

Table's new star? The relaxed and versatile dinner bowl

By Kim Cook
The Associated Press

Dinner menus are now crowded with mixed greens bowls, savory stews, and casseroles, which can create a quandary when it's time to set the table.

Should you use regular salad plates? (A little small.) Regular dinner plates? (A little flat.) Regular soup bowls? (A little big.)

Thus was born the dinner bowl, a plate/bowl hybrid. It's generally the diameter of a standard dinner plate, but with some curved lip to contain all the delectable broths, juices, or errant morsels.

New York-based Peter Kayaian, who is part of sweetgreens' culinary operations team, says more restaurants have begun using dinner bowls because of their versatility.

"Almost any type of dish can go into a shallow bowl — pasta, salad, side dish. Plates aren't cheap, so being able to have one type of plate instead of three or four is a plus for cash-strapped restaurateurs," he says.

"It's also just the trend for plating right now. Gone are the days of the oversize white plates with a small portion in the middle. The shallow bowl allows for some creative plating, with the tall curved rim



as a good medium for swooshed sauces and purées."

Craig Norton, director of operations for the Prince George Hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia, also sees a move away from the standard white plate: "It's too formal. Bowls are more relaxed." He says pottery with earthy tones and rippled texture are more in keeping with what the dishes hold, whether that's in restaurant dining rooms, takeaway spots, or back at home.

"It's all about the new comfort food — a fusion of cuisines. You can layer flavors, textures, cultures, leftovers, and fridge contents into a culinary adventure, all in

one bowl," he says.

A bonus feature of these capacious containers is that when they're not corralling rice, rigatoni, or rocket, they make lovely dishes for bunches of grapes or a batch of fresh-baked cookies.

And there are lots of well-priced options.

Food52 calls its smooth, snowy porcelain bowl "the lovechild of a plate and a bowl." West Elm's version has a slightly curvy rim, giving it an organic look. Williams-Sonoma's has a classic black trim.

World Market offers a set of four pristine white porcelain dishes, a deal at under \$20. For those ready to try some color, the

MULTIPURPOSE PLATE. This undated photo provided by Food52 shows dinner bowls available at Food52. The dinner bowl, a plate/bowl hybrid, is generally the diameter of a standard dinner plate, but with some curved lip to contain delectable broths, juices, or errant morsels. (Ty Mecham/Food52 via AP)

retailer has a set of handmade stoneware dinner bowls in uber-trendy blush pink. Or for al fresco gatherings, perhaps the foursome of bamboo bowls, in a midcentury-modern palette of teal, pink, cream, and blush.

British designer Aaron Probyn's low-profile porcelain bowl plates come as sets of four, in six hand-glazed hues including navy and 2020's hot color, light green, at Crate & Barrel.

Another pretty color story — this one's midnight, daybreak, fog, and moon — is at Year & Day; the bowls are made of hardy Portuguese clay and can handle the freezer, oven, microwave, and dishwasher.

Stoneware in earthy hues with a nice speckled finish can be found at Target, from Project 62.

At Food52, there's the Caractere collection of French porcelain plates in rustic white, turmeric, or moss, created in collaboration with designer Noe Duchaufour-Lawrance. Also at this retailer, you'll find terracotta and white bowls from Fortessa, in a user-friendly melamine that looks like stoneware.

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