

PARTY PLANNING Checklist

An easy-to-use guide to a successful soiree.

ONE MONTH BEFORE PARTY

Note: Allow six weeks or more for a very large function or if outside services are required. If you use an event planner/coordinator, use this schedule to check on his or her progress.

Decide on the particulars:

- Date** _____
- Type of party** _____
 - Theme _____
- Venue** _____
 - If not at home, reserve venue
- Guest list**
- Budget**
- Hire party planner** if you are going to use one
- Hire any needed outside services**
 - Caterer _____
 - Bartender _____
 - Food servers _____
 - Entertainment _____
 - House-cleaning service _____
 - Gardener _____
 - Transportation/valet parking _____

THREE WEEKS BEFORE PARTY

- Choose menu**
 - If preparing food yourself, organize recipes and compile a list of ingredients to purchase.
 - If it's a potluck, find out what people are bringing or suggest/assign menu items.

- Make a timeline** for preparing items that can be made ahead of time and frozen or stored in the refrigerator.
- Inventory** linens, tableware, glassware, chairs and tables, serving platters and utensils, etc. and make arrangements to borrow or rent what you don't have.
- Buy wine, beer and liquor**
- Shop for nonperishable items**
- Buy decorations**
- Set a dining table or buffet serving line** to determine whether you have enough room for all the food and guests. Borrow or rent any last-minute items
- Make sure you have some extra flatware and serving pieces**

ONE WEEK BEFORE PARTY

- Firm up guest list** with reminders to guests who haven't RSVP'd
- Confirm any rental reservations**

FOUR DAYS BEFORE PARTY

- Prepare any food that will remain fresh for four days**

- Go over lists** of food, beverages, decorations, etc. and double-check your final shopping list

TWO DAYS BEFORE PARTY

- Place any **frozen foods** in the refrigerator to **defrost**
- Iron table linens** if needed
- Do any **last-minute cleaning** required
- Wash serving pieces, de-spot glasses and polish silver**

ONE DAY BEFORE PARTY

- Final shopping**
- Prepare final menu items**
- Set table and put up decorations** if possible

DAY OF THE PARTY

- Finish setting up** the serving area, bar, tables and chairs, special activities, etc.
- Set out flowers and other decorations**
- Make sure bathrooms are clean** and stocked with hand towels and toilet paper
- Finish preparing food**
- About four hours before the party, **start chilling sparkling and white wines.** ☞