



Hosting a Christmas Party

By Mary M. Alward

Christmas is fast approaching. This is the time of year that everyone begins to think about holiday party planning. The weather is turning colder, frost appears on the roofs in the morning and retail stores are displaying decorations and lights. If you will be hosting a party this holiday season, here are a few tips that will make the occasion more enjoyable for everyone:

- Plan your Christmas party well in advance. Make the menu and decide on a Christmas theme and decorations by the middle of November. This will give you time to get everything in place before the big night.*
- Send out the invitations at least three weeks ahead of time. This allows people to slot your party into their busy holiday schedule. Be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope with the invitations and a RSVP request by a specified date. This enables you to know well ahead of time how many guests will be attending.*
- Keep the party menu simple and, if a party theme is being used, keep the food geared to the theme. For instance, if your theme is Victorian, serve foods that would have been served at a Victorian Christmas party. These can include Christmas cake, plum pudding, sugarplums, nuts of all types, prunes, dates and candied cherries are just a few of the foods that would go with this theme. There are hundreds of Victorian Christmas recipes available online, or check out your local library for a Victorian Christmas cookbook.*
- Cheese trays and finger foods are always popular, as are homemade desserts. Make up cheese and pickle trays, sandwiches and other finger foods. Appetizers can include shrimp cocktail, spring rolls, garlic bread and cheese and breaded shrimp. Desserts can include tarts, pies, pastries and squares.*
- Be sure to provide a wide selection of beverages that include both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Not all guests will want alcoholic beverages. Tea and coffee are a must, as are juices and soda. Alcoholic beverages should include beer, eggnog, Irish Cream liqueur, rum, whiskey, wine and vodka. This will assure that all guests can enjoy their favorite holiday drink.*
- Decorate according to your Christmas theme and plan your menu accordingly. Another idea is to request that guests dress to reflect the party's theme. This makes for a fun and interesting evening.*

Use the tips in this article to throw a great Christmas party this holiday season. A unique Christmas theme will make your party the talk of your friends and family for weeks to come.