

THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



BY SHARON SARGEANT

PLANNING EXPERIENCE



I'm honored that you've chosen this Holiday Meal Planning Guide to help you create a season filled with joy, comfort, and delicious food—without the financial stress. The holidays are a special time for gathering with family and friends, sharing laughter, and celebrating the traditions that make this time of year so meaningful.

With years of experience in planning heartfelt celebrations and family gatherings, I created this guide to make your holiday meal planning simple, affordable, and stress-free. Inside, you'll find practical tips for organizing your menu, stretching your grocery budget, and preparing dishes that bring warmth and flavor to the table.

Whether you're hosting a big family dinner or a cozy get-together, this guide will walk you through each step—from choosing recipes to managing your shopping list—with thoughtful suggestions for saving time and money.

Let's begin this journey together, creating a memorable Christmas season that fills your home with love, laughter, and the comforting aroma of home-cooked meals, gift giving and fun family time together..

Sharon Sargeant

Copyright © 2025 The Party Planning Experience
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION PLANNING EXPERIENCE

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed at the address below:
Encore Portfolio LLC
4393 Kevin Walker Drive #1164
Montclair, VA 22025

Published in 2025 by Encore Portfolio LLC
Authored by Sharon Sargeant
Editing by Edward Sargeant

SECTIONS

01 HOLIDAY MEAL PLANNING

- CALENDARS
- TIMELINE
- GUEST LIST

page 1-5

02 MEAL PLAN

- MENU
- TRADITIONAL STYLE DINNER
- HEARTH HOLIDAY DINNER
- SHOPPING CHECKLIST
- BUFFET LAYOUT

page 6 -10

03 ENTERTAINMENT

- DIGITAL MUSIC
- GAMES
- SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS

page 11-13

04 PLANNING YOUR GATHERING

- DAY BEFORE SCHEDULE
- DAY OF SCHEDULE
- FINAL CHECKLIST
- GROCERY LIST WORKSHEET

page 14-18

SECTIONS

SECTION

1

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION PLANNING

Christmas is a season filled with joy, laughter, and the warmth of togetherness—but it can also bring its fair share of stress as you juggle planning, preparation, and hosting. From choosing the perfect menu and organizing recipes to decorating your home and getting ready for guests, it's easy to feel overwhelmed before the first batch of cookies even comes out of the oven.

This guide was created to help you plan your Christmas celebration with confidence, creativity, and calm. Inside, you'll find practical meal plans, shopping lists, and festive recipes suggestions designed to bring ease, flavor, and tradition to your holiday table.

Whether you're preparing a grand Christmas dinner for a crowd or a cozy holiday meal for two, this guide will show you how to serve dishes that shine with holiday spirit. Because the magic of Christmas isn't found in extravagant ingredients or complicated menus—it's found in the laughter around the table, the stories shared year after year, and the love that fills your home. You will find a bonus section with game suggestions, music playlist and so much more!

So grab a cup of cocoa, turn on your favorite carols, and let's plan a Christmas feast that warms both your heart and your home.

THE TIMELINE PARTY EXPERIENCE

FOUR WEEK PLAN

WEEK ONE

01

Timeline
Budget
Guest List

WEEK TWO

02

Shopping
Plan for Guest

WEEK THREE

03

Party Coordination
Fine Tune

WEEK FOUR

04

Purchase Final Items
Plan the Buffet
Plan you games
Happy Holidays!

JAN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEB

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MAR

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APR

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JUL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

AUG

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEP

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCT

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOV

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DEC

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

GUEST LIST

NO.	NAME	PHONE NUMBER
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

GUEST LIST

NO.	NAME	PHONE NUMBER
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		

SECTION

2

MEAL PLAN

In this section, we'll help make your holiday meal planning a little easier by guiding you through the process of preparing a warm, Southern-style feast that brings everyone together. From choosing the right dishes to organizing your kitchen helpers, thoughtful planning ensures your holiday table is filled with love, flavor, and tradition.

Whether you're known for your cornbread dressing, sweet potato casserole, or perfectly seasoned green beans, working with family and friends to share the cooking and setup helps lighten your load. The goal is to create a joyful, well-organized celebration where guests can relax, laugh, and savor every bite of good Southern cooking.

This section includes a planning sheet for jotting down recipes, grocery lists, and helping hands, as well as sample menu options and a checklist to guide you through each step of your holiday preparation—from the first shopping trip to the last slice of cake.

TRADITIONAL STYLE MEAL

This page gives an old standard Traditional Style Menu that is often prepared for the Christmas holiday meal. The food should be served by “helping hands” and there should be a drink station with cups of ice and tea/lemonade already poured. This drink station should be at a separate table or counter space to keep the buffet line moving. In addition, a dessert station should be prepared in a separate space to keep things organized.

ITEMS

UTENSILS

- sterno serving sets
- two sterno per dish
- water pans
- food serving pans
- foil
- serving utensils
- condiments

PAPER PRODUCTS

- plates (dinner and dessert)
- drinking cups
- forks, knives, spoons
- napkins

TIPS

- Purchase gallon water jugs to place homemade tea in after cooling
- precut desserts and create a dessert and coffee station during dinner time
- create the drink station separate from the food so that things don't bottle neck in the buffet line

MENU

- Baked or Fried Turkey w/Gravy
- Ham
- Cornbread Stuffing
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Candied Jams
- Collard Greens or String Beans (fresh)
- Whole Cranberry Sauce
- Rolls
- Tea with lemon slices
- Pound Cake with Lemon Glazed Icing
- Sweet Potato Pies/Apple Pie
- Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

HEARTH HOLIDAY DINNER

This Holiday Hearth Dinner is a warm, inviting meal that captures the heart of the Christmas season. It suggests a gathering centered around comfort, tradition, and togetherness—much like family and friends coming together around a glowing hearth. This dinner evokes a sense of coziness and holiday charm, featuring a hearty, classic meal that brings people closer and fills the home with a festive spirit that smells delish!

ITEMS

UTENSILS

- sterno serving sets
- two sterno per dish
- water pans
- food serving pans
- foil
- serving utensils
- condiments

PAPER PRODUCTS

- plates (dinner and dessert)
- drinking cups
- forks, knives, spoons
- napkins

TIPS

- Purchase gallon water jugs to place homemade tea in after cooling
- precut desserts and create a dessert and coffee station during dinner time
- create the drink station separate from the food so that things don't bottle neck in the buffet line
- set up the appetizers early for guest so that they have something to "nosh" on

MENU

- Standing Prime Rib Roast
- Homemade garlic mash
- String beans
- Sweet Potatoes Soufflé
- Cranberry Sauce
- Dinner Rolls
- Tea with lemon slices
- Wine (favorite)
- Cheesecake

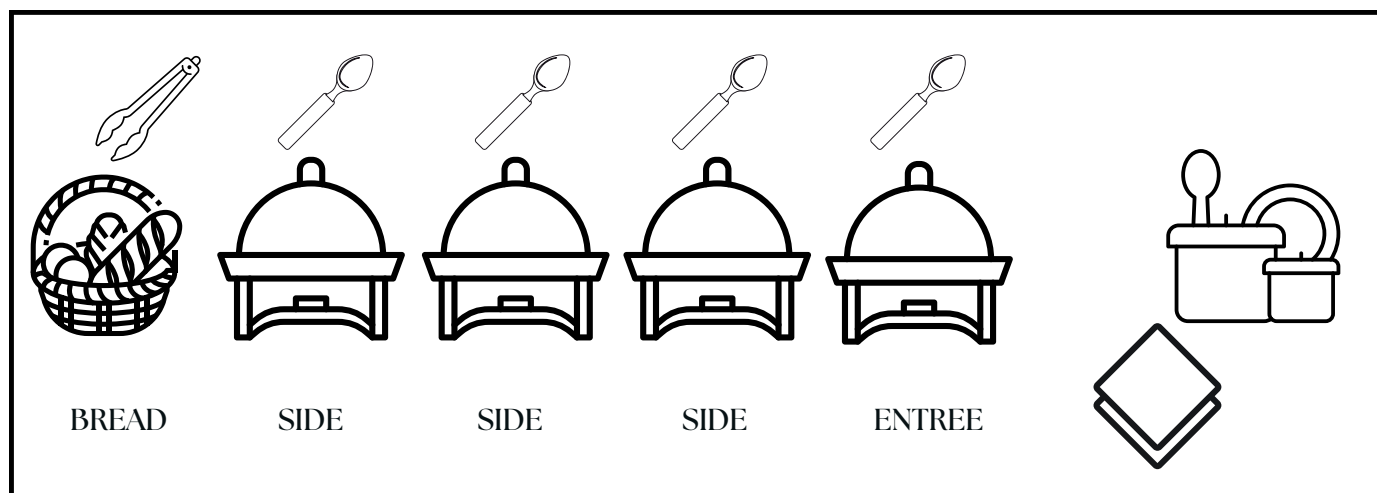
Appetizers

- Charcuterie
- Mullen Spiced Wine (in crockpot)

HOLIDAY BUFFET LAYOUT

This is a sample chart to show you how to organize and plan for your buffet table. Go to the thrift store and find a few unique items for food display. There is a blank worksheet provided for you to use to set up your buffet. (add more chafing dishes as needed)

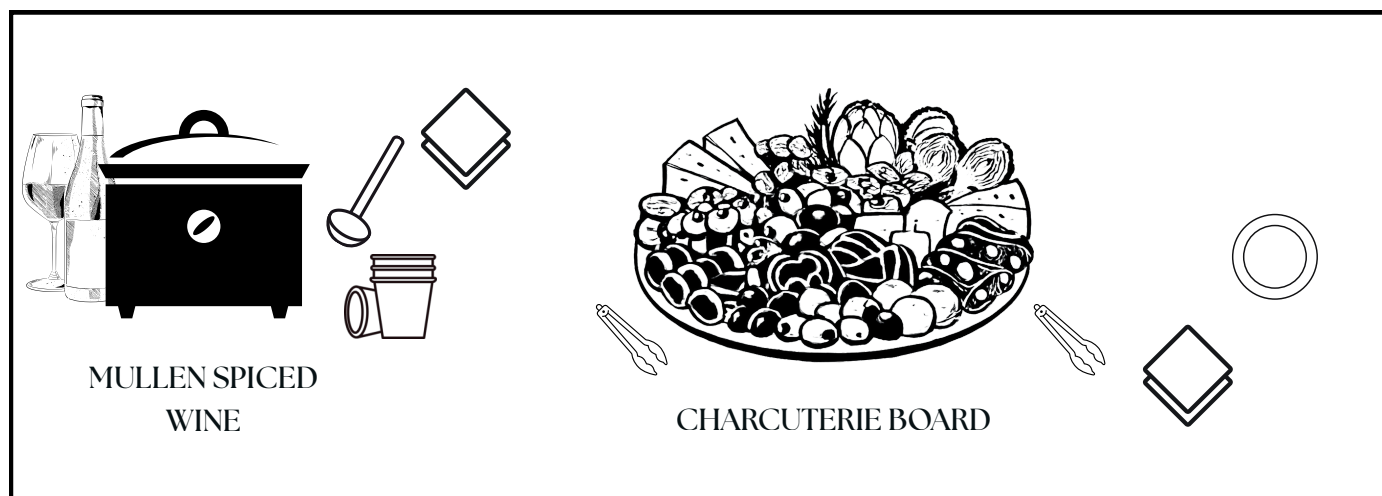
ITEMS	SERVING DISH CONTAINER	UTENSILS
ENTREE #1	CHAFING DISH	TONGS
SIDE	CHAFING DISH	SPOON
SIDE	CHAFING DISH	SPOON
SIDE	CHAFING DISH	SPOON
BREAD	BASKET	TONGS
UTENSILS/NAPKINS	CADDY	----
PLATES	ON BUFFET TABLE	----
DESSERTS	READY TO PICK UP ON DESSERT PLATES	PLACE ON A SEPARATE TABLE
BEVERAGES	READY TO PICK UP CUPS WITH ICE	PLACE ON A SEPARATE TABLE



APPETIZER LAYOUT

This is a sample chart to show you how to organize and plan for your appetizer area. Go to the thrift store and find a few unique items for food display. There is a blank worksheet provided for you to use to set up your buffet.

ITEMS	SERVING DISH CONTAINER	UTENSILS
CHARCUTERIE BOARD	WOODEN BOARD	TONGS
MULLEN SPICED WINE	CROCKPOT	LADEL
NAPKINS	ON BUFFET TABLE	----
PLATES	ON BUFFET TABLE	----
BEVERAGES	SMALL WATER BOTTLES	----



YOUR BUFFET LAYOUT

Use this buffet layout to complete your personal layout needs. You may have more dishes than are created on the suggested list. This will assist you with your personal layout.

[illegible]

HEARTH HOLIDAY DINNER SHOPPING CHECKLIST MENU

Use the checklist below to create a shopping list for the menu given. This is not an exhaustive list of all seasoning items that you may use. Please see suggested recipes and season according to your dietary needs.

SIDES

- ☐ whole milk $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon
- ☐ butter
- ☐ fresh ground pepper
- ☐ 4 lb bag of sugar
- ☐ fresh green beans
- ☐ smoked turkey necks
- ☐ bouillon chicken (Better Than Bouillon)
- ☐ salt and pepper
- ☐ bag of Russet or Yukon potatoes
- ☐ sweet potatoes
- ☐ onions
- ☐ minced garlic in the jar
- ☐ sour cream
- ☐ fresh chives or parsley
- ☐ olive oil
- ☐ kosher salt
- ☐ rosemary
- ☐ dried thyme

ENTREES

- ☐ Prime Rib Roast

CHARCUTERIE

- ☐ havarti cheese
- ☐ sharp cheddar
- ☐ Gouda
- ☐ pepper salami
- ☐ pepperoni
- ☐ nuts
- ☐ olives
- ☐ mixed cracker box
- ☐ jelly
- ☐ chocolate

DESSERTS

- ☐ cheese cake
- ☐ pie
- ☐ cake and pie serving utensils

DRINKS

- ☐ tea (lipton's bags)
- ☐ lemonade (4C)
- ☐ lemons
- ☐ cooler for ice
- ☐ sugar
- ☐ ice

SERVING AND PAPER PRODUCTS

- ☐ serving utensils - tongs and spoons (disposable)
- ☐ chafing dishes (disposable)
- ☐ chafing dish racks
- ☐ sterno cans (two for each set)
- ☐ matches
- ☐ table clothes (disposable)
- ☐ cups
- ☐ dinner plates
- ☐ dessert plates
- ☐ forks and knives
- ☐ napkins
- ☐ centerpieces - use fresh flowers
- ☐ plastic gloves for serving
- ☐ foil
- ☐ ziploc bags
- ☐ charcuterie board

GARLIC MASH

Garlic Mashed Potatoes (Serves 10)

Ingredients

- 5 pounds russet or Yukon gold potatoes,
 - peeled and cut into chunks
- 3 tablespoons of minced garlic
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 ½ cups whole milk (or half-and-half for creamier potatoes)
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt (plus more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Optional:
 - ½ cup sour cream for extra creaminess
 - Fresh chives or parsley for garnish



Instructions

1. Prepare the Potatoes
 - Place the peeled, chopped potatoes and whole garlic cloves into a large pot. Cover with cold water by about 1 inch. Add 1 teaspoon of salt.
2. Boil Until Tender
 - Bring the pot to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat and simmer for 18–20 minutes, or until the potatoes are very tender when pierced with a fork.
3. Warm the Milk and Butter
 - While the potatoes cook, heat the butter and milk in a small saucepan over low heat until warm. (This keeps the potatoes creamy instead of gummy.)
4. Drain and Mash
 - Drain the potatoes and garlic well. Return them to the pot and mash using a potato masher or electric mixer on low speed until smooth.
5. Add Creaminess
 - Pour in the warm milk-butter mixture gradually while mashing. Add salt, pepper, and optional sour cream. Mix until silky and smooth.
6. Taste and Adjust
 - Add more salt, pepper, or milk as needed to reach your preferred seasoning and texture.
7. Serve
 - Spoon into a serving bowl, top with a small pat of butter, and sprinkle with chives or parsley if desired.

RIB ROAST

Prime Rib Roast (Serves 8 - 10)

(view a few Youtube videos to help with the cooking process)

Ingredients

- 6-7 pound boneless rib roast
- dried thyme
- dried rosemary
- kosher salt
- fresh cracked black pepper
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil or butter for extra browning



Instructions

1. Prepare the Roast
 - Remove the rib roast from the refrigerator 2 hours before cooking to bring it to room temperature. Pat the roast dry with paper towels. This helps create a beautiful crust.
2. Make the Seasoning Rub
 - In a small bowl, mix together: Olive oil; Minced garlic; Salt; Black pepper; Rosemary; Thyme. Rub this mixture all over the roast—top, sides, and bottom.
3. Preheat & Sear
 - Preheat your oven to 450°F (very hot to sear the outside).
 - Place the roast fat-side up in a large roasting pan on a rack (the bones act as a natural roasting rack too).
4. Start with High Heat
 - Roast at 450°F for 20 minutes to develop a crust.
5. Reduce Heat & Slow Roast
 - Without opening the oven, reduce the temperature to 325°F
6. Continue roasting for 1 ½ to 2 hours, depending on size, or until it reaches your desired internal temperature:
 - 120–125°F for rare
 - 130–135°F for medium-rare (recommended)
 - 140–145°F for medium

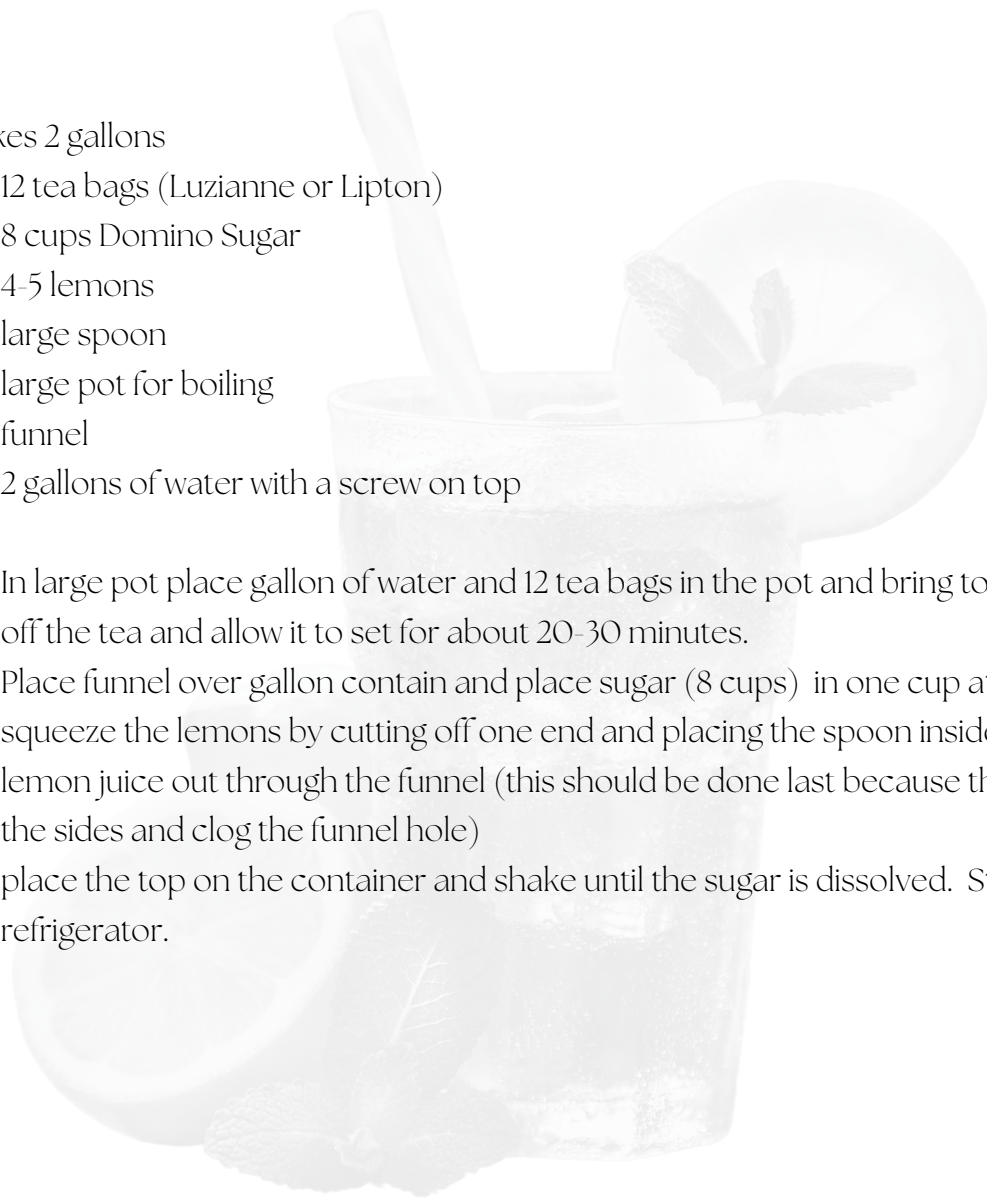
Tip: Always use a meat thermometer to ensure accuracy.

7. Rest the Roast
 - Remove the rib roast from the oven, tent loosely with foil, and let it rest 20–30 minutes.
 - This allows the juices to redistribute and makes carving easier.
 - The temperature will rise about 5–10 degrees during resting.
8. Slice & Serve
 - Carve by running a sharp knife along the bones to remove the roast in one piece, then slice into thick, beautiful slices.
 - Serve with mashed potatoes, green beans, dinner rolls, and jam soufflé for a complete Holiday Hearth Dinner.

ICE TEA RECIPE

Makes 2 gallons

- 12 tea bags (Luzianne or Lipton)
 - 8 cups Domino Sugar
 - 4-5 lemons
 - large spoon
 - large pot for boiling
 - funnel
 - 2 gallons of water with a screw on top
-
- In large pot place gallon of water and 12 tea bags in the pot and bring to a rolling boil. Turn off the tea and allow it to set for about 20-30 minutes.
 - Place funnel over gallon contain and place sugar (8 cups) in one cup at a time.
 - squeeze the lemons by cutting off one end and placing the spoon inside to squeeze the lemon juice out through the funnel (this should be done last because the sugar will stick to the sides and clog the funnel hole)
 - place the top on the container and shake until the sugar is dissolved. Store it in the refrigerator.



SECTION

3

THE ENTERTAINMENT

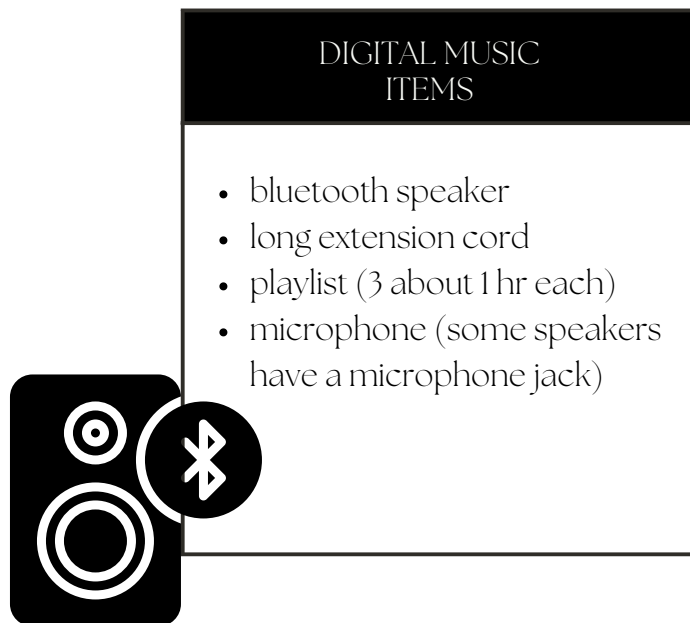
"No holiday gathering is complete without a little fun and laughter! Set the tone with a festive music playlist that keeps the energy bright from start to finish. Mix in timeless classics like "Silent Night" and "This Christmas" with upbeat favorites such as "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" or "All I Want for Christmas Is You." For a Southern twist, add a few soulful holiday hits or jazzy instrumentals that pair perfectly with good food and warm conversation. You can even invite guests to share their favorite holiday song or take turns being the "DJ" for the evening.

Keep the celebration going with lighthearted games and activities that bring everyone together. Try a holiday trivia challenge, a Christmas carol name-that-tune contest, or a fun "gift wrap race" where teams compete to wrap boxes the fastest. If your group enjoys laughter, set up a holiday photo booth with props like Santa hats, reindeer antlers, and festive signs. For more sentimental moments, encourage guests to share a favorite holiday memory or tradition. These simple entertainment ideas add joy, connection, and a touch of playful spirit to your gathering—making it one your guests will remember long after the last slice of pie is gone.

THE DIGITAL MUSIC EXPERIENCE

This information will assist you with getting your digital music organized for your special event.

- You will begin by creating a music playlist for this event on your platform of choice
- If you have Spotify there is a starter list of songs under “The Party Planning Experience”
- Name your playlist (Example: Thanksgiving Songs 2025, Holiday Songs 2025, etc)
- TIP: If you borrow a Bluetooth speaker make sure it has all of the parts when you pick it up. Make sure that you pick it up early enough to learn the system and how you will connect it to your phone’s system.



FAMILY GAMES

GAME #1

PUT THE BOWS IN THE BOWL



GAME #2

SPINNING CHRISTMAS BOW



GAME #3

WHAT'S UNDER THE CUP?



GAME #4

BLACK HISTORY TRIVIA



HELPERS

NO.	NAME	DUTIES	PHONE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

SECTION

4

PLANNING YOUR GATHERING

This section is designed to help you manage all the thoughtful details that go into hosting a smooth and memorable holiday gathering. From setting the schedule to organizing your kitchen helpers, a little preparation goes a long way toward creating a stress-free celebration.

Inside, you'll find planning worksheets to help you outline your menu, shopping list, and cooking timeline—so you can enjoy more time with your guests and less time in the kitchen. These tools make it easy to keep track of what needs to be prepared, who's bringing what dish, and when each item should go in the oven.

We've also included a "Last-Minute Tips" checklist for those final touches—like setting the table, warming the rolls, brewing the tea or coffee, and making sure serving utensils and extra seating are ready.

Additionally, you'll find a simple "Things to Do" list that covers common hosting tasks, such as confirming your guest count, preparing to-go containers for leftovers, and setting up a cozy space for conversation and laughter.

Whether your gathering is large or small, these planning tools will help ensure your holiday meal runs smoothly, stays within budget, and is filled with warmth, flavor, and good company.

DAY BEFORE SCHEDULE

8:00 am

9:00 am

10:00 am

11:00 am

12:00 n

1:00 pm

2:00 pm

3:00 pm

4:00 pm

5:00 pm

6:00 pm

7:00 pm

DAY OF SCHEDULE

8:00 am

9:00 am

10:00 am

11:00 am

12:00 n

1:00 pm

2:00 pm

3:00 pm

4:00 pm

5:00 pm

6:00 pm

7:00 pm

FINAL CHECKLIST

HELPER

[illegible]

FOOD

[illegible]

MUSIC

[illegible]

THINGS TO DO

[illegible]

GROCERY LIST

[illegible][illegible]

THE PARTY

Thank you for purchasing “THE PARTY PLANNING EXPERIENCE” guide book. There are many digital themed books available for you to purchase from our collection. Please take a look at what we have available now on the website below! We appreciate your loyalty and patronage.

PLANNING
EXPERIENCE



www.thepartyplanningexperience.com

BY SHARON SARGEANT