

INTRODUCTION

Not all of us are party planners or can afford to hire one. If you're not familiar with the drill and haven't hosted many dinners or parties, you're bound to drop the ball on something crucial just before the doorbell rings and the first guest arrives. Are you so frantically trying to plan a party that you forget to pick up the dress you wanted to wear from the dry cleaner?

Are you too busy worrying that no one will come to a party you've planned to remember to restock toilet paper in your powder room? Entertaining is in the details. Some are big, such as what day and time is the event, and some are small, such as whether Jane and Liz will get into a political brawl if they sit next to each other. If you let details go unchecked, they can turn into a major pain in the neck. That reminds us, did you remember to put ibuprofen in the first aid kit?

Here's a tip: whether you're planning a wedding or a BBQ, make sure to remember to get extra drinking glasses and ice, so both your guests and you can enjoy the fun!

EVENT PLANNING TIMELINE

HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN OUR GUESTS ARE DRINKING AND MERRY? WHEN WE RUN OUT OF GLASSES. THAT'S WHY WE ORDER THREE TIMES AS MANY GLASSES AS WE NEED, SO WE CAN BREEZE THROUGH COCKTAIL HOUR WITHOUT FRANTICALLY WASHING THE STEAMWARE. NOW POUR YOURSELF A GLASS OF WINE.

WANT TO KNOW HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR VENDORS? A TIP, OF COURSE.

BUT A PERSONAL THANK YOU NOTE AFTER THE PARTY SEALS THE DEALS FOR EVENTS TO COME.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PERSONAL CELL PHONE NUMBERS FOR ALL VENDORS, IN CASE THEY DON'T SHOW UP.

I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER. AND I KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE. THAT'S

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IN CASE A VENDOR IS RUNNING LATE.

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING. FOR EXAMPLE, ORDER ONE FLOWER ARRANGEMENT IN ADVANCE. LOOK AT IT, DECIDE AND TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH. IF IT'S RIGHT, GET A PRICE.

		√ LIST
Event		
Date		
Place		
Time		
Occasion		
Dress Code	RSVP	
TO DO		
1. Pick a date.		
2. Pick a venue, if not at home. Check availability and reserve. Pay deposit if necessary.		
3. Make a guest list with names, addresses, phone numbers (home, cell, fax), and e-mail addresses. (Use <i>UO</i> Invitation List)		
4. Send "Save-the-date" cards or call or e-mail guests.		
5. Arrange for:		
Party planner		
Servers, bartender		
Party rentals (tables, dishes, glasses, tents, etc.)		
Photographer (be specific about whose pictures you want taken)		
Caterer (including tables, chairs, dishes, etc.)		
Florist (centerpieces and other)		
Valet parking or parking passes		
Coat rack, hangers, umbrella bucket if rain expected		
Entertainment (band or DJ?; where will they be?)		
Decorations		
Deliveries (instruct vendors)		
Party favors		
6. Design and distribute invitations (use <i>UO</i> "Invitation Checklist"), directions, parking, dress code, and any other information guests will need. (See <i>UO</i> "Driving Instructions to the Venue")		
7. Create a menu with your caterer. Have a tasting. Order a cake if occasion calls for it.		
8. Choose place settings (check that you have the correct # of each piece for your guests). Have extra glasses on hand for cocktail hour.		
9. Review final acceptance list.		
10. Confirm all yes RSVPs two to three days before.		
11. Check with guests as to special dietary needs (make a note).		
12. Ask someone to prepare a toast if desired (and decide when to give it).		
13. Make a seating chart. Buy and make out place cards.		
14. Order or shop for containers for flowers, candles, and ice.		
15. Buy food and beverages. Pick up cake if ordered.		
16. Clean house or make sure the venue is in order. Wash glasses, dishes, silverware, table, tablecloths, and cocktail napkins. Clean refrigerator and coat closet. Make sure you have correct serving dishes, bowls, spoons, heating trays, etc. Stock the bar. See HOME/"Well-Stocked Bar"		

This is just a sample.

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