

How to Throw A Vegan Dinner Party Even Meat-Lovers Will Enjoy

A brief guide to hosting and entertaining.

By Lucia Herrera

The holidays are quickly approaching and there's no better time to invite a few friends and loved ones over for a dinner party. Being the odd one out is something many vegans feel at almost any social gathering. From awkwardly letting the host know about your diet to having to frequently ask if the food contains any animal ingredients. You can end up feeling like a burden. But imagine if the roles were reversed this time, and you were the one in charge of entertaining.

Even if most of your guests are not vegan -- fear not -- you can still throw a completely vegan dinner party and keep them happy, well-fed, and entertained. Hosting a vegan party is not as daunting as it seems and can be done well and easily once you know what to look out for. Here is how to simplify, get creative, and enjoy some stress-free entertaining.

The Planning

Be sure to plan ahead, this way you aren't overwhelmed on the day of your party and you can actually enjoy yourself when your guests arrive. Write a list of what you plan on making and keep it in the kitchen. This will help keep things planned and in order. A good idea is to plan some cold dishes as well as the hot ones. This way you don't end up stressing out too much while you warm things up before serving.

The guest list should be balanced. Invite an eclectic mix of people in order to spark intriguing conversations that allow everyone to participate. Do you know people who you think will connect but have never met? In order for people to connect, try to invite guests who you know will bring out the best in each other.

The Food

Food is the most important part of almost any gathering and it can easily make or break the occasion. Our memories are tied to our senses. So, when looking back at an event, one of the first things to come to mind is whether the food was enjoyable or terrible.

Tip: Be sure to ask guests in advance about any food allergies.

While people arrive, include something to pass around. This can prolong the meal in case anyone is running especially late. For starters, there are many appetizers that can be shared

and enjoyed. There is a vast selection of dips such as hummus or guacamole which can be served with bread, cracks, or chips. Before the main entree, consider starting off with a salad. Mix your favorite greens with fruits, veggies, and/or nuts. For the main dish in order to satisfy a variety of palates, try to go with crowd-pleasing dishes instead of experimenting with newer dishes. A safe bet is veganizing popular dishes or making naturally vegan foods instead of serving “fake meats”.

The Atmosphere

As for the ambiance, put together a playlist composed of music that you love and fits the mood you are trying to channel. Have some soft, warm lighting and simple decorations that pull everything together. Have fun by mixing and matching your dinnerware for an effortless and chic look. If you're crafty this is the perfect time to show off those skills. A good tip is to think of your favorite restaurant and try to emulate it.

Enjoy the opportunity to serve your favorite vegan dishes! Remember that it's not about making things perfect (if in doubt -- simplicity and good ingredients are key!), it's about having food to share with people whose company you relish.