

# Your Essential *Party* Checklist

PLANNING TO HOST A SHINDIG THIS HOLIDAY SEASON (OR ANY TIME)? WELL, YOU'D BETTER GET BUSY BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO DO. FOLLOW THIS STEP-BY-STEP PLAN TO MAKE IT AS EASY — AND FABULOUS! — AS POSSIBLE.

## TWO TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE YOUR PARTY

- Consider using a party-planning app like Pro Party Planner to help organize the event.
- Choose a theme.
- Set your budget. Costs can vary wildly depending on the type of event, venue, décor, entertainment, food and drink you have in mind. Unless you are serving nothing but Cheezies and Labatt Blue, expect to spend at least \$50 per person — and possibly much more than that.
- Choose your date and time.
- If you plan to use a caterer, private chef, bartender, servers or outside entertainment, book them now.
- Order any special supplies.
- If you have any renovations that need to be done before you can welcome guests to your home, this is the time to do them.\*
- Assemble your guest list and send a "save the date" note.

## ONE MONTH BEFORE

- Send invitations. Consider using an online service like evite or Paperless Post — they have pretty designs, interactive features such as automatic reminders and are super convenient for hosts and guests alike. See page 60 for invitation etiquette.
- Plan your menu and the beverages you want to serve.
- Order/purchase wine, beer, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as non-perishable foodstuffs.

- If your event is at a busy time of year or you have a special cake or dessert in mind, order your baked goods now.
- Order, purchase or make any décor items such as balloons, flower arrangements, special lighting, signage and holiday decorations.
- Order your tableware and other rentals. Party rental businesses offer everything from linens to Riedel glassware to coffee urns and chairs, and you don't even need to wash the dishes when you return them.
- Plan any special activities and make sure you have the supplies on hand.
- Book cleaners for your carpets, windows and/or house.

## ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Finalize the menu.
- Order baked goods if you haven't already done so.
- Follow up on RSVPs and finalize your guest list.
- If you're not using YAM's party playlist (see page 53), create your own — apps like Spotify or Apple Music make it easy.
- Do your major tidy, declutter and deep clean, and make any repairs.
- Nail down your party look. Buy some new party clothes or get your existing ones cleaned.
- Confirm your caterer and other event staff.
- If it's THAT kind of party, share the Instagram hashtag now.

## TWO DAYS BEFORE

- Go shopping for groceries and other supplies. (Or hire a delivery service to do it for you.)
- Send a reminder to your guests along with directions and information on parking or access codes.
- Go over your schedule, menu and shopping lists and make sure you haven't forgotten anything.
- If you haven't already done so, get essential grooming done (hair cut and/or colour, beard trim, manicure, pedicure).

## ONE DAY BEFORE

- Clean your house from top to bottom (or hire someone to do it for you).
- Make sure any event staff you've hired have easy access to the space and everything they need to do their jobs. Also, prepare tip envelopes so you are not scrambling as the party is wrapping up.
- Pick up your rentals.
- Start your food prep — get as much done today as you can to save your sanity on the day of. Many things can be made in advance, including quick pickles, dips, marinades, punch bases and most home-baked goods.
- If you haven't already done so, put up décor items such as wreaths, garlands or festive trees.
- If you are offering a takeaway gift, prep it now.

## THE DAY OF

- Pick up your last-minute groceries, as well as your bakery order, flowers and balloons.
- Buy ice. Remember, you will need much more than you think. If you don't have room in your freezer, have a couple of coolers on hand.
- Do a final clean and make sure any rooms where guests will spend time — especially bathrooms — are immaculate.
- Finish decorating your place. Set tables, arrange centrepieces, get candles ready to light. Set up your drink and food stations. Put out glassware and snack bowls.
- If you are cooking, get busy in the kitchen. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get everything done, and if you have dishes that will be heated or cooked during the event, plan your schedule so you know what to do when. If you've hired a caterer, let them do their thing.
- Shower, get dressed and look amazing.

- Light the candles, turn on the twinkly lights, put out the snacks and get your welcome drinks ready for your perfectly perfect party.

*\* Note that this checklist is for house parties. If you want to use an outside venue, book it at least two months before your event.*

*Be warned, though: At busy times of year, popular venues book up months, sometimes a year in advance. Check your contract thoroughly, make sure you understand what your costs and responsibilities are, and work them into the checklist above.*