

Atmosphere For Fun and Profit

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One aspect of Alliance LARP is atmosphere. Atmosphere in Alliance LARP is defined as the decorations in any PC or NPC dwelling that gives a more realistic flavor to the game. Or in layman's terms, that stuff you put up and around to make your cabin look cool and different. I know of a few people who have gone to great lengths to decorate their cabins, I was one of them. As I drove solo to many Alliance LARP events in a large station wagon, it was possible for me to bring quite a lot of atmosphere. Sadly when I no longer had that option, my atmosphere collection severely dwindled. Here below is an example list of atmosphere you can bring to events, but don't be limited by what's listed.

Cabin Decoration:

1 **Folding Screen-** whether you use it to divide a cabin between multiple groups or to hide behind as you change clothes, a folding screen is a nice piece of atmosphere to bring to events (though very large and possibly bulky). The choice of fabric used can add to the atmosphere of your cabin. Whatever you use will add greatly to whatever effect you are trying to achieve. A simple way to get a folding screen is to make one yourself. Buy some wood, or decorative wooden molding from a lumber store. You can have the store cut it for you into the lengths you need for a minor fee. When you get home you nail all of the pieces together to make at least 3 frames. The frames should be tall enough that you can stand behind it, and wide enough to hide your entire body. When I made my screen, it averaged about 5 feet in height so that I could peek over it if need be (but I am short, yours should be taller). You will need to paint the frames now in whatever color you like (I like coordinating the frame color with the fabric). You will also need fabric, buy enough fabric so that you can "fill" the frames with the fabric and staple it down. First you will lay the fabric on the back of the screen and staple in a few strategic places. Then you will stretch the fabric and staple all the way around to attach the fabric to the frame. If you watch enough Trading Spaces, you should be able to do this easily. Then buy some hinges and attach the frames together to make the screen. You can also try to find one at Goodwill, or cheaply at a Big Lots store. You may have to change the fabric since it usually comes with a white muslin type material. Your only mission now, finding a way to get it to events.

2 **Tapestry/Banner-** Tapestries and banners are a nice way to decorate your cabin. You can hang them on the walls, or even cover your windows if your cabin has no curtains. You can hang them outside to claim your space, or hang them in front of your bed for privacy. Whatever you decide to use them for, they are a cheap and easy way to spruce up your space. You can find some tapestries at Goodwill or at yard sales and flea markets. Most banners and other tapestries are made at home by creative young people (or their mothers). They can be sewn, painted, embroidered, or appliquéd. However you do it, it will add a nice touch to your atmosphere collection. You can start with a basic rectangle of fabric, hem the sides and bottom. At the top, fold the fabric and sew to make an opening for a dowel rod to be threaded through. You can add a ribbon or string to the dowel rod to help hang it, but you'd wait until you are finished for that. After hemming the edges and such, you decorate the banner/tapestry however you see fit, in whatever fashion you are proficient. Most banners/tapestries you see are sewn, and some are sewn and painted. Whatever methods you use, make sure it will be durable to last through miles of travel, squish sessions from packing, and if to be placed outside... the elements. On a side note, you must find out policies at chapters and camps concerning hanging items on walls. Some cabins at certain camps have an extreme rustic feel and you may find nails already in the walls. At some other camps they may have a "no hanging things or poking holes in our walls rule", so it is good to find out what the policies are before you go doing things that will cost the chapter money. If you are at one of these places where you are unable to hang things, you can use things that are already there (like the preexisting curtain rods, etc), just make sure you return all of the camp's possessions to their rightful places before you leave site on Sunday.

3 **Boxes -** whether you make your own or buy one and decorate it, boxes make wonderful atmosphere. You can keep your treasure in it, components, or just some random strange things that curious people who will peek in may ask you about. They can be styled in any manner, from wicker to wood, and differ from owner to owner. Large or small boxes make a wonderful accent to your Alliance LARP space.

Craft Ideas:

1 **Nick Nacks** - or Bric-a-brac, whatever you call them they are the easiest things to accumulate for atmosphere. Whether it's a ceramic rocking horse that granny used to own, or a coconut monkey, you can find nick nacks anywhere. Your most choice places to look are Goodwill, Flea Markets, Yard Sales, and in that box your mom has labeled "To Throw Out". Choices on atmospheric nick nacks vary from person to person, usually people keep what speaks to them in some way. I used to collect small pewter and brass cups, then at the event I'd add real flowers or fake ones to decorate. Another person I know brought a small bust of a woman (a small statue of the shoulders and head) to every event and decorated it with beads and necklaces he received as gifts from his feminine admirers. Whatever you like they add a small amount of spice to your cabin at each event. Be forewarned however that collecting nick nacks is an addictive habit which will possibly lead you to carrying a large box filled with them to events.

2 **Wooden Plaques** - At Michael's or some other craft place (like [JoAnn Fabrics](#)) you can find wooden plaques that can be used to create unique signs and art. The plaques can range from rectangle to oval (and anything in between), be completely smooth or not, and sometimes the stores even sell slices of trees with the bark still attached. You can use acrylic paints to decorate it however you see fit. In the past I have made signs for the Guilds, I recently made the sign for the ARGO tavern, and I also once created a wenching tray (from the tree slice). Prices for the wooden plaques can range from \$1 to \$10 depending on the size and quality. First come up with a design that will fit on the surface of the plaque. Next you will transfer the design to the plaque... you can use [transfer paper](#) or an old trick I once learned [take a pencil and scribble over the entire surface of the design on the back of its paper, then turn over and trace the design's lines. The pencil lead on the back of the paper will act as transfer paper and produce the lines on the plaque]. Then paint in your design with Acrylic paints, when you are finished it is a good idea to cover it with clear spray acrylic to seal it. To hang it as a sign add screw eyes (which are screws with loops at the end) to the top to hang by. To make a wenching tray screw or nail leather straps to the sides or bottom.

3 **Pillows** - You can make your own, or buy them. Throw them around on the floor to sit on or cover your bed in them. Whatever you decide to do with them, pillows are a nice (and comfy) way to add to your atmosphere.

Other Quick Atmosphere Ideas:

Decorative Bottles , perhaps filled with colored liquids or "specimens" of creatures collected? Alchemists or Potion makers can have "Laboratories" set up representing the raw materials of their craft.

Flame-less Candles (LED) and LED or rechargeable Lanterns decorated to look "old world" or Medieval

Books, Scrolls or Tablets either journaling your own exploits (if you have had any!) or take some In Game legends, stories and books from the Library of Vandlar (on our website www.alliancelarpohio.net).

Quills, "Ink Bottles", parchment- by taking the elements out of a pen and slipping it into a large feather you can create a ball-point "Quill" which looks great and works like a regular pen. An "ink bottle" of dark glass (with nothing in it) completes the illusion for Scroll makers, historians, journalists and literary minded characters.

Armor – Care supplies- waxes, "repair tools", hammers, extra links, extra plates, leather working tools, etc. Not only are these things atmospheric for warriors and fighters but they may be necessary if something really needs repair.

There is no end to the many ideas and uses you can give things to give your Alliance LARP space a more realistic feel. Do not be limited by this list, you can only be limited by your imagination and by the amount of space in your car.