine linens. After washing, simply lay your slightly damp linens on your table over large towels or a Felt Table Liner and press with a hot iron. You will be surprised how easy it is to iron both linen and cotton tablecloths alike. Of course, you may also have your linens professionally pressed for a small charge.

### **How do I store my table linens?**

Preparing linens for storage is easy. Make sure linens are completely clean and dry. Avoid starching them prior to storage. Fold items gently and store them in a cool, dry, and well-ventilated area. Do not store linens in plastic bags or cedar chests or in basements, attics, or garages to prevent large fluctuations in humidity and temperature. Check your linens periodically to ensure that they are clean and dry.

### **Why do I need the Archival Linen Storage Kit?**

To properly store your linens for long-term storage, we recommend our [Archival Linen Storage Kit](#). Convenient and easy to use, each kit includes a specially manufactured textile box, pH neutral acid-free tissue paper, white cotton gloves, a sample bottle of Le Blanc Linen Wash, and easy-to-follow instructions. Used by museums and textile conservators around the world, linens that are properly stored in these boxes will last you for years to come.

### **How many table linens do I need?**

Gracious Style recommends that a basic collection of table linens include the following items:

- 1 Formal Tablecloth
- 12 Formal Napkins (usually to match the tablecloth)
- 1 Casual Tablecloth
- 12 Casual Napkins
- 12 Placemats
- 18 Cocktail Napkins
- 1 Table Liner

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Tudor Table Linens

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