

With the right screening, you can also enclose a space to keep out insects and offer more privacy when needed.

A DECK TO DINE ON

Decks can be low level, elevated or multilevel to create a beautiful outdoor feature in your entertaining spaces. Australian hardwood timbers like ironbark or tallowwood are considered among the strongest of decking materials. Timbers are graded on their durability — the higher their rating, the more hardwearing.

Composite decking has the look and feel of timber. It's made from recycled wood fibres and other additives and is low maintenance and durable, with a consistent-looking grain. It's also UV protected. Source a product that offers a 25-year warranty.

PUT YOUR FEET UP

While your guests will enjoy mingling, seating is important. Cosy sofas, outdoor beanbags, bar stools, seating around a firepit, daybeds to recline on and sunlounges to soak up those rays by the pool are all popular. Opt for seating in durable weatherproof fabrics in neutral colours, and choose quality products that will endure. To freshen up the look, simply swap out scatter cushions to add a splash of seasonal colour.

TABLES AND OTHER THINGS

Of course, you'll need a table or tables for guests to graze on or sit down at if it's a sit-down affair. Once you have sorted your tables, have a trial run to see how you'll decorate them and where you'll position chairs and other aspects like additional lighting, including festoon lighting and lamps, candles, and other decorative elements like place holders. If you do it a little in advance, this adds a buffer if you need to source additional supplies, something you might have forgotten, or change aspects of the decor if it doesn't look right.



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Creating an alfresco space that is designed with entertaining in mind begins with maximising the use of the space



Top Left Image courtesy of Lime Lace. limelace.co.uk
 Above Chargrilled Octopus with White Bean Purée and Chilli Oil (Sous Vide and Charred). dereklaui.com.au
 Left Photo by Bridges Ward. pixabay.com
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