



GRADUATION PARTY CHECKLIST

Graduation Party Planning Checklist

Schedule

Right Now

(if possible, start 8-10 weeks out from party so you have less to do each week)

- ☐ **Set Your Party Budget** – Nothing is worse than getting to summer and finding you overspent. I start my shopping early to spread it out a bit. This helps the budget. I spent between \$150-\$200 for each party.
- ☐ **Pick the Date** – Lots of people tend to have drop in parties the weekend of graduation. Some people choose to wait a week or 2. For us that is near Memorial Day. If you have out of towners, maybe that is a good weekend to plan for since many people have an extra day off work.
- ☐ **Guest List** – Organize your attendee list in an excel spreadsheet so you can print labels – it will save you time from handwriting.
- ☐ **Decide on Location** – Decide where you want the party. If you are looking at a venue, you will need more time to book as this time of year is busy and party venues get booked out early. If you want something easy and inexpensive just have the party in your yard or home (or both!) If you don't have the space or desire to clean, rent a park area, apartment clubhouse or even rent a venue if you're expecting a large crowd.

6-8 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Pick a Theme** – A theme helps you focus your efforts and makes the party more personalized and memorable for your child. See the theme section of this document for ideas.
- ☐ **Finalize grad announcements** – They can take up to 2 weeks to get if you use shutterfly or snapfish. For a quicker turnaround go with Walgreens, Walmart or Staples. They have same day printing on some items.
- ☐ **Plan Graduation Announcements** – If you want easy and stress free you can do a digital invite. However, many people prefer the printed type. Be on the lookout for special offers and promo codes. You can design a card online and have it shipped to you or have it printed at a drugstore or big box store. Don't forget your stamps. If you need help designing a card, drop me an email and I can help!
auburnraven7@gmail.com

4-6 Weeks Out

(If you have lots of people who will need to travel, send announcements out as early as possible so they can make travel arrangements.)

- ☐ **Mail Graduation Cards** – Keep track of returned cards to update addresses.
- ☐ **Plan Decorations** – Make sure you have a list of what you want for decorations. Read the decorations section in this document for ideas. – Read the decorations section in this document for ideas.
- ☐ **Food Plan** – Get the plan together so you can start slowly with food and not get overwhelmed.
- ☐ **Start Shopping** – Shop a little each week. Buy small amounts of items over time to make it financially easier on the budget. Or set aside money and do it all at once.
- ☐ **Order Items** – Order anything you plan to purchase like a graduation cake, cookies or meal items.

2-4 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Check Your Guest List** – Confirm your guest count especially if you have out of towners coming to stay with you so you can prep your home. Remember that many kids will just pop by for a while so plan people that never RSVP.

1-6 Days Before Graduation Party

- ☐ **Decorate** – Put up the decorations.
- ☐ **Go Grocery Shopping** – Purchase your non-perishables.
- ☐ **Prep as Much as Possible** – Prepare as much food ahead of time as possible so you can relax and enjoy the big day.

Graduation Party Eve

- ☐ **Plan a Simple Dinner** – Casseroles, Spaghetti, Tacos. Think simple.
- ☐ Any last minute things you forgot or didn't have time to do.

Party Day

- ☐ **Remember to Relax and Enjoy** – Don't get so caught up in everything that you do not take time to enjoy the day. It will all come together. Breathe!
- ☐ **Photos** - Assign someone (or set up a shared photo album) to make sure you capture more moments. Consider having a hashtag for guests to share their pictures—it's a fun way to collect memories.

After Party

- ☐ **Thank You** – Make sure to have your graduate send a handwritten thank you to everyone who gave and anyone else they want to thank for being there for them over the years. Give them a 2-4 week timeframe to complete the task.

MORE TIPS AND IDEAS

Party Theme Tips

- ☐ **Why** – It personalizes the party for your kiddo and makes it more memorable.
- ☐ **What** – It can be just their school colors or something more specific.
- ☐ **How** – Think about the following to get you started:
 - ☐ What is their favorite sport, something they did in high school that is important to them, or their favorite subject.
 - ☐ I did 3 high school graduation parties.
 - ☐ One was Friends, the One Where They Graduate (my daughter's favorite tv show)
 - ☐ Another was Reach for the Stars (my daughter loved stargazing and everything space)
 - ☐ The last was Grow Where You Are Planted (my last daughter loves everything plants)
 - ☐ Check Pinterest for ideas. Check out my [graduation planning board!](#)

Party Decoration Tips

Decorations can be simple like flowers on the tables, star centerpieces, streamers and balloons. Dollar Stores and Dollar Generals have lots of inexpensive items. Are you going to want to order a balloon bouquet or balloon arch? You will need to pre order these items.

Think about the following to get you started:

Will it be outside, inside or both?

Can you set up some outside games for guests?

Will you have a photo booth for pics?

One family favorite decoration is the photo board (large foam core board) with photos of the graduate's adventures and growth through the years. Photos include family, friends, and travels. It's always a hit with the guests as well! Start this early, it takes time to make.

Party Food Ideas

- ☐ **DESSERT** - Graduation cake, cupcakes or cookies. I ordered cookies from a local cookie shop. They are frosted in the school colors with a school logo. It can be the featured item or part of a dessert table featuring the grad's favorite treats.
- ☐ **PROTEIN** - Pulled pork sandwiches, crockpot bbq sausages, grilled meats, charcuterie board, backyard BBQ, pizza party, taco bar
- ☐ **VEGGIES** - veggies with ranch dressing for dipping
- ☐ **FRUIT** - fruit tray or fruit kabobs, fruit charcuterie board
- ☐ Don't forget to consider any dietary restrictions for your guests!
- ☐ **BEVERAGES** - We did it simple with iced tea, lemonade, water and wine. We had rose gold plastic cups to give it a fancier vibe without the washing hassle.