

pretty party

The absolute best parties are those that leaving your guests feeling impressed, important and full of joy. The lasting impression does not have to be labor intensive or over the top to be successful. However and eye to detail will go a long way!

invitations

In a day of emailed invitations, I hold strong to the belief that real snail mail paper invitations are the best. In my experience there is little risk of people forwarding, CCing or spamming your paper invite. So take the time to create real invitations, whether they be hand written, printouts, or scrapbook supply marvels this is by far the best way to go.

Food

Keep food simple and delicious! Things with dips and themes are usually crowd pleasers. Even if you are having a pot luck or barbeque don't be afraid to make assignments or remind people to bring "Italian" or things on kebobs. Otherwise you could end up with only salty chips and ranch dip in abundance. Diversity in tastes and textures, and a thought towards those with food allergies or other sensitivities is smart.

accept offers of help

Sometime a well intended offer to help is just a curtesy and they don't really mean it, but more often than not people understand how much work a party could be. Try to be accepting where possible with offers to help or "What can I bring?" Be gracious and offer up suggestions. You should know your guests well enough to know who schedule is not overloaded and would be willing to bring something homemade, and who much rather just help clean up the paper plates in the end.

Theme through and through

It's easy to carry out a theme with simple printed items and decorations. Use offices supply paper and dollar store finds to really pull it off. Easy and inexpensive.

Party Favors

Debatable for some, but a small token is a good idea. Inexpensive items or baked goods always go over well. I am not a fan however of the huge goody bags for youth birthday parties. Kids should come for the fun of celebrating, not for the expectation of loot.

Keep it simple

Although some youth birthday parties may trend toward the over the top, I vote for the simple at home or park event. This goes for guest lists, meals, and games. Keeping it simple saves time, money and headaches for everyone! Also keep the length your party in mind, 1 1/2 hours is plenty of time for toddlers, older children and adults and go much longer.

Thank YOU Emily Post had it right about thanking people for gifts and spending time with you. A short handwritten card or kid drawn picture will go a long way and make your guests just waiting for your next event.

