



How to Plan the Perfect Holiday Party

If you have not begun planning your holiday party yet, it's possible to put together a great event in a short amount of time.

Create your guest list and send invitations.

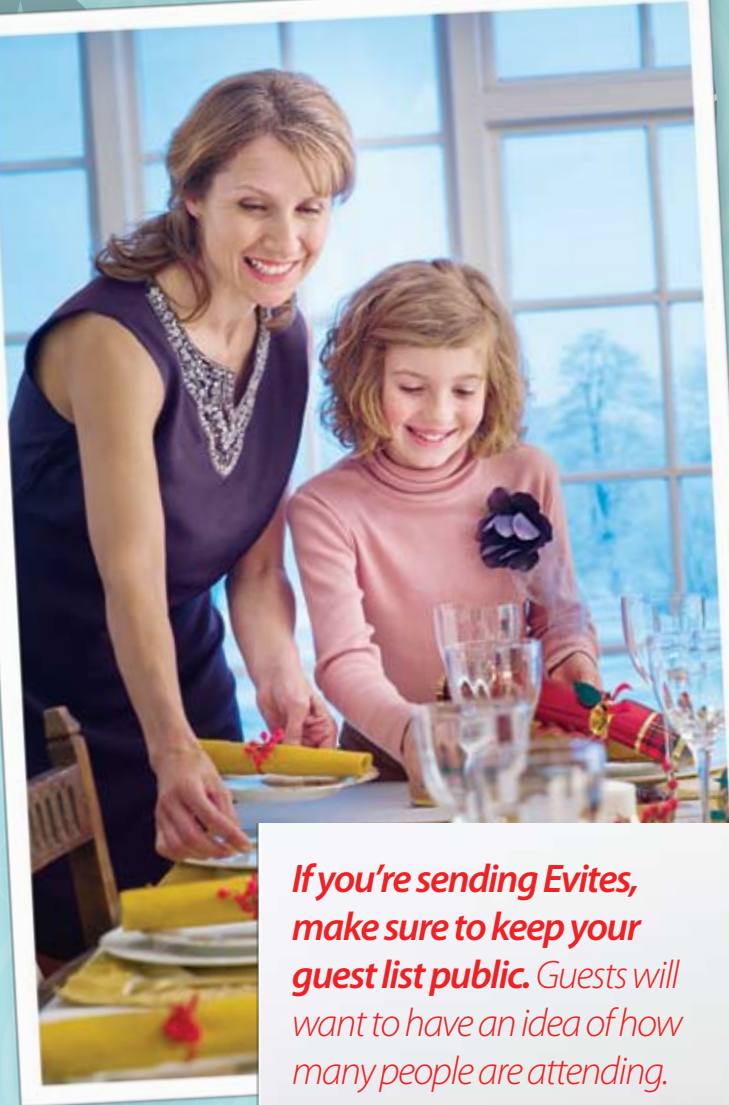
Be sure that your invitations include the following information:

- The type of party (e.g., cocktail party, dinner party, potluck, etc.)
- Start and end times
- If the party is for adults only or if children are welcome
- If guests should bring anything

Set the mood.

Tried and true holiday decorations, such as lights, evergreen wreaths and poinsettias, are sure to get your guests in the spirit of the season. Additionally, soft lighting and familiar seasonal scents, such as vanilla, cinnamon or pine, encourage a homelike atmosphere that will put everyone at ease. Place candles or essential oils around your home, and if you have a fireplace, be sure to light it.

Greet every guest with a sweet treat or your party's signature cocktail or drink.



If you're sending Evites, make sure to keep your guest list public. Guests will want to have an idea of how many people are attending.

Plan and prepare the food and beverages.

Food is arguably the most important part of your party. If you're hosting a large feast, do your shopping and prep work ahead of time. Any dishes that can be prepared and frozen a week or two in advance will help you save time on the day of the big event.

For smaller parties, choose an assortment of finger foods and snacks such as sandwiches, cheese and fruit plates, veggies and dip, bruschetta, etc. to limit the number of utensils your guests need.

A signature drink will make your party memorable. For adult parties, choose a festive cocktail that incorporates the flavours and colours of the season, and make a non-alcoholic version too. If children are invited, offer your own twist on favourites such as hot cocoa and cider.



Place food and beverages on tables throughout the room to help ensure that everyone gets to sample the tasty dishes.



Arrange seating and surfaces

Whether you're hosting a dinner party or an informal affair, make sure there are enough seats for all guests and enough surfaces to place a plate or a drink, especially if you're serving food that requires utensils. That way, your guests won't have to awkwardly balance their plates or cups in order to eat or drink. Also, be sure to set an extra place or two at the table for unexpected guests that may show up.

Get the party started.

There are a variety of holiday tunes out there for every type of party, from traditional holiday standards to modern interpretations of the classics. Let the type of party guide your choice of music.

- Soft instrumental holiday music is perfect for a dinner or cocktail party as it encourages conversation.
- At informal parties, limit music to the background to instill holiday spirit, or use it to encourage a sing-a-long or dance off.

Don't forget the party favours.

Never let your guests leave empty-handed! Fill small gift bags with candy canes, chocolates and baked goods as well as the recipe for your party's signature drink, if you had one. Decorate the bag with a pretty bow, and hand the bags out as guests leave, or set them by the door with a sign to take one.

A party isn't complete without a toast.

Remember to thank your guests for coming, let them know how special they are to you and wish them well during the holidays and in the coming year.

 **Set up a table with plain gingerbread men and of the trimmings.** Let your guests tap into their creative sides and decorate a cookie to take home.



3 Ways to Save Money on Your Holiday Party

- 1 Send Evites instead of invitations. Or, create an Event on Facebook and invite people from your Friends list.
- 2 Have guests bring holiday-themed glassware.
- 3 Ask guests to bring their favourite holiday cookies or bottle of wine to share.

