

# Dinner Party Tips



- Remember, your party doesn't have to be fussy or cause you a lot of stress. Your guests are thrilled to be invited to your home, whether you serve them on paper plates or your finest china.
- Plan your dinner party several days in advance and make lists of everything you need to purchase and prepare to make it an enjoyable event for your guests, and YOU!
- Require your guests to RSVP at least one week before your party, whether you invite them by e-vite, text, phone call, or paper invitation. If they don't RSVP in a timely manner... well, consider it a lesson.
- Inquire about any food allergies so you can plan accordingly.
- Plan a menu and write it down. Use recipes you're familiar and comfortable with. If you're trying new recipes, make them a few days ahead to make sure you like them. However, if you want to try new recipes for friends you know will be understanding (in case it doesn't quite work out), this is a great opportunity to have taste-testers.
- Make a list of everything you can do 1 week before, 2 days before, 1 day before, etc.
- Make a detailed timeline of what to do the day of your party.
- Clean out the refrigerator and make room.
- Set the table the day before your party, including (unscented) candles and centerpieces. Remember it doesn't have to be "Pinterest Perfect."
- If children are attending your party, make a "kids table."
- Choose your serving platters for every dish and mark them with a post-it note. Decide if you want to serve buffet-style, family-style, or plated. If you want to plate, ask a reliable guest to help you.
- Place the serving utensil inside each platter or bowl that will use it.
- If you want to clean your house before the party, do it the day before. Avoid cleaning anything other than the kitchen on the day of your party.
- Get yourself ready for the party hours before start time. I like to shower in the morning, and have my make-up and outfit on two hours before the party. Wear an apron to protect your clothing.
- If your guests ask if they can bring something, let them bring ice, drinks for the kids, kids' activities, dessert napkins.
- When your guests arrive, leave your tasks in the kitchen and greet them. If they ask to help, put them to work filling water glasses, keeping people out of the kitchen (if that's your desire), answering the door, watching the kids, chopping herbs.
- Prepare an activity during dinner to get everyone engaged and comfortable: go around the table and have each person tell their favorite family tradition, favorite dish from their childhood and why, best family vacation, how they met their spouse or significant other, favorite quality they see in the person on their left (right)....you get the picture.
- When dinner is over, ask everyone to take their plates to the kitchen. If they offer to help clean up (and they really mean it) let them help! And have a special treat for those who stay to clean up (a small bag of coffee, bag of chocolates, muffin for tomorrow's breakfast.)
- The day after the party take notes of things that went really well, and things that you'd like to improve. Keep your notes for the next time you have a dinner party.



# Event Timeline



## ***2-3 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT:***

- Choose guests & send invitations
- Plan menu
- Order rentals, if necessary
- Hire helpers, if necessary
- Order flowers

## ***1 WEEK PRIOR:***

- Any menu preparations that can be frozen or refrigerated for a week.
- Plan table settings, dinnerware, serving platters, linens

## ***3 DAYS PRIOR:***

- Shop groceries
- Clean refrigerator
- Plan music/playlist for event
- Any preparations that can be done 3 days in advance

## ***2 DAYS PRIOR:***

- Select serving platters & utensils. Label with sticky notes & put near serving area.
- Locate candles, if necessary
- Any preparations that can be done 2 days in advance

## ***DAY BEFORE:***

- Set table
- Clean house
- Stock toilet paper & hand soap in bathroom
- Plan outfit/accessories, iron & set out
- Chill wine
- Set out wine/Champagne glasses/cocktail napkins
- Set out coffee cups, saucers, sugar & creamer
- Make a list of tasks for event day
- If using disposable plates/cups, set out clean trash bin
- Any preparations that can be done the day before

## ***EVENT DAY:***

- Clean front door/porch entrance area
- Do as much early preparation of food as possible
- Check preparation list
- Hydrate
- Prepare coffee maker or make coffee in carafe
- Empty trash bins

## ***2-3 HOURS PRIOR:***

- Get dressed & ready

## ***1 HOUR PRIOR:***

- Start music
- Open red wine bottles & decant if necessary
- Clean kitchen area—no dirty dishes

## ***30 MINUTES PRIOR:***

- Fill water glasses
- Light candles
- Calm down
- Practice smiling & acting like throwing party is effortless
- Accept that even if you don't think the food is perfect, your guests are thrilled to be there & they will love it.

