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The Backyard Makeover on a Budget

Three patio plans, shopping lists, and a printable worksheet for making the most of the space you already have.

Start with the space

Choose what you want to do outside most often. That one decision makes it easier to spend on the pieces you will use.

1. Give your patio one main job

Pick morning coffee for two, family lounging, or meals with guests. Start with the layout on pages 3–5 that matches that job.

2. Measure before you shop

Use page 8 to record the usable footprint, door swings, steps, and the delivery route. Note where sun lands at the hours you actually expect to sit outside.

3. Mark out the layout

Use painter’s tape or flattened cardboard to mark the furniture footprints. Walk the route from the house to the yard. Pull chairs out and open the door fully before settling on dimensions.

4. Set an all-in budget

Write down the maximum you want to spend, including delivery, tax, and extras like an umbrella base. Set aside part of the total for those extras before you choose furniture.

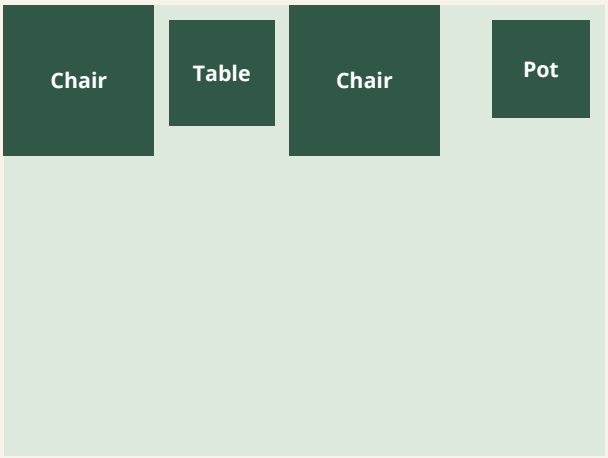
Pick a layout

Page 3 Coffee for two
Page 4 Family lounge
Page 5 Outdoor dining

LAYOUT 1 / 6 × 8 FT SAMPLE PATIO

Coffee for two

An easy layout for a small back step or paved nook. Two chairs share a small table and leave one side open for walking.



Approximate footprints

The lower edge represents the house side. Adapt the layout to your door and yard access.

Shopping list and sample budget

☐ Two chairs	**$90**
☐ Side table	**$35**
☐ Outdoor rug	**$45**
☐ Planter and plant	**$25**
☐ Tax and delivery reserve	**$30**
Example total	**$225**

Illustrative U.S. dollar allowances for planning. Check actual delivered prices before ordering.

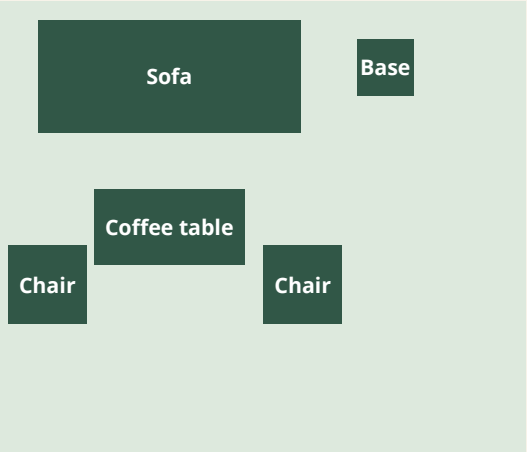
What to buy first

Start with the chairs and side table. Reuse a planter you already own. Add the rug after you can see how the seating fits.

LAYOUT 2 / 12 × 14 FT SAMPLE PATIO

Family lounge

A compact seating group for four. Keep one side of the group open so people can reach the yard without weaving between seats.



Approximate footprints

The lower edge represents the house side. Adapt the layout to your door and yard access.

Shopping list and sample budget

☐ Sofa and two chairs	**$375**
☐ Coffee table	**$65**
☐ Umbrella and compatible base	**$135**
☐ Outdoor rug	**$60**
☐ Tax and delivery reserve	**$65**
Example total	**$700**

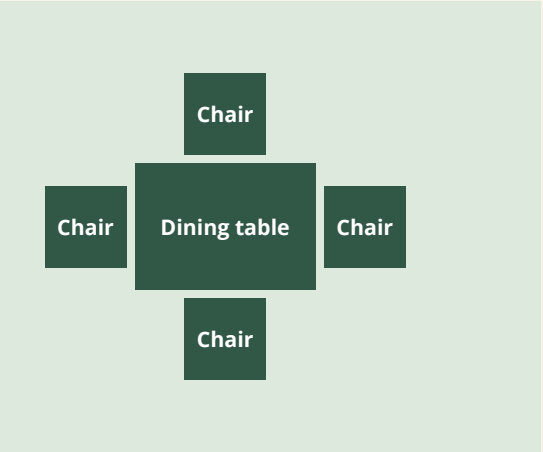
Illustrative U.S. dollar allowances for planning. Check actual delivered prices before ordering.

What to buy first

Buy seating first. Add shade after checking afternoon sun and mapping the canopy and base. Set up the rug once you know where the chairs will sit.

Outdoor dining

A four-seat table for weeknight meals. Tape out the table and the pulled-out chairs to see how much room serving takes.



Approximate footprints

The lower edge represents the house side. Adapt the layout to your door and yard access.

Shopping list and sample budget

☐ Table and four chairs	**$285**
☐ Outdoor-rated string lights	**$35**
☐ Planter and plant	**$30**
☐ Serving tray	**$20**
☐ Tax and delivery reserve	**$55**
Example total	**$425**

Illustrative U.S. dollar allowances for planning. Check actual delivered prices before ordering.

What to buy first

Prioritize a table that fits with the chairs pulled out. Bring a tray from indoors for the first few meals and add lighting when you know where you need it.

Choose pieces that fit

Use these checks to compare listings and secondhand finds before committing to a purchase.

Seating and tables

Check assembled width, depth, seat height, and cushion care. For dining, compare chair arm height with the space under the table. For secondhand furniture, examine joints, frames, and missing hardware in person.

Shade

Record the canopy size, pole position, base footprint, and the manufacturer's compatible base requirements. Map afternoon shade and check that doors and pathways still work with the umbrella open.

Rugs and planters

Mark the rug outline on the patio. Check drainage underneath and see where chair legs land when people sit down. Size planters for the available floor area and allow access for watering.

Lighting

Choose outdoor-rated lighting and follow the product's installation instructions. Check cord length, outlet location, and mounting options before ordering.

Compare the delivered cost

Add shipping, tax, and any separately sold base, cushions, or hardware. Check the return window and who pays for return shipping on bulky items.

SET IT UP

The weekend checklist

Work through these steps in order, then spend an evening outside before buying any extra décor.

- [ ] **Clear and measure**

  Move loose items, sweep the patio, and record the measurements on page 8.

- [ ] **Test the footprints**

  Mark the furniture, rug, and base with tape or cardboard. Open doors and walk through with a serving tray.

- [ ] **Arrange the seating**

  Position your chairs or sofa first. Add the table and check that drinks and snacks are within easy reach.

- [ ] **Add shade and light**

  Check the shade at the time of day you will sit outside. Follow the product instructions for umbrella setup and outdoor lighting.

- [ ] **Put it to use**

  Have a meal or spend an evening outside. Note any uncomfortable seats, awkward routes, or spots that need light.

- [ ] **Finish with what you have**

  Try a spare tray, washable throw, or planter before deciding which finishing touches are worth buying.

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

Measure and plan

Print this page before shopping. Record measurements in feet and inches, and include door swings and steps in your sketch.

Patio width

Patio depth

Narrowest delivery opening

Door swing / steps

Sunniest time and location

Outlet location

Main use / seat count

Total spending limit

Sketch the patio and furniture footprints

Buy first

Reuse or buy secondhand

Save for later