

Party Planning Checklist

1 Month Before

- Determine the type of party you'll host. Settle on the theme and formality level.
- Set the date.
- Prepare your guest list.
- Select and order invitations by Carlson Craft
- Line up help you may need (bartender, servers, cleaning service, etc.).

3 Weeks Before

- Mail the invitations.
- Plan the menu and determine if you'll have the food catered.
- Place orders with local caterer, bakery, etc., if having the food brought in.
- Create a timeline and grocery list, if preparing the food.
- Test new recipes now to eliminate problems at final preparation.
- Prepare any food that can be frozen.

2 Weeks Before

- Stock the bar; plan on three to four drinks per guest for a two- to three-hour party.
- If you're hosting a potluck (or if friends offer to prepare food for you), let guests know what to bring.
- Do a test run of the entire table setting to take inventory of what you have and what you need.
- Arrange to borrow, rent, or purchase items you don't already have.
- Prepare the music to be played throughout the duration of the party.

1 Week Before

- Contact guests who have not RSVP'd to see if they plan on attending.
- Follow up with guests who will bring food, beverage, or other items.
- Prepare all food that keep well up to a week.
- Clean the house thoroughly.

4 Days Before

- Purchase all remaining nonperishable food items.
- Notify your neighbors if you're expecting a large party, a loud party and/or extensive parking spaces.
- Tuck away your valuables, things that will be in the way, or items that could get broken.
- Decorate the party space. Arrange the furniture in a way that allows guests to move about easily. Keep in mind that fewer chairs than guests encourages mingling.
- Prepare for accidental spills. Place items such as a box of salt, stain remover, club soda and a few rags in a small basket and set it in a location easily accessible by your guests.

2 Days Before

- Clean and polish serving pieces, plates, flatware, and glasses you'll be using.
- Launder and iron table linens.
- Specify a place for guests' coats.
- Place any frozen food in the refrigerator to defrost overnight.

1 Days Before

- Purchase any perishable food items (salad greens, fresh bread, seafood, etc.).
- Pick up fresh flowers (or have them delivered) and place them where guests can see and enjoy.
- Assemble those foods that can be made in advance.
- Wash and prepare salad greens and other vegetables. Refrigerate in separate airtight containers.
- Give your house a quick recap cleaning.

4 to 7 Hours Before

- Ready the bar for service. Chill the wine and other beverages if applicable.

Up to 1 Hour Before

- Finish any last-minute food prep and set up.
- Shift gears to prepare for arriving guests. Greet them warmly, making sure they feel welcomed.

