

CHICAGO BRIDE

The Do's and Don'ts of Engagement Party Planning Expert Tips for Throwing an Unforgettable Event

Some Do's:

Do use small cocktail tables: Whether you are planning a cocktail or a dinner party, use smaller tables mixed in with high airport style tables and stools. This will encourage and enable guests to easily mingle, dance, eat and drink, which are all the elements that make for a great celebration.

Do plan your event with buffet style accommodations: Buffet meals are best for this type of occasion. If space allows, separate the different elements of the meal into separate stations. Carving stations, sushi stations and pasta stations are all ideal because service is quick and the food will not diminish over the party's duration. Select food that will hold up well under the stress of continuous heating (such as sternos) for a protracted period of time.

Do create or purchase small desserts: Dessert is an important element to an engagement party but an engagement cake is not. I prefer to create an impactful dessert buffet by making (or buying) smaller cakes of different flavors. Another idea is to have cupcakes, fresh cut fruit and some cookies. Also, adding edible favors to the dessert buffet, such as pre-wrapped cookies with the engaged couple's initials is a nice touch. I'd also recommend the addition of a large selection of candy in the party's themed color; put clear cello bags on the side and encourage guests to load up.

Do choose a color scheme that you can tie in with other essentials: Decorating an engagement party is also very important but don't overdo it. Themes are not so important but choosing a color is. By keeping to a single color, you can tie all the elements together to make for a memorable event. Add sparkle to the room by using Christmas decorations such as strings of lights or crystal garland. Flowers and candles are always a good way to create ambiance, as well.

Do choose the right background music: Music is important when bringing strangers together, as it delivers background noise, which easily fills the room when conversation dims for a bit. I suggest two types of playlists; the first should be filled with mellower

music selections. This music should be low and soft, where guests are still able to talk to each other, introductions can be made, and the food can be enjoyed. If the music is too loud when people are trying to say hello, they end up shouting above the noise. The second playlist I suggest would be a selection of louder music that your guests can dance to following dinner.

Some Don'ts:

Don't have a seating arrangement: Don't assign seats. If your guests are all seated, they will stay with the group they know.

Don't use large round tables that mimic a wedding: These tables tend to establish "ownership" and again, your guests will not mingle.

Don't serve a plated meal: Think of a buffet table as the water cooler- a great place to meet and chat with people you don't know. www.EventsandCelebrationsNYC.com

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