



3 Easy Ways to Make a
**CELEBRATION
MEMORABLE**
on Any Budget!

Planning an event can be stressful.

There's a lot to consider, long before the guests arrive. Luckily for you, we've already done most of the heavy lifting!

Here are a few rules of thumb to keep in mind, as well as a preparation checklist to help you throw one of the best parties of all time.



General Rules of Thumb

1. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Planning a party for someone specific? Whether you're celebrating a grad or spoiling someone on their birthday, treat them like the guest of honor they are! Every party planning decision is an opportunity to show them some love.

- Choose a venue that nods to their personality. (Did you and the guest of honor frequent the pool hall in college? Consider choosing a venue with pool tables.)
- Create a playlist of all their favorite music. (Throwbacks, anyone?)
- Choose a tune and rewrite the lyrics about the guest of honor.
- Plan the menu around their favorite foods. (Do they love spice? Have a dedicated hot sauce table!)

2. CONSIDER THE FIVE SIX SENSES

Sometimes the easiest starting point is to paint a picture of the tactile experience you're trying to create for your guests. What do you want them to see, hear, smell, feel, and be thinking about as they move about your event?

- What do you want your party to look like? Consider signage to guide guests from the parking lot, or a festive banner to greet them when they walk in.
- How will you leverage the power of smell? If you're hosting an Oscars watching party, make popcorn right as the guests arrive so it's the first thing they smell when they walk in.
- And of course, the sixth sense is FUN: How can you infuse a bit of whimsy? A secret password or handshake to get in, perhaps?

3. GIVE GUESTS CONTROL

You may be tempted to think that as the party planner, you have to take care of everything — but actually, people often have particular tastes and appreciate being empowered to make decisions for themselves. Make your own job easier by giving guests plenty of DIY options.

- Choose foods that have the word “bar” in them (nacho bar, salad bar, baked potato bar, etc.), which will allow guests to build their own plate exactly the way they want.
- Make a signature drink ahead of time in a large “serve yourself” container, so people don’t depend on you to pour their drinks.
- Have multiple activity options, so one big party becomes several smaller ones, and guests can choose their own adventure.

4. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

And the most important rule is... there are no rules! Some of the most memorable parties are ones that deviate from the traditions we’ve come to expect. So, make the event your own and surprise guests with something unexpected.

- Forget cake & ice cream — serve gourmet doughnuts instead. Better yet, skip the dessert altogether and do a cheese fondue bar.
- Choose an unconventional theme, like murder mystery or scavenger hunt.
- Make it a costumed event with creative prompts, like “Dress up as the guest of honor,” “Dress up as your inner child,” or “Dress up as your idol”.



Planning & Prep

1. PICK A THEME

This decision comes first, because it will help inform all the decisions that follow — like venue, decorations, activities, and guest attire. Here are a few theme ideas to get your cogs turning:

- Game night
- Luau
- An interest-specific theme, like Star Wars or Harry Potter

2. CHOOSE A VENUE

Where will your party be held? Some major factors to consider here are budget and proximity — and of course, what would delight your honoree the most. Some common venue options:

- Park
- Backyard / patio
- Private rooms in restaurants

3. PLAN AN ACTIVITY

For adults, drinking is often activity enough... but you could consider more creative alternatives, especially if the party will also include little ones. Some possibilities to consider:

- Bouncy house, sandbox, swimming pool or bubble machine for kids
- Karaoke machine, charades, or custom madlibs for parties with all ages
- Board games, card games, or drinking games for all-adult parties

4. INVITE WITH STYLE

Your invitation sets the tone for the whole event — so use it as an opportunity to let guests know what to expect. Here are a few ways you might do this: Inform guests of the theme, and if they should dress up or prepare in any way.

- Consider mailing invitations, to make the experience even more special.
- Enlist a service to do the invitations for you, like Postable or Greenvelope.

5. CONSIDER PARTY FAVORS OR PRIZES

A personalized gift or prize is a great way to thank your guests and enhance the celebratory spirit. Some good options could be:

- Make extra food and box it up for everyone before they leave, whether it's a bag of fresh baked cookies or the honoree's favorite snack.

- Assign someone to take photos at the party, then buy frames and print photos during the party to give to people when they leave.
- Let every kid go home with their own squirt gun to continue the fun.
- Give prizes away for things like “first person to show up”, “best dressed”, “winning a bingo game”. Door prizes with raffle tickets are always a delight too. You could even “fill a balloon up with dollar bills and let the winner pop it!

6. DECORATE!

And of course, the last step is to make your environment party-ready! We recommend decorating the people first and place second, like so:

People:

- Give your guests a lei, hat, necklace, tiara, or light-up ring when they walk through the door.

Place:

- Take traditional decorations up a notch with personalization. “Happy 21st Birthday, Kris! We love you!” goes way above and beyond a standard birthday banner.
- Likewise, balloons are festive all by themselves, but a custom balloon makes your honoree feel even more special. From letters, logos, numbers, to specific designs and shapes, the options are endless.
- If you have glass windows on the front of your house or door, consider using glass friendly pens to write a personalized message welcoming people to your home. This is an affordable way to make a big impact!

6. STAY ORGANIZED & ASK FOR HELP

Write your final “day of to-do items” on individual sticky notes and put them on the fridge. Then anyone who shows up early knows exactly how to help by taking a sticky off the fridge and making it happen.

- Examples could be “buy ice, whip the cream, put out trash bins, set table, chill wine, bake pie, arrange party flowers, set up flowers, light candles, turn on music.” As each item gets completed the sticky note goes into the trash.



Final Thoughts on the Day Of

The decorations are up, the food is ready, the guests are on their way... what now? Here are some final things to keep in mind on your big day:

1. LIGHTING

Everyone looks better and feels more comfortable in low lighting. If you're at a venue where lighting is under your control, dim the lights or add a few candles to create an inviting ambiance.

2. MUSIC

Don't forget to press "play" on whatever music you decided on! It should be in the background before the first guest arrives.

3. ENJOY YOURSELF

Finally, have some fun! As the saying goes, good ingredients make a great cake. Once you've planned well, let it go and enjoy yourself. Focus on putting your guests at ease instead of perfection.

- Have a drink and relax while you're getting ready. Wear clothes that make you feel confident and comfortable.
- Ask for help so you're not stressed.
- Greet guests with a warm hug. And then get started on the most important work of all: having a great time.



Does this sound like a lot to remember?

Don't worry — we've got you covered! Below is a quick questionnaire to make sure you've thought of everything.

Print it out, complete it, and keep it with you as you plan. Better yet — send it to Diddams, and we'll help you make your party one to remember.



1. CHECK OUT THE FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE

Use it to get inspired for your event



2. TEXT OR CALL LISA AT 650-804-4602

We'd love to talk through your ideas



3. WE'LL BRING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE

You won't have to lift a finger if you don't want to!

Diddams Party Success Checklist

GENERAL RULES OF THUMB

How I plan to engage the six senses for my guests:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

The most important person at my event is:.....

I plan to honor them personally by:

1.
2.
3.

Ways I plan to make my job easier / give guests more control:.....

Three outside-the-box ideas that will surprise and delight my guests:

PLANNING & PREP

The party theme will be:.....

The venue where it will be held is:

Activities will include:

How I plan to invite people:

For party favors, I will give out:

I will decorate people with:

I will decorate the venue with:

I will ask for help/advice from Diddams and/or

