



Let's Get This Party Started

Stock up and prepare ahead of time, and you can ensure that your holiday party goes off without a hitch. After all, tis the season to be merry!

From Thanksgiving, right through to New Year's day, the holiday season is filled with one event after the next. Whether your planning the Christmas party to end all Christmas parties or you're celebrating the traditional holiday of Hanukkah or a New Year's bash, there are certain fundamentals to hosting a successful holiday party.

No party is complete without libations

The holiday season is a time to eat, drink and be merry! Consider stocking the bar with holiday classics, like champagne or spiked egg nog, along with some of the most popular cocktails of the moment. (*Check out and try some of the holiday-inspired cocktail options found in [Mixology](#), starting on page 6 or in our [Festive Cocktails](#) section beginning on page 14.*)

Offer plenty of hearty food options

People typically go to parties with empty stomachs and eager appetites. Consider offering a wide range of options to meet different dietary needs and preferences. Remember, hosting a party is about meeting your guests' needs first. It may be tempting to have nothing but cock-

tail wieners and Swedish meatballs, but then what will the vegetarians at the party eat?

If you want to please all comers, an assorted charcuterie board is sure to please. With a wide range of smoked meats, cheeses, nuts, legumes, and pickled vegetables, you're sure to satisfy every palate.

Don't forget the sweets station

What's more appealing than sweets, confections, chocolates and candies during the holidays? Keep your guests happy by providing a confection station. Consider giving away party favor bags at the end of the evening. Consider holiday classics, such as candy canes, gingerbread cookies or perhaps a Vermont-made gift such as maple syrup candies or apple cider donuts. Your guests will thank you, and you'll be ending the evening on a sweet note.

Decorate, decorate, decorate

Whether you're hosting a Christmas, Hanukkah or non-denominational holiday party, decorations help set the tone. Traditional garland and wreaths along with white lights provide a festive atmosphere without being strictly aligned

to one holiday over the other. Of course, the holiday season is also about sharing your culture with others, so don't be afraid to decorate for your holiday of choice!

Don't forget the music

If you've got the room, setting up a dance floor can be the perfect way to cap off your holiday party. At a predetermined time, consider switching over from the holiday classics to today's top hits — it could turn your nice-but-ordinary party into a holiday party that people look forward to throughout the year.

Keep your guests safe

Part of your responsibility as a host is not only entertaining guests but ensuring they have a safe night. Designate a bartender who can mix the proper proportions and keep an eye on guests. Know who's driving and make sure designated drivers have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks. Consider closing the bar an hour before the party's end and make sure that everyone has a safe ride home; with designated drivers, by taxi or Uber. Enjoy the season responsibly.