

Setting The Table

Over the last few weeks, I have shown you how to create an advent calendar to count down the days until Christmas, how to dress up your home for the holidays, and the best gift ideas for the person who has everything. With the holidays just around the corner now there are parties that need a-hosting, and tables that need a-setting. I love to host gatherings with my friends, from simple cocktail parties to extravagant bashes, and of course, dinner parties with my closest friends are always a holiday favourite.

The Cocktail Party



When hosting a cocktail party, while you may not have place settings, you will certainly need to set out food and drinks buffet style. First, re-arrange your furniture to accommodate your guests and allow them to mingle. It's best to set up a table for serving against a large wall in the room, instead of in the middle of the room. Set up a pitcher or punch bowl of non-alcoholic with some highball glasses, a bucket of ice, and some lemons and limes for garnishes. Set out wine glasses, as well as an uncorked bottle of red and white (don't open too many right away, as your guests may bring you a bottle as well). Serve finger foods that are easy to eat and don't require utensils, and be sure to provide lots of side dishes and napkins.

The Dinner Party

When hosting a dinner party, how you choose to dress up your table is up to you. Whether it be simple and elegant, or festive, or even themed, have fun with it. Be sure to set the table before your guests arrive. It will help to set the tone for the evening, and avoid the chaos of trying to get it done while entertaining your guests.



Set out hand-written place cards for a personal touch, and that way you can choose the seat that you want that will allow you the most flexibility to balance serving with entertaining.

The Black Tie Themed Party



If you are hosting a formal, black tie style party, why not set your table in a black tie theme? Choose a black linen tablecloth, and crisp white linen napkins, with black and white dishware. Compliment with some shimmer, such as silver candlesticks, or a centerpiece of silver and gold ornaments. Add a splash of colour by using a single colour accent, such as red or purple, both hot colours this season.

The Festive Party

If you want to keep it festive, compliment your holiday decorations and set the table with the festive colours that you have chosen for your home. Create a feeling of warmth with candles, and bring out the holiday spirit with pinecone and holly accents.



If you're attending a hosted party this season, avoid showing up empty handed. While most hosts will appreciate a contribution to the beverage bar, such as a bottle of wine or after dinner liqueur, feel free to bring something more personal instead, something that they can keep and enjoy after the party (see last week's ATH for some great ideas).