

Planning Your Theme - Valentine's Day - Party

{Prepared by TCC's Hospitality Management Program}

1. Determine Location

- ~At home
- ~Other location

2. Theme Development

- ~Valentine's Day ideas
 - ~Masked Carnival
 - ~Roman Holiday
 - ~Mid-Summer Night's Dream

3. Menu Planning

- ~Determine if you'd like to serve heavy hors d'oeuvres or prepare a complete meal. Remember that hors d'oeuvres should be easy to eat.
- ~This will help you determine how many guests to invite, how intimate the setting and what to serve.

4. Request RSVPs

- ~Allow yourself one week between receiving responses and giving your caterer the final guarantee.
- ~This gives you time to call guests who have yet to respond, and enables you to accommodate guests who may have to cancel due to emergencies or illness.

5. Budget

- ~Budget for the extras including any rentals you may need for china, flatware, glassware and linens or the purchase of disposable tableware.
- ~For a cocktail party featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres using china and glassware, allow at least two plates and two glasses per guest. When using disposable tableware, add extra plates and glassware.
- ~For a seated dinner, you will need full place settings to accommodate all courses, including china, flatware, glassware and linens.
- ~For a fully-catered event ask for a breakdown of all charges including food, taxes, labor and rental fees.

6. Serving Your Guests: Options

- ~Determine if you will prepare and serve the food yourself, or if the occasion will be a fully-catered event.
- ~ If you are handling the arrangements yourself, choose a menu that can be prepared in advance, frozen and placed in the oven to reheat.
- ~Have cold platters that are garnished and ready to serve delivered from a restaurant or caterer the day of the event.
- ~Depending on the size of your party, hire one additional person to help in the kitchen to plate your courses and assist with clean up.
- ~Ask the caterer when event staff will arrive.
- ~Provide a suitable work space for the caterer to heat and plate your food and instruct the caterer on what to do with any leftover food.

7. The Bar

- ~Instead of a costly full bar, offer one fun specialty cocktail, and wine and soft drinks. Remember to always provide a non-alcoholic beverage.
- ~Plan a wine or champagne tasting with courses.

Special Notes:

- ~Whether you are preparing a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres party or a plated multi-course meal, be conscious of food allergies, severe dislikes, and be sure to balance flavors, colors and textures.
- ~When offering heavy hors d'oeuvres, start with small butler-passed pieces (1-2 bites), offering 3 or 4 per guest, then provide an assortment of stationary hors d'oeuvres (2-3 bites) of 5 to 6 pieces per guest.
- ~End with an assortment of small pick-up desserts, such as chocolate-dipped strawberries, sorbets in mini chocolate cups and mini biscotti served on a specialty coffee table.
- ~If you are doing a seated dinner, start with an amuse bouche, followed by a light first course, a palette refresher, then the main attraction. Choose a plated dessert that will wow your guests visually, but not leave them overly full and sleepy. Light mousse with chocolate lacing and berries coupled with champagne and special coffee make a great ending.
- ~Try a tapas menu where the portions are enough for two to share. You can offer each couple a great variety that would impress your guests.

Have fun planning your party; but more importantly, have fun at your party!!