

# CHICAGO BRIDE

## ***Plan The Perfect Bridal Shower Tastefully Simple Offers Tips From Invitations To Preparing Quick & Easy Gourmet Snacks***

A bridal shower should be fun for everyone involved: the bride, the guests, and even the hostess. A little advance planning ensures that happens. First, a bit of etiquette: the shower is usually hosted by the maid or matron of honor, or a close family friend. The guest list should include only people who have been invited to the wedding, unless the shower is hosted by co-workers. Showers are traditionally held a month or two before the wedding; this can be a very stressful and busy time for the bride, so make sure the date fits into her schedule before making all the arrangements. Showers are supposed to help the bride and groom equip their new home, so they're often planned around a specific theme: recipe showers, camping showers, linen showers, etc. In choosing a theme, consider things that are important to the bride. Does she love to cook? Consider a recipe party. Does she like to entertain? How about a "stock the bar" shower? Is the couple moving into a new home after the wedding? A tool shower can help them collect the essentials they'll need. Once you decide on a theme, you can use it to tie in decorations, gifts, even the food and games.

### **Invitations**

The theme starts here. For a cooking shower, send invitations written on recipe cards, or cut out leaf shapes for a garden shower. Make it clear if guests are expected to bring a certain type of gift.

### **Decorations**

Your local party supply store is a good place to start, and the Internet is also a great resource. Look for paper goods that carry out your theme – a floral design for a garden shower, for example. Another good option is to decorate for the shower in the colors the bride has chosen for her wedding.

### **Food**

Showers usually involve a light lunch or appetizers. ***Tastefully Simple*** sells gourmet food products that make it easy to put together an impressive menu. Most of the company's products require only one or two ingredients to prepare, or can be enjoyed right out of the package.

For example, the Creamy Wild Rice Soup mix can be used to make a delicious wild rice casserole that can be the main course of your menu. Or spread softened cream cheese on flour tortillas, top with ***Tastefully Simple's Sweet Pepper Jalapeno Jam***, roll tortillas, chill and slice into spirals for beautiful hors d' oeuvres.

The company's Web site has a complete selection of products and more serving and menu ideas. You can even choose ***Tastefully Simple*** as your shower theme. A consultant will organize a home taste-testing party, offering samples, easy meal ideas, recipes and serving suggestions. Guests can order for themselves and for the bride.

### **Games**

People tend to be split into two camps where shower games are concerned -- either they think no shower would be complete without them, or they'd rather visit the dentist than play them. Take your lead from the bride on this one; after all, it's her party. Check your local bookstore, library, or the Internet for party game ideas. Chances are you'll be able to find a game that ties in with your theme. For example, if you're having a recipe shower, you could play the apron game: attach a variety of kitchen utensils to an apron and have the bride put it on and model it for a couple of minutes, then leave the room. Have guests write down as many items as they can remember; the person with the longest list wins.

### **Party favors**

While party favors are not essential, they are a nice touch. Choose wisely, and your party favors can double as part of your decorative theme. For example, for a garden party, use small potted plants with guests' names painted on the pots as a place card on the table. When the party is over, guests can take

the plant home as a memento. You can also use personalized photo frames, champagne flutes or candles in the same way.

If you' re throwing a kitchen shower, send guests home with a tasty treat such as **Tastefully Simple's Spinach and Herb Mix**, or their **Garlic Garlic** and **Bacon Bacon** dip mixes. Use these tips to plan the perfect shower. You' ll be a relaxed, gracious hostess and the bride will have a very special day to remember.

#### **About Tastefully Simple**

Founded in 1995, Tastefully Simple is among the fastest-growing privately held companies in the nation – ranked #44 on the 2004 Inc. 500 list. This is the fourth consecutive year that Tastefully Simple has appeared on the list. Those interested in ordering products, attending a taste-testing party or learning more about starting a Tastefully Simple business of their own are invited to call the company's toll-free information line at 1.866.328.6673 or visit the company's website at [www.tastefullysimple.com](http://www.tastefullysimple.com).

**SIDEBAR** - Here' s an easy main course, for a bridal shower or for a family dinner.

#### **Creamy Wild Rice Casserole**

Tastefully Simple Creamy Wild Rice Soup

1/3 cup chopped onions

1 pound ground beef

1 tablespoon butter

8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 to 2 cups instant rice

1/3 cup sour cream

Prepare soup according to package directions, omitting 1 cup water. While soup is simmering, sauté onions, mushrooms and ground beef in butter until onions are tender and beef is no longer pink. When soup is done simmering, add beef mixture, soy sauce and rice. Cover and simmer until rice is done; stir in sour cream. Pour mixture into greased casserole. Bake at 325 F for about 1 hour.