

HOW TO HAVE FUN AT YOUR OWN HOLIDAY PARTY

When I was first married, I hated throwing parties. It was so much work, I never got to enjoy one minute of it. I'd spend all day on my feet frantically trying to get everything together before our guests arrived. Then I'd run around refilling drinks and washing dishes as everyone else noshed away and settled into conversations.

But over the years, I've developed a foolproof plan that frees me up to join in on the fun. It does require an excel spreadsheet, make-ahead recipes, and a slightly anal-retentive nature.

2022/2023 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

CHEESE BOARD	SALMON ROULADES	GOUGERES	COQ AU VIN	ROASTED BRUSSEL SPROUTS	POTATO CAKE	PECAN PIE
Cheeses	Smoked salmon	Unsalted Butter	Bacon	2 lbs Brussel Sprouts	6 Russet Potatoes	Butter
Fig Spread	Cream Cheese	Parmesan	8 chicken thighs	Pecans	Garlic	Sugar
Mustard	Lemon	Eggs	Carrots	Maple Syrup	Sour Cream	Flour
Pate	Chives	Gruyere	1 Yellow, 12 small white	Onion	Chives	Honey
bread	Scallions	Nutmeg	Garlic	Garlic		Lyles Golden Syrup
olives		Flour	Brandy			Vanilla Extract
Chacuterie		Milk	Red Wine			Dark Rum
			Chicken Stock			Nutmeg
			Thyme			Eggs
			Mushrooms			2 cups pecans
						ice cream
DEC 28 WEDNESDAY	DEC 29 THURSDAY	DEC 30 FRIDAY	DEC 31 PARTY TIME!			
BUY ALL INGREDIENTS. EXCEPT BREAD	SELECT ALL SERVING TRAYS, PLATES, GLASSES - CLEAN ANYTHING THAT NEEDS CLEANING	MAKE COQ AU VIN	2:00pm Complete Cleanup and Set-up			
CLEAN HOUSE	SET UP ROOM/TABLES/BAR AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE	MAKE POTATO CAKE	3:00pm Make Gougeres			
	MAKE PECAN PIE	MAKE BRUSSEL SPROUTS	4:00pm Shower and Get Dressed			
			5:00 Prep Cheese Board			
			6:00 Prep and Plate Salmon Roulades			
			7:00 Reheat Coq Au Vin, Potato Cake, Brussel Sprouts			
			7:30 Guests arrive			

STEP #1 – Decide what kind of party you're having. Is it a dinner party? Just cocktails and hors d'oeuvres? A brunch?

STEP #2 – Pick your dishes wisely. The key is finding recipes that can be done a day or so before and then just reheated or

served cold.

STEP #3 – Make a spreadsheet. I'm not kidding. The first thing I do is label the dishes along the top. Next, I list the ingredients I need to buy beneath each dish. You can then cut and paste that section onto a separate page for your shopping list.

STEP #4 – Below the ingredients, I list the four days of the week leading up to the party. Below each day, I assign tasks that can be done ahead.

STEP #5 – Make sure to include things like cleaning the house, setting the table, prepping your bar, etc. to the list. These can be a real time suck, and it's important to allot ample time for each.

STEP #6 – Stick to the plan. If you're feeling overwhelmed, there's no shame in asking someone to bring a dish. Just be specific about what you need.

STEP #7 – Assign tasks to your spouse, partner, kids, and/or good friends.

STEP #8 –If something doesn't come out well, don't worry about it. Chances are you've made way too much food anyway.

STEP #9 – Don't leave showering and getting dressed to the last minute. You'll always run out of time and you don't want to greet your guests looking like a worn out dishrag.

STEP#10 – Now pour yourself a cocktail and have a great time.