



# Party Planning Made Simple

Make party organizing simple by starting a checklist well in advance. Your goal is to be a calm host/hostess, while the party nearly runs on its own. Finally, 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 or a similar 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.
- A theme 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](http://SendOutCards.com).
- Send well in advance so guests can plan.
- 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 what you already own: 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, garden greens.
- 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. Try not to give a favor that will end up as landfill.

