

Trade in the usual plastic wrap for one of these easy, elegant bowl covers to protect the food at your next cookout or picnic. Buy linen napkins (or hem some fabric scraps sized large enough to fit over your serving bowls) and attach assorted seashells to weigh down the edges. It's best if the shells already have holes worn into them, but you can use a small drill with a very fine bit if necessary. Then, using upholstery thread, sew a shell onto each corner and one in the middle on each side, finishing the stitch close to the hemline.



RESOURCES: Many people enjoy strolling the beach on their vacation, picking up seashells that catch their eye. But if you're looking to do serious shelling, head to Sanibel or Captiva Island, nicknamed the Shell Islands, in southwest Florida. Visit sanibel-captiva.org for more information. If you can't take a trip, but would like to create shell projects, try ordering supplies from www.theshellstore.com, seashellcity.com, seashells.com, or seashellworld.com.

scalloped edges

Add a dainty, decorative flair to pastry by pressing a small, ridged scallop shell into the dough's edges. (Thoroughly clean the shell before beginning.) Try this technique on any type of pastry, from pie crusts to turnovers. It's an especially nice touch if you'll be serving a meal at the beach.



salt and pepper shells

Hosting a seafood supper? Spice up the table setting by using an oyster shell to serve sea salt and fresh-ground pepper to your guests. The next time you eat oysters, save the shells, or hunt for some intact ones along the shore while you're on vacation. Boil them for a few minutes to ensure they're sanitary, then fill with seasonings. The oyster's pearly interior makes a gleaming addition to the table.