

# Party Planning Checklist

## The Basics

When planning a party, you must first establish a basic elements:

- Who is the party for? (business, family, friends)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What's the reason for the party? (theme, birthday, special occasion)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When is the party?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the party going to be?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many people are you inviting?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What type of party is it?  
Brunch • Lunch • Dinner • Hors d'oeuvres • Dessert • Buffet • Sit-down meal

## Getting Started

Use this party planning checklist to guide you through the details:

- Make list of people to invite + Block the date on your calendar.
- Arrange for extra helpers if needed.
- Send save-the-dates if more than 6 weeks out (by mail, e-mail, or phone).
- Send invitations 3-4 weeks prior (by mail, e-mail, or phone).
- Plan the menu: food + beverages. (Try to keep the menu simple to make the party less stressful)
- Plan decor.
- Make shopping lists and a plan for being efficient if you need items from multiple stores. (You'll likely need lists for food, paper goods, + decorations).
- Plan cooking schedule: Determine what can be made ahead including frozen, day before, and that day, and what you are buying already prepared.
- Make list of everything you need including extra furniture like (rental chairs and table).
- Plan where you will place focal points including food tables, bar, gifts, desserts, etc...
- Plan playlists - music is a vital element for all parties!
- Prepare your centerpieces + other decorations.
- Check your stock of cleaning supplies for both before and after the party.
- Make sure you have all the platters and serving pieces you'll need.

## Once the Party Starts

Here are some things you will likely need to have on hand and be prepared for during the party:

- Coat rack (extra hangers ready or a separate room to put coats)
- A place for boots or umbrellas
- Plenty of ice, bucket or cooler, tongs or scoop
- Napkins - cocktail + dinner style (for cocktail napkins allow a minimum of 2 per person)
- Candles - votives are best for keeping the area clean of dripping wax but still add ambiance.
- Consider place cards, food signage, and any other direction helpers.
- Paper towels
- Plenty of toilet paper set out where guests can find it.
- Plates (consider you will need them for every course: appetizer, salad, dinner, dessert)
- Glasses (water, wine, mixed drink, beer, soda, coffee); some beverages can use the same type of glass
- Silverware (Think through each course; a fresh spoon or stirrer is necessary for coffee.)
- If grilling - Be sure you have plenty of gas or charcoal.
- Coffee and assortment of tea bags
- Cream and sugar
- Salt and pepper
- Wine, beer, and soda chilled (It takes beer, wine, and soda 20 minutes to chill on ice. You can keep a large tub or cooler out of sight in a back room.)
- Wine and bottle opener
- Bar garnishes (lime, lemon, olive)
- Charged camera battery
- Garbage bags
- Dishwashing soap
- Greet guests + Remember to have fun!

## Make a Note!

- Parties have their fair share of highs and lows. It's a great idea to take a moment after the party to reflect on what worked and what could be improved next time.