



Party Planning Made Simple

Make party organizing simple by starting a checklist well in advance. Your goal is to be a calm host/hostess and enjoy your own party!

1. Decide on the who, when, and where

- Establish a budget.
- Keep all receipts and information in a notebook or binder especially if you'll be repeating the event.
- Include dates of when you want to complete certain tasks.

2. Decide on a theme

- Dictates your budget and the feel of your party.
- Guides your food, drinks, and invitations.
- Green themes could include donations for a charity.

3. Invitations

- Buy invitations, print your own, use e-mail or use SendOutCards.com.
- Send well in advance so guests can plan ahead.
- Give details so there are no questions, e.g. adults only, attire, ending time, etc.

4. Party Supplies

- Do this well in advance to avoid excess, to spread out the cost, and to stay on budget.
- Take inventory of paper supplies, dry goods, and decorations.

5. Food

- Plan for appetizers, entrees, desserts: have old favorites and new recipes; healthy and indulgent.
- Doing it yourself? Don't go shopping without a list.
- Check your pantry for food supplies first, don't guess.
- Prepare as many of the items or ingredients ahead of time to save time. Freeze whatever can be frozen.
- Hiring a caterer? Have a budget in mind, consider your guests, sit-down or buffet, and consider preparing some of the food yourself to cut costs.

6. Drinks

- Have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks, low calories, or sugar free.
- Provide a hot and cold selection for all ages.
- Bottled drinks are nice, but pricey, and waste is higher.

- Hiring a bartender? Choose a reliable bartender who abstains from alcohol at the party and who can keep track of who is of legal age and the size and number of drinks that guests consume.

Do you.....

Want instant elegance?

- Drape tables with floor length tablecloths and hide unneeded items underneath.
- Play soft music in background.
- Drape chairs with fabric and tie with bows.
- Clear countertops and surfaces to give the illusion of simplicity: don't make guests reach past the toaster to find the bruschetta.
- Hang tiny lights to add an air of sophistication.

Have large spaces?

- Use stations of certain types of food so folks mingle: drinks in the kitchen, appetizers in the dining room, desserts in the den, etc.
- If you want folks to stay in certain areas, close doors to certain rooms.

Have a small space?

- Take all unnecessary furniture from the rooms.
- Reorganize your furniture to allow guests to put down drinks if they'll be standing.

Watching expenses?

- Bring the outside in to decorate: holly, pine cones, evergreens, garden flowers.
- Have family and friends each bring a favorite dish and bring the recipe to hand out to guests!

Want a non-commercial focus?

- Instead of a hostess gift, ask guests to bring an item for a local adult shelter, charity or animal shelter.

Invite small children?

- Consider hiring a teenager to play games or complete a craft with the children and provide them with a fun evening.
- Have the children produce an art piece to take home as a favor.

