

Party Planning Checklist

By Kimberly French

- Two to three weeks in advance:**
 - Time** Decide on the day, and the time of the day. People usually have parties on weekends, but don't feel restrained if your guests are available during the week.
 - Guests** Write down your guest list and give "plus ones" if necessary.
 - Invitations** Invite your guests by phone, email or even Facebook. Facebook has become a very useful tool in party-planning, but don't neglect your friends who are not on the site.
 - Budget** Make a budget and stick to it. If you will require help from your guests, let them know how much. Consider a "bring your own beverage" party to save on alcohol.
 - Inventory** Look through your house for party supplies. Write down anything you are missing.
 - Rental** Go to your rental store and reserve anything you might need at least ten days ahead, if not more.
 - Menu** Plan the food, whether you are cooking or having a potluck.
 - Potluck notices** After planning your menu, assign dishes (or at least a course) to your guests.
 - Entertainment** Choose the music you will play, if any, and think about ways to keep the children busy and safe without much adult supervision.
- One week in advance:**
 - Guests** Confirm your guests' attendance, but leave flexibility for last-minute arrangements.
 - Decoration** If you decide to decorate your house, choose how and buy the supplies in the store.
 - Cleaning** Start doing the bigger cleaning, such as floors and windows.
 - Food** You can buy the beverages and non-perishables at this point.
 - Fridge** Clean up your refrigerator and make space for all the food you'll buy and prepare during the following days.
- A few days in advance:**
 - Cleaning** Do lighter cleaning like dusting and counters. Take clutter away.
 - Food** Go shopping for the perishables and cook the dishes that can be preserved in the fridge or in the freezer.
 - Cameras** Make sure your photo and video cameras are charged and ready to be used.
- The day of your party:**
 - Children** If children are attending, make sure you remove anything dangerous to them.
 - Food** Buy the produce for the salads and other fresh meals, and prepare the dishes that are left.
 - Decoration** Set up your table and use any decoration you bought.

- Seating** Make sure you have enough seating for everyone. Don't be afraid to ask your guests to bring their folding chairs if necessary.
- Bar** Buy ice from the store and set up your bar.
- Snacks** Have the snack bowls ready before the first guests arrive.
- Space** If your party is in the winter, prepare space for the influx of boots and coats.
- Take a few minutes to get dressed and refresh yourself, and welcome your first guests.** Since you planned so well, you'll have a great time!