

· ESSENTIALS ·

Plaid Patterns



Both gingham throw pillows and a tartan throw blanket make appearances in the vintage-inspired entryway of designer Holly Thompson's home.

There are hundreds of different plaid patterns. Find out which are best for farmhouse style.

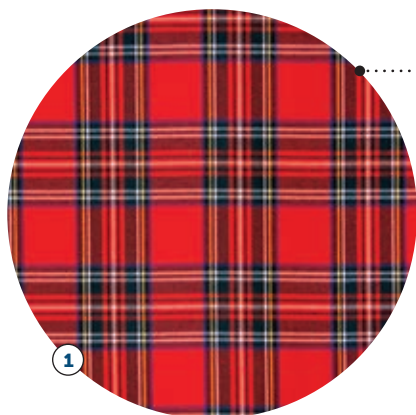
BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

“Plaid” is a general term that refers to a checkered or tartan cloth. But there’s a wide variety of plaid and checked patterns, many of which are ideal for farmhouse style. When it comes to choosing a plaid or checked pattern, here are some of the different types and how to distinguish them.

(right) You can bring in plaids in small quantities for a tiny pop of pattern, like homeowner Maryal Miller Carter did with this windowpane-plaid napkin in her table setting.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LANDON WIGGS



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TARTAN

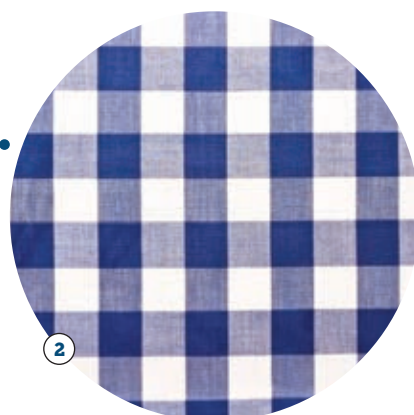
The most traditional type of plaid pattern, tartan, is a Scottish plaid. Particularly before the defeat of the Jacobite uprising by the British in 1746 (an event made famous by the novel *Outlander*), tartans served as Scottish coats of arms. Each Scottish house had its own tartan pattern, and the Scots used the patterns in formal clothing and uniforms to distinguish their clans. Those traditional clan tartans still appear today in both fashion and home décor fabrics.

TIP: Royal Stewart tartan is one of the most recognizable Scottish tartan patterns, the pattern belonging to the Scottish Royal House of Stewart. It’s also the personal tartan pattern of Queen Elizabeth II.

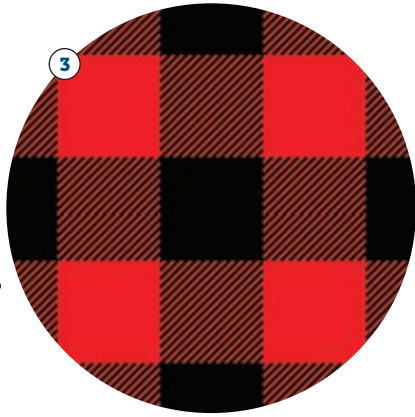
GINGHAM

Gingham has been around since the mid-1800s. It’s a small, blocked pattern that is woven with white and one other color of thread, most traditionally red or blue. While many people use the term “checkered” interchangeably with gingham, the two patterns are different. Checkered patterns consist of two solid colors, whereas some of the squares in gingham are more translucent, due to the interweaving of the two thread colors.

TIP: In this woven gingham, you can see the lighter, translucent-like blue blocks that distinguish it from standard checkered patterns.



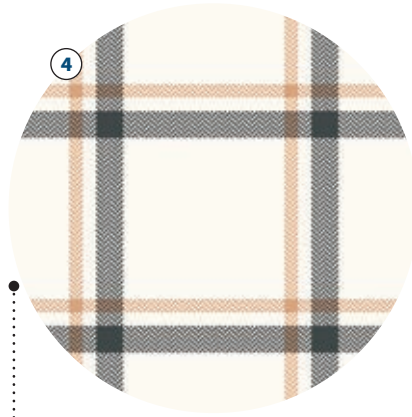
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BUFFALO CHECK

This is a large version of gingham—the blocks are usually between 1 ½" to 6" in size, as opposed to the smaller ¼" gingham blocks. Like its smaller cousin, buffalo check uses two thread colors, which produce some of the mixed/translucent blocks. Traditional buffalo check is often black or red, but now we see it in a broader range of colors.

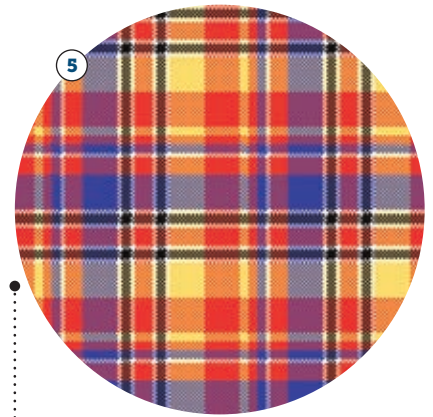
TIP: In farmhouse décor, the larger buffalo check is a good option for bedding and furniture upholstery.



WINDOWPANE

This plaid pattern looks like a windowpane, with large patches of the background color, filled in with smaller stripes of a contrasting thread that create boxes on the fabric. Windowpane plaid is typically a slightly larger pattern, more on the scale of buffalo check than gingham.

TIP: Windowpane plaids can have one or more lines making up the boxes.



MADRAS

The most colorful of the bunch, Madras plaid deviates from traditional colors to include pale colors, oranges and purples. The patterns originated in India, which explains the bright colors, as opposed to the traditional primary colors typical of Scottish plaids. Unlike Scottish tartans, which are traditionally printed on wool, you'll often find Madras plaids on lighter, non-wool fabrics such as cotton and linen.

TIP: In fashion, Madras plaids are often used in summer clothing, such as skirts and sun dresses.



In this boys' bunk room, homeowner Holly Lauritzen used gray buffalo check in the bedding and pillows.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL HUNTER

PLAID IN Farmhouse Style

Ideas for incorporating plaid and checkered patterns into your home

- **WALLS.** There are many larger surfaces in a room where you can add plaids. Go big with a buffalo-check wallpaper, or use it on the upper walls with wainscoting underneath. You could even paint the walls yourself in a large checked pattern, which would work well for a children's bedroom or guest bedroom.
- **WINDOWS.** If you prefer nonpatterned walls, try gingham or plaid curtains with your preferred color palette. You could also get a charming retro farmhouse look with a shorter valance or Roman shade curtains on a kitchen or bathroom window.
- **BEDDING.** Whether for the sheets, duvet or bed pillows, plaid is a perfect bedding choice. If you like to change out your cotton sheets for flannel in the winter, plaid will work well in traditional colors to tie in with your fall and Christmas décor.
- **FURNITURE.** Upholstery is a good place to add a tartan, buffalo check or Madras plaid pattern. These patterns work especially well for smaller furniture pieces such as armchairs, dining chairs and barstools.
- **ACCESSORIES.** In many other areas in your home you can add a touch of plaid or checks without making it the main pattern in the room. Try accenting your décor with plaid in throw pillows and blankets, bathmats, dining table runners, decorative ribbon and even wall art.

PLAID PICKS

Add these pieces to your home for a fun plaid pop.

1



2



3



4



5



- 1. Aberdeen quilt**, \$299.99. (404) 944-5095 or gabbysfarmhouse.com.
- 2. Plaid 5th Avenue merino throw**, \$199. (877) 996-6599 or pendelton-usa.com.
- 3. Peppermint plaid tablecloth**, \$49.99. (888) 766-7925 or piperclassics.com.
- 4. Farmhouse beige plaid buffalo-check linen throw pillow** by The Craft and Cupboard, \$29.99. Visit society6.com.
- 5. Modern gray plaid tote**, \$49. (888) 850-3348 or woodwaves.com.