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Five Tips For Hosting a Successful Event

1. Be Prepared

Planning an event can be a significant undertaking. In order to ensure success it is important to start planning early. Think about what kind of event you are trying to create first and what your goal is. A family barbeque “just for fun” will require a different type of planning than a corporate get together to “wow” the boss. What kind of food do you want to have, and do you plan on handling this yourself or do you expect to hire a caterer? Do you have any rental needs? Who will be handling the bar? Make up a checklist for all these items and mark off how you want to handle each. Be especially careful in the planning process to be realistic about your goals and budgets. Nothing can create more stress for a host than unrealistic expectations.

Which brings us to the next point...

2. Relax

Make sure to leave some time for yourself before the event starts. Put the planning behind you and have a glass of wine or listen to some music. Because you were well prepared, you will be able to deal with any small problems that arise swiftly and calmly. Recognize that your guests are there to enjoy themselves. Join in the fun!

3. Focus on your guests

This is critical regardless of what type of event you are hosting. Your guests are there to see YOU. If you are spending all your time in the kitchen making sure every plate is refilled and that the courses all come out at the same time you are missing the personal interaction, which is the basis of any event. Mingle with your guests, making sure to spend at least a minute or two with each.

4. Serve one impressive dish

Many hosts try to go all out when creating a menu, and strive to have the most interesting and creative menu the guests have ever seen. There are two problems with this. The first is that most people really do have very basic tastes. Staples like lasagna and chicken francaise, for example, are often seen at functions because everyone likes them. They might not be that impressive but nothing is less impressive than creative food that no one likes. The second problem is that by trying to make everything special, you in fact, make nothing special. Most people will not

remember all the “creative” tidbits you put out for them. However, if you have as the centerpiece of your meal one creative and impressive dish, people will remember that as the hit of the night.

5. Never say never again

The minute the last guest is gone is not the time to be hard on yourself and second guess your planning. Take a couple of days to relax after the event and do a mental debrief of the party. What went splendidly? What might you do differently next time? Did the guests seem like they had a good time? Make some notes for next time. If you feel like you took on too much alone there are many event professionals in our area to turn to for advice. Caterers, rental professionals, event planners, florists, bakeries, etc all work with hostesses every day. They can provide a wealth of information on planning parties. The reality is that we all have important life events, holidays, and business functions that seem to come one after the other. You will almost certainly entertain again so try to be prepared and have a good time!

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