

Socially-distanced holiday party guide

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-What are 2-3 ways a family/friend group could make their holiday party fun/festive and socially distanced? Explain.

- Zoom Cooking Demos are a fun and unique way to celebrate the holidays from the safety of their home. Work with a company to package up ingredients for 1-2 dishes and send it to your guests so they can cook alongside during the demonstration. Followed by time to chat and enjoy what's been created. With a glass of wine... or 3.

- Creating a theme of some sort for your guests will make the evening festive and fun! Consider an Ugly Christmas Sweater Theme. If you are hoping for a classier affair, ask everyone to dress in their best attire or to wear all white/red. Let's be honest – when is the last time we had a REASON to get all dressed up this year?

-What are 2-3 ways to enforce socially-distant holiday party rules? Explain.

- Provide festive masks for the group to wear to ensure that they wear them while they are not eating or drinking. Also placing individual bottles of hand sanitizer at each place setting will help remind them to use it as often as possible – this can even become their “escort card” for assigned seating.

- I believe that the host of the party must set clear expectations prior to guest's arrival so that everyone is following the same protocol. Send out an email or a handwritten note to each guest listing the rules so you (hopefully) don't have to repeat them during your party. Also, adding cute signage around the house as discrete reminders.

- What are 2-3 ways to have dinner? Explain each.

- A virtual feast – a wonderful way to enjoy each other's company at home. Send a list of the items you plan to make with ingredients to each guest so they can each make a feast for their family at home and enjoy together over Zoom or Facetime. My family is planning to do all the cooking and preparation together over Zoom, enjoy the meal as individual families and then come back together for dessert/presents.

- If you plan to host guests in your home be sure to separate tables by family with at least 6ft. of space between each table. You may have to get creative with the layout of your tables, but this ensures the most social distancing while still being together. Having a different place setting or theme per table will help make the space feel inviting.

- Serve food in individual containers – now this can seem like extra work, but it helps avoid “too many hands in the kitchen”. Each guest will be assigned a meal and prepare it in advance and bring in individual containers for each person or family. This assists with clean up as well because each family will take their containers home and clean them vs. in your home.

-What are 2-3 ways to exchange presents? Explain each.

- White elephant gift exchanges are a fantastic idea to enforce social distancing while adding some excitement to the room. Set up each family in a separate area of the room and assign a “present grabber” to ensure only one member of the family is moving in the space, while staying 6ft. apart of course.

- If you are hosting your party virtually, send your gifts to each other in advance so that you can still open them together. Get creative with your packaging! Make them look like Rudolph with simple brown paper, a sharpie and red pom pom ball nose!

-How can you make the celebration cozy, yet distant? Explain.

- To make the space feel cozy, we recommend plenty of candles around the space, soft textures, and holiday fragrances. Space tables far enough apart, but with as much visibility to each other as possible. Decorate the table and space as you normally would to still feel your normal traditions are present. Giving each family unit their own designated area will help them feel at ease while still being able to enjoy the whole family safely.