

Dinner party planning checklist



The day of

- Make a checklist of what needs to be cooked and when.
- Do any food prep that can be done ahead of time.
- Set out coffee maker with measured coffee and a teapot with bags on the side.
- Clean bathrooms.

Two hours before the guests arrive

- Shower and get dressed.
- Clean bathroom sink, put out guest towels.

One hour before the guests arrive

- Open red wine. Sample (just a wee sample).
- Plate olives, cheese and walnuts for hors d'oeuvres, place on serving table with serviettes and a small bowl for olive pits.
- Make cocktail and store in fridge.

Thirty minutes before the guests arrive

- Put the music on.
- Light candles.
- Put ice in ice bucket, if using.

The guests arrive

- Introduce everyone if they don't know each other with commonalities.
- Offer drinks--delegate a bartender.

Ten minutes before salad time

- Plate salads and put on the table.
- Ask your guests to sit down--seat talkers across from each other on a diagonal--better for group conversation.
- Clear table and get the main course ready.
- Plate dinner--it looks more professional, you have portion control powers and there will be less clutter on the table. Serve main course.
- Wait 20 to 30 minutes, then make tea and coffee.
- Plate dessert in the kitchen if you wish and serve with tea and coffee.

The guests leave

- If anyone has overindulged in the booze department insist on calling them a cab.
- After everyone has left, clean up, kick back and enjoy the knowledge that you did a wonderful job, your house is clean and dinner parties are a great way to nurture your fabulous friendships.

By Mairlyn Smith. From *How to throw a fabulous dinner party*
(www.canadianhomeandcountry.com/dinnerparties)