

Christmas Party Timeline Checklist

A make-ahead-first plan for a normal home, with separate guest zones and a protected final 15 minutes.

GUESTS

ARRIVAL

PARTY FORMAT

HOT-FOOD FINISH

7-5 DAYS BEFORE

- ☐ Choose dinner, cocktail, brunch or open house
- ☐ Set guest cap from room capacity
- ☐ Choose one hot anchor plus stable foods
- ☐ Plan coats, drinks, food and trash as separate zones

2 DAYS BEFORE

- ☐ Shop and finish stable make-ahead food
- ☐ Clear refrigerator landing space
- ☐ Assign serving dishes
- ☐ Finish non-food setup that will not block normal life

PARTY DAY

- ☐ Prep late-assembly items
- ☐ Clear sink and dishwasher
- ☐ Set drink station outside cooking lane
- ☐ Stage small refill batches

FINAL 90 MINUTES

- ☐ Finish the real hot-food step by recipe
- ☐ Put out stable arrival food
- ☐ Reset bathroom / entry / coats / trash
- ☐ Stop decorating and cleaning 15 minutes before

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Adapt the same core plan to dinner or open-house hosting without trying to run both formats at once.

CHOSEN FORMAT

PEAK ARRIVAL

FOOD WINDOW

END WINDOW

DECISION	DINNER VERSION	OPEN-HOUSE VERSION	OWNER / NOTE
Arrival food			
Hot anchor			
Refill rhythm			
Seating			
Coats / gifts			
Drinks			
Dessert			
Kitchen reset			
Goodbyes			