



Perfect Party Planning

Advanced planning is the most important aspect of any party. Know the answers to the following questions before you start:

- 1.) Be clear about what the purpose of the party is and keep that in you mind when making all decisions. Decide on the date and allow at least 4-6 weeks (more for a large event) to give you planning time and for your guests to book the date.
- 2.) Determine your budget as everything you do from here on will be affected by it. Allocate the main part of your budget to the aspects of the party that is most important to you, food, wine, decor or entertainment?
- 3.) Decide where you will be holding the party and determine who your guests will be. Make an invite list and plan for RSVP responses one week before the party.
- 4.) Decide on the time and length of the event. Your menu and beverage decisions will be planned with this information.
- 5.) Do you have a theme in mind? Themes make the planning process simpler if you have a route to follow.
- 6.) Make some menu decisions. Cocktail finger foods, dinner, light refreshments? Design a menu that matches the party purpose, the budget and your guests palates.

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What can you do well yourself, what can you purchase ready made from specialty shops or reputable caterers? If you don't have lots of fridge space you can pick up ready made food or have it delivered before the party.

7) Make a list of all the items you can prepare in advance, what needs to be done on party day and what has to be attended to at the last minute. Be realistic and not over ambitious, make sure you are not overloaded on last day or last minute items!

8) Hired help can make your life so easy during the event, having a server or bartender eliminates the need for you or your guests to run around picking up dirty glasses and plates. You should be with your guests!

9) Consider renting glassware, china, or coat racks? Trust me this makes it easier to keep you party tidy and reduces the loss of your own good crystal or chin Good rental company's have lost of selections, will deliver and pick up.

10) Make a room diagram of how you will set-up the layout of the bar, food tables, storage for guests coats and shoes, and storage for rental containers etc. Make sure food and beverage stations are far enough from each other to prevent gridlock!

11) Do your house cleaning and arranging of the setup the day before. Keep last day chores to a minimum.

12) It's party day! - Do you have your list? You should be able to follow it through and still have time to have a shower before guests arrive. Allow yourself at least 30 minutes before guest come to open wine, set out platters and put on the music. Unwind for a minute with a glass of wine and get ready to have a good time with your guests.

"Isn't that what it is all about anyways?!"

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Professional Tips:

(From "perfect parties" by Allison Price)

Check that you have enough serving dishes-they do not have to match

Canapés should be a single mouthful. Start with a combination of cold canapés, then serve hot ones.

Offer a supply of finger napkins for sticky fingers

Avoid over-garnishing - it is very off-putting

Avoid serving on fabrics, unless they will be changed each time you replenish your trays with food.

How many Canapés? For a 1 - 1/2 hour cocktail party allow 8-9 canapés per person.

For a 2 - 2 1/2 hour party allow for 10-12 pieces per person.

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