

# Planning a Christmas dinner party

Contributed by Administrator  
Friday, 04 November 2005  
Last Updated Friday, 04 November 2005

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by Rose Lenk

Entertaining friends and family in your home during the Christmas holiday is one of the most popular activities of the holiday season. Many people choose to host small, informal gatherings in their home, while others plan extravagant dinner parties which are destined to generate more than one urban legend in the community in which they are held.

While many of us do not aspire to such heights as those held by the socialites in our community, we would still like to host an unforgettable Christmas dinner party that will be remembered fondly among our closest friends and family for years to come.

If you are like me, and many are if they would just admit it, the thought of all of the work and skill that goes into throwing a successful dinner party leaves you a little weak in the knees and wondering how in the world you are going to pull it all off without a hitch.

But don't let the fear of juggling the tasks involved with putting on a dinner party keep you from hosting the event that your family and friends will talk about for a long time into the future. It's really not that hard if you follow a few simple steps and guidelines for putting on a successful dinner party.

Here's how to plan the perfect Christmas dinner party:

Make your list, check it twice, and invite, invite, invite. The first thing you need to do when planning a dinner party is to create your guest list. Keep in mind that not all invited will attend. So, if you want to have 50 guests at your party, you will have to invite quite a few more than that. Send out invitations no less than three weeks in advance so that people will have a chance to RSVP.

Plan to cook your own meal or plan for others to plan it for you. If you are no Betty Crocker, admit it to yourself before signing on to make a large homemade meal. Having someone cater your dinner party or ordering takeout is perfectly acceptable depending on what type of atmosphere you want to create. Remember that buffets are informal and a sit down dinner is more formal. I'm not saying that you are not capable of cooking a large meal for your guests. If you are and want to take on the work load of cooking for multiple guests, then by all means do so. Just keep in mind your limitations and time constraints. Doing so will save you a great deal of headache in the end.

Menu planning. When planning your individual dishes to serve at your Christmas dinner party, choose dishes that are both delicious and easy to make. Choose recipes that can be made ahead of time or that require just a little heating right before the party to be finished. The last thing you want to be doing during your dinner party is slaving over a hot stove sequestered away from your guests. Another important thing to remember when planning your menu is to never, ever attempt to cook a recipe for the first time. Trust me.

Take inventory. Create a list of all of the supplies that you will need to host your dinner party. Items may include tables, chairs, service pieces, cutlery, plates, candlesticks, decorations, table cloths, etc. Do not forget your food items from your menu as well. Shop and Clean till you drop. About a week before your dinner party, you should take the time to do your party shopping and give your house a thorough cleaning.

Cook and decorate. Cook and prepare as many foods as you can ahead of time, preferable the day before the party. Save the day of the party for setting up your tables and adding the finishing touches to your décor.

See, hosting a memorable Christmas dinner party is not so hard after all. In fact, I'm sure that you can do it. So, get out there and start planning, and if at any time you feel overwhelmed, simply hire a caterer.

#### About the Author

By Rose Lenk

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