

12 LAST-MINUTE HOLIDAY PARTY TIPS

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

Last-minute gatherings happen all the time around the holidays. Whether it's an unexpected invitation to a party or a spur-of-the-moment get-together at your house, there's no shortage of celebration when the holidays come around. To keep yourself from getting blind-sighted during holiday season, follow these 12 last-minute holiday party tips.

1 Keep A Gift Grab Pile

Whether it's a neighbor bringing you an unexpected gift or a scramble to find a present for the person you forgot to put on your shopping list, sometimes you are forced to give a last-minute gift. When holiday shopping, always grab a few extra, neutral gifts for those unexpected occasions. Some go-to staples include holiday cookie sets (because who doesn't like food) and a variety of gift cards with small amounts on them. These are great for giving to the mailman, your neighbors, teachers or as secret santa gifts. By keeping gifts on-hand, you'll never have to rush to find one at the last second.



2 Make Gifts in Bulk

Homemade gifts are almost always more personal and cheaper than store-bought ones, plus they're great for a holiday gift exchange or as favors for a holiday party. When it comes to homemade gifts, it's best to make them in bulk, this way you'll never be without when going to a holiday event. Whether it's a sugar scrub, or homemade candles or even just holiday cookies, you can't go wrong with making more than enough. This way, you have plenty to spare if you have to give a last-minute gift.

3 [Invest in an Ugly Sweater]

Ugly Christmas Sweater Parties are a growing trend. It may seem silly to buy a sweater that you'll only wear maybe once or twice a year, but by keeping one on-hand you won't have to rush to the store when you get invited to one of these parties and realize you have nothing to wear.

HOMEMADE SUGAR COOKIE SCRUB

Ingredients:

- ½ cup coconut oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar (add more if you want the scrub to be more grainy)
- small mason jars

Directions:

Mix all the ingredients in a medium size bowl and scoop into small mason jars. Seal the jar and decorate to give as a holiday gift!





4 Don't Be Afraid to Order Out

Sometimes it's easier to pick up a phonebook than a cookbook. No one expects a last-minute holiday party to have all the bells and whistles. Not everything has to be homemade and look like it came off the cover of a lifestyle magazine. If you find out you are hosting holiday guests without much notice, reduce your stress level by ordering in food or picking up pre-made party platters. If you have a couple days of notice, you can even have your party catered by your favorite restaurant.

5 Create a Hot Chocolate Bar

Turn a casual movie night or small gathering into a real party with a hot chocolate bar. You'll look like the hostess with the mostest with this easy breezy party plan.

On a table, set up mugs, hot cocoa (you can prepare a big batch in a slow cooker) and lots of fun toppings like whipped cream, marshmallows, candy and hot fudge. The possibilities are endless. A hot chocolate bar pairs perfectly with a chilly night and good company.

6 Have A Cookie Decorating Station

If you're looking for a last-minute activity to have at your holiday party, you cannot go wrong with a cookie-decorating station. All you will need is a pack of plain sugar cookies, either homemade or if you're really stretched for time store-bought, and some different colored icing and sprinkles. This is a good holiday party activity to have when you have children to entertain. They will love getting to decorate their cookies, and they'll especially love eating them!

