



## Outdoor Party Planning Tips

*Have you ever heard it said that food tastes better when eaten outdoors?*

An outdoor setting is great for any gathering of friends, family, neighbors or work associates and can be used for graduation parties, weddings, baby or bridal showers, company picnics, reunions or even neighborhood block parties.

*Where To Entertain?*

- In your own backyard or front yard
- At a park, playground or zoo
- At a lake or river
- In a parking lot
- At a public garden
- At the beach

*Bugs, Flies & Other Critters*

It's hard to find an outdoor site that's bug-free. Try to spray the area for insects several hours before your guests arrive so the smell of insecticide doesn't linger in the air. If mosquitoes are in the air, have a can of mosquito repellent nearby.

*Dining by Candlelight*

There is something magical about a party under the stars. Here are a few ideas to make it more special.

Stringing tiny white lights in a few trees around the garden creates an enchanted look. Or try perching votive candles in glass holders on tree branches.

Citronella candle pots or torches are beautiful and practical. They help keep the insects away and look great. Because of their distinct smell, keep them away from food.

Don't forget to illuminate steps and steep paths, especially at night. Luminaries do the job while adding to the festive atmosphere.

*Outdoor Themes*

A theme will provide focus and pull together all the aspects of your party.

**Garden Party**—Add dry flowers petals to the invitation envelope or decorate with floral stamps and stickers. Choose a floral print pattern for the plates and napkins; mix in solid color cutlery, cups and table cover.

**Pool or Beach Party**—Create fun and unique invitations by using different items that you can mail, such as a sun block sample, a pair of sunglasses, or a sun

visor. Details of the party can be written on the visor.

Activities can include a land surfing contest, water balloon fight, bubble blowing contest, volleyball, badminton, croquet or sidewalk chalk drawing.

*Smart Party Tips*

To reinforce a paper plate, tape it down to a solid color 10 1/4" plastic plate with double stick tape.

Make sure there is ample seating and shade for ill or elderly guests, or those with sun-sensitive skin.

Always locate food stations, guest seating and reception lines in the shade, under a tent or canopy if necessary.

Have on hand sun screen and mosquito repellent.

If at the beach, bring extra beach towels, sunglasses, and beach toys .

## Food Safety and Storage for Outdoor Entertaining

*Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.* You've heard it a hundred times, yet we cannot stress enough the importance of safe food handling. Cold foods need to be stored at 40 degrees F or below - even in the cooler - and hot foods need to be kept above 140 degrees F. Mayonnaise is not the food poisoning villain people think it is. Its high acid

content from lemon juice and vinegar actually reduces bacterial growth. Ingredients such as eggs, meats and potatoes (when combined with mayo) are what spoil quickly. Serve grilled foods immediately. Place cooked foods on clean plates that were not used to transport raw meat or seafood. Perishable foods should be eaten within two hours, or one hour, if the air temperature is over 90 de-

grees F. Bottles of water (non-carbonated) serve double duty. When frozen, they keep the cooler cold and when thawed, are great to drink. Before freezing, pour out a small amount of water to allow for expansion. Discard leftovers that have been sitting out for more than an hour or two. If the ice has melted in the cooler, discard perishables.

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