

Holiday Dinner Party Checklist

People often shy away from inviting friends over for a dinner party because they feel overwhelmed with the planning process or do not think they have the right supplies. Here is a convenient checklist to assist you in coordinating your Holiday Soirée.

Four Weeks Prior to the Dinner Party

Holidays get booked quickly, so one month notice is not unreasonable to ensure your guests record your gathering on their calendar.

✎ Decide on a theme.

While it is not necessary to officially have a special reason to plan a party, a theme adds to the excitement and provides a direction for your decorating.

✎ Send out the invite.

Your request can be anything from a quick text, "Having a few friends over for dinner next Friday, can you join us?" to a beautiful card on quality card stock with an RSVP included, sent through the mail. The invitation will set the tone for the event. Make the attire expectations clear, whether the dress code is casual, professional or black tie, always include it in your correspondence.

✎ Take inventory of your kitchen tools.

Here is a list of some essentials:

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| ✎ Rack & roasting pan | ✎ Wine opener |
| ✎ Meat thermometer | ✎ Paring knife |
| ✎ Platters & serving pieces | ✎ Cutting boards |
| ✎ Wine & water glasses | ✎ Garlic press |
| ✎ Kitchen timer | |

✎ Plan your menu.

Your ideal menu is simple, fresh and takes food allergies or dietary restrictions into consideration.

Three Weeks Prior

- ✎ Decide on the signature drink(s).
- ✎ Purchase the liquor.
- ✎ Contact a valet service to greet guests as they drive up and park cars.
- ✎ Arrange a car service for guests who may (overindulge) need assistance home.
- ✎ Go through your apartment/house and check for light bulbs that need changing.
- ✎ Shop for your holiday outfit.
- ✎ Bake and freeze cookies.
- ✎ Review your recipes and make a list of ingredients you will need.
- ✎ Go through your spice cabinet and toss outdated spices.

Two Weeks Prior

- ✎ Pull out your plates, serving dishes and wine glasses. Count and clean them, and have them ready to go.
- ✎ Borrow what you are missing from friends and family.
- ✎ Mix and match plates and serving pieces you already own.
- ✎ Wash and iron table linens.
- ✎ Purchase decorations or shop your closet and backyard.
- ✎ Paint the front door. This is a good excuse to repair a door that needs attention.
- ✎ Create a lively music playlist.

One Week Prior

- ✎ Wash the windows.
- ✎ Order the flowers and food you do not intend to cook.
- ✎ Grocery shop for food that is not perishable.
- ✎ Set the table.

One Day Prior

- ✎ Clean the house.
- ✎ Slice and dice foods that require attention.
- ✎ Take out frozen cookies.
- ✎ Buy fresh vegetables and pick up food order.
- ✎ Inform police and neighbors of heavier traffic.
- ✎ Chill the wine and beverages.
- ✎ Set up the self-serve bar cart/table.
- ✎ Clean guest bathroom and shut the door.

Day of the Dinner Party

- ✎ Light candles.
- ✎ Turn on lamps, turn off bright overhead lights.
- ✎ Put the playlist on as background music.
- ✎ Dress up.
- ✎ Accept help from friends if offered.
- ✎ Designate someone to open the bottles of wine.
- ✎ Rely on your prior planning and enjoy the experience.

There is no better way to welcome the holiday season than with good food, exceptional company and a gracious host.

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