

FAB UP YOUR HOLIDAYS



BE THE BEST GUEST!

The bells are jinglin' and the carolers are singin'... it's time to party! This year, float through all your fêtes with fab girl finesse.

DO MAKE A COMMITMENT "Always RSVP!" stresses event designer Stephanie Frazier Grimm of Couture Parties. If a friend extends an invite, it's only right to respond, especially if you can't make it (you don't want to cause hurt feelings). Calling to confirm? Ask what you can bring.

DON'T RISK A WARDROBE MALFUNCTION Whining about your too-tight wedges? Not very merry. Avoid a party foul by test-driving your outfit. Our no-fail get-up? A sparkly top, dark wash skinnies, cute kitten heels and a cropped blazer. Forever chic.

DO PICK A PARTY PIECE Striking up a convo is all in the wrist. Since you'll be walking around with a tasty treat or sweet sip, wear an eye-catching piece on your arm, like a bangle or clutch. Then, wait for the oohs. Continue the back-'n'-forth by commenting on your new pal's cool accessory, too.

DON'T BE LATE Showing up late is a thing of the past. "Being a good guest means arriving on time," insists Brett Galley, event planner and founder of Hollywood Pop Gallery. Running more than 15 minutes behind? Fire off a text with your apologies. Note: Arriving early could throw off your hostess as she preps, so simply be punctual.

DO COME BEARING GIFTS Always bring a small hostess gift, says etiquette expert Melissa Leonard. "It can be something as small as a bundle of candy or a pretty notepad you had at home—re-gifts work just fine." (Just remember the golden rule of re-gifting: Never pass a prezzie within the same friend circle.) Wrap it up with a big, bouncy bow.

DON'T ATTACK THE SNACKS Bites and bevs are set out so you can nibble, not scarf. Go for healthful eats like nuts, pretzels, veggies and dip. Avoid anything with garlic and onions (or any other dragon breath inducers). And skip soda and fatty appetizers that'll leave you feeling stuffed or gassy (need we say more?).

DO WORK THE ROOM Sure, it's tough to venture outside your circle, but as a good guest, you should try. Ask an unfamiliar face what's atop her holiday list. Maybe she's wishin' for a stocking stuffed with an iPhone 5, too.

DON'T BRING THE DRAMA No one likes a dull bash, but don't be the girl who tries to

liven up the night by bringing booze, being risky with boys, acting catty with your frenemies or starting a loud sing-off. Follow the hostess' lead, and keep things fun and festive.

DO MAKE A GRACEFUL EXIT Triple-booked? 'Tis the season. "Always quietly thank the hostess before leaving and tell her what you loved most about the party," says Melissa. Then duck out discreetly, without a grand exit. A few air kisses and you're off!

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW UP Sending off an "I had so much fun at your party last night. Thanks for the invite!" text the following a.m. brings extra cheer to your hardworking hostess. If you chatted up a cute boy, be brave and friend him on FB, too. Who knows? Soon, you might be making your New Year's Eve plans with him.

INSTA-HOSTESS



4 fave built-in-fun holiday party themes



Holiday movie sleepover

Break out the classics (think: *A Christmas Story*, *Rudolph*, *Home Alone*, *Love Actually*). Pass out bowls of popcorn with gourmet toppings and settle in for some warm and fuzzies with your besties.

Silver 'n' gold

Transform your party space into a sparkly haven with glittery ornaments, shiny garlands and as much confetti as your mom will let you buy.

Cookie bake-off

Whip up sugar cookies, then have guests decorate 'em with everything from gummy bears to silver dragées. Vote on the most creative confection.

Cardi makeover madness

Leave the ugly sweater theme to your mom and host a cute cardi party. Have your girls each bring over a plain sweater to prettify with feathers, beads, flower appliqué, ribbons and sequins. Head to girlslife.com/iti for fab ideas.

THROW A PARTY! (Yes, you!)

Our secrets to ensuring your holiday fest is utterly unforgettable. Get ready to impress.

GET THE WORD OUT Send pretty personalized e-vites (we heart paperlesspost.com) three weeks in advance and request an RSVP. Novice hostess? Invite just your closest crew—they'll have fun no matter what.

TRY A DIY COCOA BAR Brew three carafes of cocoa: one white, one dark and one milk chocolate. Set out mugs and mix-ins (choc shavings, chili powder), stirrers (candy canes, cinnamon sticks) and toppings (whipped cream, fancy marshmallows).

PICK A PERF PLAYLIST Help your guests get in the groove. "Ask everyone for their fave holiday tune with their RSVP," says Stephanie. Add a few Top-40 songs for a night of sure hits.

SPOT THE SIGNS A great hostess always recognizes and reacts to her guests' cues. This means being one step ahead of everything from the music (turn it down if everyone is talking) to the food (keep it coming!). "Just know when it's time to switch gears," advises Melissa.



Awesome hostess gifts that are practically F-R-E-E

- Cheesy-yet-cute mix CD
- Made-with-love BFF bracelet (check out page 88)
- Warm Christmas cookies (see page 93 for recipes)
- Pack of six personalized notecards you made yourself
- Pretty DIY paper snowflake chain (go to girlslife.com/iti for how-tos)