

02/05/10 - Easy Entertaining Tips

Entertaining can be very stressful and time consuming if you have to reinvent the wheel each time. This set of guidelines sees me through an ever-changing culinary world and keeps me motivated and excited to experiment, have family and friends over, and work at recreating the latest taste sensation. I love holidays and many times the invitation to come and dine escapes from my mouth before I think it through. Keep these in mind and you will more confident and relaxed when entertaining.

1. Always be generous with portions when calculating how much to buy. Some guest may have a healthy appetite or, like my boys, bring a friend.
- 2 Use the freshest, best quality ingredients you can reasonably find.
3. Minimize the use of processed ingredients and flavor enhancers, like bullion cubes, cake mix, or bottled lemon juice (yuck).
4. Planning ahead with a menu and a shopping list makes for less stress and less waste.
5. It is fun to set a beautiful table and invite people, have a positive attitude and be creative.
6. Make a color symphony on the plate when you plan your menu. The saying that people eat with their eyes is true.
7. Never worry about serving food burning hot. Most things are great just warm or room temperature. Reheating often ruins the taste.
8. Except for a few old time favorites or classics, uncluttered, simpler recipes are better tasting and healthier.
9. There is always room at the table for some extra friend of the kids or someone from out of town.
10. Always send food home with those who don't have the means or resources to cook.



Whether it is a special occasion dinner or a holiday meal, I always serve at least two main courses, such as a chicken dish and a beef roast. Many people don't eat one thing or the other. I serve more than one vegetable for really large meals, and I avoid clear soup like chicken. Soup makes guests feel full and your hard work for the rest of the meal may go untouched.

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