

# Simple Tips— Perfect Results

Plan ahead, do ahead and enjoy your party.

**W**hether you're hosting a family get-together, a girls' night out or a bridal or baby shower, these tips from professional event planner Lorraine Mariella, owner of New Jersey-based Celebrations, can help you have as much fun as your guests.



**TIP:** Plan and prepare as much of your party in advance as possible. That will leave you with minimal work to do during the party. The plan here is to get most of the work out of the way so that you, too, can enjoy your guests and your party.

## How to make it work for you:

- ☞ Place all of the serving platters out on the table earlier in the day. On each platter place an index card with the name of the item to be placed on the platter. This will help you plan your food display and avoids last-minute rummaging through cabinets looking for another plate.
- ☞ Cold appetizers can be prepared in advance and set out right before guests arrive. Stick with hot appetizers such as dips or

mini quiches that can be cooked before the event and left out for self-serving. Avoid foods with short cooking times that need to be placed in the oven after guests have arrived.

- ☞ If you are planning a full meal, consider serving dishes that don't require attention after guests have arrived. For example, pulling a roast out of the oven is much simpler than preparing a dish that requires constant stirring.
- ☞ And remember, you don't have to cook everything. If you love to cook, choose a few items you enjoy preparing and supplement with items bought pre-made.

**TIP:** **Serve Yourself.** Keep the party running smoothly by making it easy for guests to help themselves. Purchase and set out plenty of supplies so restocking during the party is kept to a minimum.

## How to make it work for you:

- ☞ Put out drinks, glasses, ice bucket, etc., so guests may serve themselves.



- ☞ Place a large garbage can where guests can dispose of trash. Stash empty garbage bags in the bottom of the pail before lining it. When the first bag of garbage is ready to be removed, replacement liners are handy.
- ☞ Make sure the bathroom is stocked with extra toilet paper.

Remember, your guests will have fun if you do. So plan ahead, do ahead and then relax and enjoy your party. EW