



Party Set up & Food Placement

We have also compiled a few hints for successful party planning. Please let us know if they help!

The placement of food and beverage in your party space is critical to the ability of your guests to mingle and may cause your guests to clump in one location.

Whatever the size of your party space is, the placement of your food and beverage can have a huge impact on the ability of your guests to move about the space, to mingle and to fully enjoy their entertaining experience. Remember that one aspect of being a gracious host, is to think of the needs of the guests, and to maximize their enjoyment. Take a few moments, prior to your party, to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your party space, and to adapt your set up accordingly.

Seating Space: If your party will include a meal, make sure that you provide enough seating for your guests. If your party is casual, you don't need to provide seats for 100% of your guests, since they will probably be eating in shifts. However, make sure that there are seats for significantly more than half of the guests. This may mean that you add additional seating at the table, in conversational groupings of 2 or 3 chairs, or by incorporating the use of a couch or loveseat into the overall party space.

Buffet Set Up: Try to create flow around the buffet area. For instance, if the **buffet** is in a dining room with only one entrance, the food should be placed in a progressive manner around the entire table. This placement will encourage your guests to start at one end of the table, circle the entire table, and exit by way of the same door they entered. If the buffet is along a straight island, you can use a double-sided set up to move guests through the buffet line at a faster rate. Again, insure that the guests have a route to approach the buffet, as well as one to exit the area.

Beverage Location: The beverages should be in a separate location from the food, in order to minimize congestion. A butler's pantry is an ideal location, although a table set up in the back hall or laundry room can be just as efficient. Provide a trash can near the beverages, to collect empty bottles and cans. It's also a good idea to place some bar towels at the beverage center, to wipe up any spills.

Trash Location: Tuck trash cans in corners throughout the party space. Although it may seem like overkill, it's better to offer your guests a quick way to get rid of their trash, rather than forcing them to search the entire house looking for the trash can.

Party Flow: Look over your entire party space to try to maximize the traffic pattern. If you have furniture or large plants blocking the flow, consider removing the obstruction for the party. Open all doors into the rooms that will be used for the party, to create additional pathways.