



HOW TO THROW the PERFECT Party

Your 7-Step Game Plan
perfect for birthdays, luncheons,
weddings & everything in between.



Plan a delicious, smooth, and memorable event—without the overwhelm.

Whether you're hosting a corporate luncheon, wedding, birthday bash, or holiday party, one thing's for sure: food can make or break the experience.

This step-by-step guide gives you the insider tools to plan a catered event that flows smoothly, impresses your guests, and keeps you stress-free.

Let's jump right into it.

1 Define the Goal of Your Event

What are you trying to achieve? A team celebration? A milestone moment? A fundraiser or client mixer?

Clarify the purpose—it shapes your menu, timing, setup, and service needs.

Corporate Tip

Align the meal with your company culture or theme (e.g., wellness = fresh, clean menu).

Celebration Tip

Think about the mood: casual fun, elegant evening, or vibrant outdoor vibe?

2

Estimate Headcount and Dietary Needs

Get a rough guest count early. Then ask: any vegans, gluten-free guests, or allergy concerns?

A professional caterer can plan creative workarounds that include everyone.

Corporate Tip

Always budget for a few extra servings—
people eat more when it's good, and
trust me, your food needs to be good :)

3 Choose the Right Menu Style

Buffet? Plated dinner? Carving stations? Passed apps?
Food truck? Boxed meal? Bar?

Think about the space, schedule, and experience
you want to create.

Corporate Tip

Buffets & Stations
= Networking
Boxed = Productivity

Celebration Tip

Buffets are casual and
cost effective and
don't forget the bar!

4

Pick a Caterer Who Gets Your Vision

Look for more than just food. Ask the following:

- ◆ Do they handle setup/cleanup?
- ◆ Can they customize menus?
- ◆ Are they familiar with your type of event?
- ◆ Do they only work at certain venues?
- ◆ Do they specialize in a specific style of events?

Think full service elegant weddings vs. casual events

- ◆ Do they have set menus and prices available or create custom menus for clients?
- ◆ Check their online reviews!



Corporate Tip

Ask if they've worked with corporate timelines and if they have any clients that can offer a reference



Celebration Tip

Ask if they've handled events at your venue type (home, park, hall).

5 Budget Like a Pro

Break down per-head costs, rentals, service fees, and extras (bar, desserts, décor).

Make sure you understand what's included—and what's not.

Corporate
Tip

Don't forget taxes, gratuity, and delivery fees.

6

Lock in Logistics

Clarify arrival/set-up time, layout needs, load-in/load-out & parking logistics, all the extras like linens, tables, chairs etc, & clean up.

Assign a person in charge to coordinate the caterer and day of logistics so you can actually enjoy your event.

Corporate Tip

Use checklists and a day-of timeline to stay in control.

Download our Free Checklist [here](#)

Celebration Tip

If using a rented venue, confirm what condition the venue needs to be left in, who is in charge, and when it needs to be returned.

7

Add a Unique Memorable Touch

Want guests to rave about the experience? Add something unexpected:

- ◆ Branded cupcakes or mocktail station
- ◆ Signature welcome drink or cocktail
- ◆ A photo booth or instant print polaroid camera
- ◆ Handwritten menu cards or signs

Corporate Tip

Add a branded bar or logo-inspired dessert.

Celebration Tip

Add a personalized gift commemorating the celebration such as a custom labeled local product



Ready to Serve Up a Seamless Event?

At Island Time Catering, we specialize in laid-back, hassle-free casual events—serving up first-class food & beverage for gatherings big and small.

From corporate luncheons to family celebrations, we help you deliver moments your guests will remember—and food they'll crave again.

Contact a Pro at Island Time Catering Co.