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## Party-Planning Guide

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### 1 Month Before:

- Choose the type of party you want to throw.
- Set the date.
- Prepare your guest list.
- Mail or e-mail invitations, or call guests to invite them.

### 3 Weeks Before:

- Choose the menu; organize recipes for easy reference.
- Create a timeline for preparing your chosen recipes.
- Read through recipes and make lists of the ingredients you need to buy. Stock up on pantry items, such as sugar, flour, and other nonperishables.
- Try out any new recipes you want to troubleshoot.
- Prepare any items that can be frozen.
- Arrange to borrow, rent, or buy serving pieces and other items that you might need, such as platters, glasses, flatware, or table linens.
- Hire a bartender if desired.

### 2 Weeks Before:

- Purchase wine and liquor, and arrange to have cases delivered to your home.
- If you're throwing a potluck, or if friends have offered to bring something, let guests know what to make.

- Set the table, as a trial run, to make sure you have all the dishes and serving utensils you'll need.

### 1 Week Before:

- Call or e-mail guests who have not yet RSVP'd to see if they plan to attend, and also follow up with guests who have offered to bring a dish.
- Make space in the refrigerator or freezer so you'll have room to store groceries.
- Prepare recipes that keep well up to a week.

### 4 Days Before:

- Purchase all remaining nonperishables.

### 2 Days Before:

- Wash serving pieces, plates, flatware, and glasses, and polish if necessary.
- If using cloth napkins or tablecloths, iron them.
- Place frozen food in the refrigerator to defrost overnight.

### 1 Day Before:

- Purchase any perishables, such as salad greens, fresh bread, and seafood.
- Pick up fresh flowers (or have them delivered).
- Assemble any foods that can be made in advance.
- Wash and prepare salad greens and other vegetables, and blanch vegetables for crudites (keep these wrapped in paper towels). Refrigerate all separately, in airtight containers.

### 4 to 7 Hours Before:

- Set up the bar, if it isn't already done.
- Place flower arrangements.

## 4 to 5 Hours Before:

- Chill white wine and sparkling wine.

## Up to 1 Hour Before:

- Finish preparing food.