

Tips for Planning a Party

There are different ways to plan a party. For the right party and people, it may be as simple as, "Let's see if A and B are free Saturday," and invite them over. If you are wanting something a bit more formal, here is a simple outline to use to help things come out the way you want.

First decide how many people you'll invite.

Next, decide on a budget. This can help you avoid financial depression after the party and help you plan without changing it too often because of the cost. Just decide how much you want to spend. Don't do it the other way around if you don't want to be paying long after the party. Don't just get what sounds good and pay later. Decide on the amount and make you plan fit the budget.

Next decide on a place. Probably it will be at home. Most parties are. But you might also ask a relative for use of their home, or rent a room, or go to the park, etc. If you choose somewhere besides home, you need to work out the logistics, like getting permission, or a permit for the park or reserve a karaoke or hotel room, etc. Some restaurants don't charge extra for a party room if you have a minimum number of guests. Find out the cost for whatever you do.

Next you might want to decide on a theme for the party. A theme isn't essential, but having a theme can do 2 things for you. It can be a great enticement (if one is needed). You are invited to a hunt for treasure at my Jack Sparrow Pirate party sounds more interesting than "my birthday party." The second thing a theme does is focus the remainder of your planning. With a theme you are very clear about what types of decorations, food, favors and so on you will need to make or obtain.

Plan the food. Will you have it catered, cook and furnish it all yourself, or have a pot luck. If you ask everyone to bring one thing, you can save a bundle and pretty much no one will mind. It's a pretty standard thing.

If it is a non-holiday party and you plan to send out invitations, send them 2-3 weeks in advance. Not so far out that people forget but now so close that they are rushed to decide and prepare. If it's a holiday party, like Christmas, plan way out. Lots of people, and businesses will be having parties. Talk to people, try to plan and coordinate a date good for the most people.

Plan your decorations early. Even if you don't purchase or make them early, know where to get them and that you CAN get them. Don't look for pirate flags 2 days before the party and find you'll need to order and it will take 3 days.

Plan some activities. If you have a place to dance and you know your guests like to dance, plan the music. Games are always great for parties. If it is a party for families, have games ready for kids, adults, and kids with adults.

The day of the party, don't wait until the last minute to prepare. Estimate how long it will take to set up and begin 2 or 3 hours early. Seriously. Something almost always happens to slow you down. If you finish and are ready early, great. Sit back and relax. That's better than being half finished, stressed out, and people begin to arrive.

Enjoy the party yourself.