



*this month:*  
**Creating Holiday  
Memories**

*Five Tips for Throwing an Unforgettable Holiday Party*

The holidays are a time for creating warm, wonderful memories with family and friends. Here are some simple tips for throwing a fabulous party this season.



### 1) Keep it simple.

Consider hosting a single-course party, such as an appetizer or a dessert party. This makes it easy to serve the food buffet-style and keeps all aspects of your event more focused. There will be plenty of large meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and small "bites" of entertaining are often easier and more enjoyable. Make all foods in single servings (for example, don't make a cake; make individual cupcakes and just place on a platter). Make bite desserts in candleholders or shot glasses instead of a large bowl. (Hint: Use plastic bags cut at the bottom to fill the containers instead of spoons; you'll be able to control the filling process better.)

### 2) Take a tip from nature.

Winter branches, pinecones, and holly berries make great holiday decorations. Place a basketful of pinecones by the fireplace and add some cinnamon sticks for a great scent. If you want the grouping to look more festive, use a small paintbrush to brush the edges of the pinecones with glue and sprinkle with glitter. Tree branches coated in glue, sprinkled with glitter, and placed in a vase make a pretty centerpiece at a minimal cost. Use one or two colors of different-sized Christmas ball ornaments in a glass vase for quick and easy decor.

### 3) Fresh and festive fits the theme.

Look to your produce section for inspiration with food presentation. Cornucopias make great garnish under cornbread or corn cake appetizers. Small pumpkins and acorn squash make great serving pieces and soup bowls (and no dishes to wash!). Make individual pies instead of large ones, using cupcake/muffin pans to bake. Plastic spoons dipped in chocolate make festive, flavorful coffee stirrers.

### 4) Multitasking is good.

Martini glasses are great for serving appetizers or even for table decor when filled with candies. Wine and beer planer glasses also are great for decor and desserts such as parfaits. Candleholders also make great individual dessert servers. "Shooter" desserts can be made ahead of time and placed in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

### 5) Add some drama.

You can purchase fabric at your local fabric store to create a holiday buffet, creating varied layers and levels on the table will make a dramatic statement. Place sturdy boxes on the table at each end and drape the fabric over them. Use holly branches or evergreen boughs for decor around the edges and then place your serving pieces.

## More Party- Planning Hints

\* For football parties, focus on foods that don't need flatware—finger foods are best. Cocktail franks in small dinner rolls are like mini hotdogs. Make mini hamburgers on round dinner rolls and serve French fries in paper cones.

\* Wine glasses filled with water (colored or clear) and candle votives make quick and easy decor (especially red wine glasses with large "bowls").

\* Recycle your decor. When the party is over, save anything you can for another party or to share with a friend or neighbor who might be planning a party soon. Place everything in a plastic bin for future use.

\* Avoid using scented candles that might compete with fragrant food, but consider boiling some water on the stove with cinnamon to add a nice, festive aroma.

Contributed by **Mama Friedman**, professional organizer, member of the National Association of Professional Organizers, and author of *EVENTUALLY Perfect*.