

Party Planning Timeline

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Use this guide to help make your party the best one ever. Please consider making it a magical event by contacting me at 804-852-6691 to chat about adding a featured Magic Show to your party, or maybe having me stroll from table to table as guests are mingling or waiting for food to be served. Also see my Party Planning Resources page for links to vendors who offer the various items, ideas, and services you may need: <http://www.michaeldouglasmagic.com/party-planning-resources/>

4-6 Weeks before your party	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Will your party be formal, semi-formal, or casual?		
What is your budget?		
What have you chosen for your theme?		
Set date and time.		
Reserve your party location.		
Reserve rental items (tables, chairs, tents).		
Choose and book entertainment (think Magician)		
Make your guest list.		
Decide on decorations.		
Begin collecting materials and creating props.		
Plan menu and grocery list or select/hire caterer/serving help/baker.		
Purchase your Invitations and Thank You cards.		

3 Weeks ahead of your event	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Purchase your party theme supplies, favors, game prizes.		
Send Invitations.		
Create a party agenda. This will guide you through your party and help you remember everything.		
Gather help from family and friends to prepare, execute and clean-up after the big event.		
Plan party activities. Check out http://www.party411.com/gameguide.html for ideas on fun party games.		
Confirm that you are on budget		

1 Week before your event	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Obtain the final count of guests. Call any guest who has not responded.		
Confirm all arrangements (rentals, entertainment, catering, etc.).		
Buy film or memory card for taking pictures.		
Prepare party favors or goodie bags.		
Check the weather reports for outside events. You may need to rent a tent for shade or protection from rain. Be prepared to move party indoors, if necessary		
If the party is in your home, start cleaning now instead of the day before the party. Remember to make room in the refrigerator for party foods.		
Confirm that you are on budget		

A few days before the party.	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Call any guest who has still not responded.		
Buy groceries and beverages.		
Prepare and refrigerate or freeze food items that can be made ahead of time.		
Buy an outfit or make a party costume.		
Check the weather reports again.		
Charge video and digital camera batteries and confirm they are working properly.		
Get cash or write out checks for any paid help, entertainers, etc.		

1 Day before your event	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Do final cleaning of home, party room, yard, etc.		
Pick up and set up rental equipment, tables, tents, etc.		
Thaw frozen party foods.		
Coordinate last-minute arrangements with caterer/helpers.		
Get out serving pieces.		
Pick up cake, if it is not being delivered.		
Go to bed early and get a good night's rest.		

Day of Your Party	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Pick up balloons.		
Put up party directional signs for guests and tie balloons to entrance of party area.		
Decorate Party Room		
Coordinate set-up, service, cleanup with hired helpers.		
Prepare and arrange remaining food.		
Do a step by step review of your Party Agenda.		
If opening gifts during the party, have a pen ready to record the gifts received.		
Dress the kids, then yourself.		
Put on the party music.		
Light candles.		
Await arrival of first guests.		

2-3 days after your event	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Finish cleaning up and storing party items.		
Send Thank You notes for any gifts received, and to helpers.		
Develop pictures and/or upload them and post to Facebook, add to your scrapbook, or mail to relatives.		

Supplies & Indoor/Outdoor Decorations to Consider	Note decisions made, or check completed.	Cost
Welcome Sign at entrance		
Entrance sign at "room" entrance		
Theme based seating cards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Sign • Balloons 		
Check-In table with pens, markers, etc.		
Theme based directional signage,.		
Coat check signage		
Theme Based Backdrops		
Theme Based Buffet Station Backdrops or Décor		
Ceiling Treatment		
Photo Blow-Ups		
Gift Table		
Murals		
Balloon Treatments/Arches		
Theme Based Table Linens		
Theme Based Tableware <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napkins/Napkin Rings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plates • Colored Cutlery • Plastic Cups/Tumblers • Mint and/or Nut Bowls 		
Table Centerpieces.		
Buffet Serving Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving Trays & Bowls • Serving Forks & Spoons • Punch Bowl & Ladle • Decorative Toothpicks 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Buckets • Drink Stirrers 		
Signage/Banners		
Balloons		
Lighting		
Music		
Streamers		
Party Favors		
Confetti/Glitter		
Games		
Themed Decorative Accents		
Single Use Cameras		
Guest Towels & Soap		
Hats		
Piñata		
Noisemakers		
Candles		
Cards		
Gift Wrap, Tag & Ribbon		