



Grocery List

Produce

- Red bell pepper _____
- Zucchini _____
- Apples _____
- Red Grapes _____
- Oranges/ Clementines _____

Dairy/ Frozen

- Cream cheese _____
- Eggs _____
- Cookie dough _____
- Crescent roll dough _____
- Soft Cheese _____
- Hard cheese _____
- Blue cheese _____
- Frozen meatballs _____

Pantry

- Seasoned bread crumbs _____
- Pumpkin pie filling _____
- Grape jelly _____
- Chili sauce _____

Pantry Continued

- Sugar _____
- Salsa _____
- Tortilla Chips _____
- Sandwich bread _____
- Peanut butter _____
- Jelly _____

Spices

- Pepper _____
- Dried Parsley _____
- Garlic Powder _____
- Vanilla extract _____

Beverages

- Juice _____
- Red wine _____
- Bottled water _____





To Do List

3 Days Out

- ___ Finalize guest list
- ___ Check through party supplies
- ___ Gather decorations
- ___ Take inventory of pantry and freezer
- ___ Make grocery/shopping list

2 Days Out

- ___ Go Shopping
- ___ Create any handmade decorations and signs

1 Day Out

- ___ Clean common areas (refer to cleaning plan)
- ___ Prep food (parmesan bites and cheesecake) and drinks

- ___ Decorate table (if you don't have small children or pets that will mess with it)

Day of

- ___ Finish food prep
- ___ Spot clean and clean as you cook in kitchen
- ___ Set buffet table (decorate if not done the day before)
- ___ Pick music (seasonal, jazz, instrumental and rat pack are good choices)
- ___ Light any candles
- ___ Greet guests as they arrive
- ___ Replenish food and drinks as they run out
- ___ Try to keep kitchen neat if guests will be in the kitchen



Cleaning Plan

Supplies

Micro-fiber cloth

Paper towels

Multi-purpose cleaner

Vacuum

Laundry basket

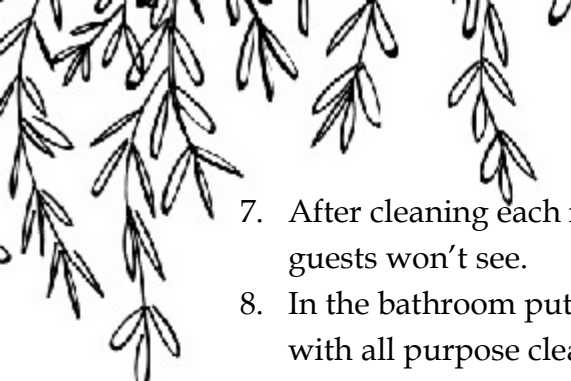
Garbage bag

Plan

Only clean the rooms that guests will see. There's no need to clean the whole place, unless you plan on showing the whole place. Unless you have recently moved into your house there is no need to let people take a tour. You will save yourself a ton of time by only cleaning part of the house.

If you happen to be one of those super organized people whose house always looks clean, lucky you! You can skip the cleaning, because your house is already spotless. The rest of us need to channel our inner neat freak and rock this plan like a speed cleaning ninja.

1. Place all cleaning supplies in a caddy or bucket with a handle. Carry the bucket and laundry basket from room to room as you clean.
2. In each room quickly grab anything that doesn't belong and put it into the laundry basket. Don't worry about putting things away unless the items belong in one of the other rooms you are cleaning.
3. Dust all surfaces with the microfiber cloth, sweeping dust onto the floor. Spray any sticky or stubborn spots with multi-purpose cleaner and wipe with paper towels.
4. Pick up any garbage and put into garbage bags.
5. After cleaning all other surfaces vacuum carpet, rugs and bare floors.
6. As you leave the room fluff any pillows or blankets.

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7. After cleaning each room stash laundry basket with any items in a room that guests won't see.
 8. In the bathroom put toilet cleaner in the toilet then quickly spray every surface with all purpose cleaner. Wipe in order of cleanest to dirtiest.
 9. Spray the floor and wipe your way out the door.
 10. Lastly clean the toilet bowl and flush toilet. If using smelly cleaners open the window to let it air out.
 11. Be sure to check the state of the bathroom right before guests arrive just in case you need to do a last minute touch up.

The plan is to clean the day before your guests come, so that the day of the party you can focus on the food and setting the mood. If you have kids this may not be doable, but I have a few tips to make this possible.

1. Get your kids to help clean up for the party and they are more likely to keep it clean since they worked to make it look good.
2. Clean the house after they go to bed and let them watch tv until the party, so they don't make a mess. (I used this technique when we were trying to sell our house)
3. Send them outside to play all day and clean while they are outside.
4. Have someone take them to do something like a play date or outing and clean while they are gone.
5. Clean after they go to bed and have them play in the rooms that haven't been cleaned for the party, like their bedroom.
6. If you have kids that still nap, clean during nap time and then occupy their awake time with one of these other tactics.
7. Remember that everyone coming to your party knows that you have kids, so they won't be expecting perfection. Your guests aren't coming to look at your dirt, so if you miss a few dust bunnies, no big deal!



Breaded Zucchini

Ingredients:

3 medium zucchini

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup seasoned bread crumbs

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup grated parmesan cheese

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup flour

1 Egg

Salt

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut the ends off of each zucchini and cut in half. Slice each zucchini section length wise into 5-6 slices. Place sliced zucchini onto wire cooling racks place over paper towels or baking sheet with raised edges. Once all zucchini is lined up on racks sprinkle lightly with salt and let sit for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes flip zucchini over and sprinkle lightly with salt and let sit another 30 minutes. Salting before cooking will draw out the moisture helping to prevent a soggy finished product. After second 30 minutes is up gently pat dry with paper towels and set aside. In a bowl combine bread crumbs and parmesan cheese and set aside. In another bowl add flour and in a third bowl beat the egg with a couple table spoons of water. Take each zucchini slice and dredge with flour then dip in egg and then coat with bread crumbs. Place each slice onto a greased baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes, then flip each zucchini slice over and bake an additional 10-15 minutes. Upon removing from oven lightly sprinkle with sea salt. Serve with ranch dressing or warm marinara for dipping. Serves 8-10. To make gluten free and low carb replace bread crumbs with ground almonds mixed with Italian seasoning.



Parmesan Bites

Ingredients:

- 2 cans crescent roll dough
- 1 8oz. package cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese (softened)
- 1 Cup of grated parmesan cheese (the kind in the can)
- 1 Cup diced red bell pepper
- 1 TBSP dried parsley
- ½ garlic powder

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine all ingredients except and set aside. On a lightly floured surface unroll 1 package of dough. Pinch all cut edges together and roll with a rolling pin into a rectangle. With a pizza cutter or knife cut dough into 12 rectangles. Place a dollop of filling onto the middle of each rectangle, roughly a heaping tsp. Roll dough around filling and place seam side down on counter. Press lightly with fingers to flatten slightly. Once all are formed and roughly the same size cut each rectangle in half to form 24 squares. Press open edges together with your fingers or a fork to prevent filling from leaking out when baking. Repeat with second package of dough. Place on greased cookie sheet leaving room to grow and bake. Bake according to package directions. Serves 10-12



Cocktail Meatballs

Ingredients:

4 lbs frozen meatballs (cocktail size, about 4 oz.)

1 32oz. jar grape jelly

2 12oz. bottles chili sauce

Empty entire jar of jelly into a sauce pan and heat on medium high heat until melted, whisking occasionally. Remove from heat, add both bottles of chili sauce and whisk to combine. Put frozen meatballs in slow cooker and pour sauce over meatballs turning to coat. Cover with lid and cook on high for 2 hours, then turn to warm. Serves 12



Pumpkin Cheesecake Squares

Ingredients:

- 1 8oz. cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese (softened)
- 1 Cup pumpkin pie filling (not pumpkin puree)
- 2 large eggs (room temp)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 16oz. package refrigerated sugar cookie dough

Preheat oven to 350°F (325°F for dark or non-stick pans). In a large mixing bowl combine cream cheese and pie filling, mixing until smooth. Then add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Place cookie dough in a greased 9x13 pan and press into a single layer with greased fingers. Bake cookie dough for 10minutes. Remove from oven and pour batter over crust. Bake for 30 minutes or until center is set. Cool on counter for 30 minutes and then chill in refrigerator for at least 2 hours before serving. Cut into 24-32 squares. To cut neat squares dip a knife into hot water for each cut.



Chocolate Chip Cheesecake Squares

Ingredients:

- 2 8 oz. packages cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese (softened)
- 1 16 oz. package refrigerated chocolate chip cookie dough
- ½ Cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs (room temp)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ Cup mini chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F(325°F for dark or non-stick pans). Beat sugar and cream cheese in a large mixing bowl. Once smooth add eggs and vanilla and beat well to combine. Make sure the eggs are room temp, because cold eggs will stiffen cream cheese. Stir mini chocolate chips into batter. Grease a 9x13 baking pan. Place cookie dough into pan and press into a single layer with greased fingers. Pour batter over cookie dough and spread into a smooth layer. Bake for 30 minutes or until center is set. Cool for 30 minutes on the counter then chill for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator before serving. Cut into 24-32 squares. To cut neat squares dip a knife into hot water for each cut.



Sangria

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle fruity red wine
- 1 liter pomegranate sparkling water (unsweetened)
- 1 Cup red grapes (halved)
- 2 Oranges cut into wedges (or 4 clementines)
- 2 small or medium apples thinly sliced

In a pitcher squeeze orange wedges and pour wine over fruit and refrigerate 8 hours to overnight. Just before guests arrive carefully transfer wine and fruit to a punch bowl or drink dispenser and pour chilled sparkling water in and gently stir to combine. Serves 8-10. To make kiddy mocktail replace wine with cran-pomegranate juice. To make more festive for Thanksgiving and Christmas add some cinnamon sticks and whole cloves or try mulling spices. To make for a summer party use sweet white wine in place of red.



Fruit & Cheese Board

Ingredients:

Strawberries

Grapes (red, black or green)

Apples, sliced (firm such as, Honey Crisp, Pink Lady or Gala)

Soft Cheese (such as Brie, Camember or Chevre)

Hard Cheese (such as Manchego, Romano or Grana Padano)

Blue Cheese (such as Roquefort, Gorgonzola or Stilton)

Alternatively choose three to four different cheeses that you like. You may be able to tell from the pictures that we had gouda and didn't put out a blue cheese, because I probably would've been the only one to eat it.

Take a cutting board and place cheese on board leaving space in between. Fill empty space with piles of fruit. Create little signs with card stock and markers to label cheese. Place a cheese knife with board or slice cheese ahead of time.