

Making the Most of Your Balcony

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Choose folding furniture that can be stored and taken out when needed for different activities such as outdoor dining or relaxing with family and friends. Keeping flexibility with your furniture is key to making the most of your space.

There's also plenty of scope for growing beautiful plants and even vegetables on your balcony – follow these tips to keep your balcony garden blooming all year round.

Whilst having a small feature tree such as an olive, arbutus or Japanese acer is worthwhile, I would recommend a smaller array of container sizes that can easily be lifted and moved around. This will allow you to shuffle plants around and place the blooming flowers in front of more tired-looking plants.

For the avid plant collector, some shelves to stack up your pot plants against a wall or balcony divider might be worth considering.

Have a bit of fun with the pot colours and materials. Perhaps make your own



planters from wine crates, tea caddies or wicker hampers. Investing in a small bird feeder will also provide great breakfast-time entertainment at any time of year. I'd probably stay away from wind chimes as they are not for everyone and might annoy the neighbours.

There is still plenty of scope in a good-sized balcony for a collection of planting to liven up all of the seasons. Why not some herb gardening or sensory planting? Lavenders and rosemary are well adapted to balconies as their natural habitat are the shallow sandy soils of Mediterranean hillsides. Chives have small bulbs and will thrive in very small pots and troughs. Sage holds onto its downy green leaf year round.



Fennels can be a bit unwieldy for a balcony, but why not try feverfew, camomile, thyme or mint instead? If your balcony balustrade is glass then it might suit the more tender herbs such as basil and coriander.

A small lollipop-shaped bay plant could provide an ample supply of hand-picked leaves.



If you'd like to eat what you grow try some rocket and nasturtiums, which will give a kick to any salad or sandwich. Courgettes and gherkins produce lovely yellow and orange blossoms and can be pickled in the winter.

I wouldn't recommend growing potatoes or other space-hungry vegetables such as cabbages or sprouts, but if you have deep enough containers and good quality potting compost then carrots, radishes and beetroot would be worth trying. What you lack in crop yield will be more than compensated by the intense flavours and crunch of home-grown vegetables.



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