

Plan the Perfect Sit-Down Dinner Party- How to Enjoy Your Own Party

Hosting a sit-down dinner party takes preparation and organization. With everyone's busy schedules, families and friends don't often get the chance to sit down and enjoy a special meal together. Here are some suggestions to help make your next gathering easy and memorable.

1) Start by making pre and post checklists of the supplies you will need. As you plan your party, follow your timetable, go over lists and check off each task as it is completed. Make certain to include critical information like date, time, place and reason for the occasion. Ask guests to RSVP by a certain date so you can appropriately prepare.

2) Figure out how big or small a get-together you would like to have so you can plan your budget. Consider how many you can comfortably seat at your table or how you can extend an existing table to accommodate more. Other tables in your home or even an inexpensive fold-out rental table can work well when clothed and set. Placing name cards at the dinner table is a nice way to encourage conversation and for people to get to know each other.

3) Consider what china, dishes, flatware and cooking pots you will use. Use your special occasion pieces - this is a party, after all. Also consider how well you can work in the size of your kitchen. If you have never done this before, start small with some simple dishes and make additions after you have some experience.

4) If you plan on having a party on a specific holiday, be prepared for a fewer number of RSVPs. People will be less likely to have other plans if the party is scheduled on a date before or after the holiday.

5) Time your invitation for people to come half an hour to an hour before you plan to serve dinner. If possible let them know - cocktails at 7:00, dinner at 8:00. The more formal the occasion, the more lead time required. Everything works for invitations - from a phone call, e-mail or handwritten invitation.

6) Ask friends and family members for help as well. Assign tasks or food items for guests to bring to help ease your load. If you are going to serve wine, choose after the menu is in place and enlist some help from local wine retailers. Not only can they find a pairing for food but they can also provide amounts required based on your numbers and the size of the wine bottle.

7) An organized house is more attractive and welcoming to your guests. Take the time to tidy up and put your belongings in their proper place. You will feel more comfortable knowing that your guests are seeing your home at its best.

Plan ahead so you have as little to do on the actual day of your party as possible. Take time for yourself before guests begin arriving. Being a relaxed and stress-free party host is the best thing to serve your guests.

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