

Come To Order®

...simplifying lives one space at a time

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Seven Days Until the Party

Kathy Jenkins, CPO®, FMC®, Come To Order

Planning a party on short notice? Or maybe you procrastinated a bit or just lost track of time and now you realize your get-together is in a week!

Don't panic. It IS possible to organize a party in just 7 days. Yes, it takes motivation, determination, and careful planning, but you can pull it off.

There are 2 keys to making this work successfully. First, keep it simple. You don't have time to experiment with new recipes and design ornate table settings. Plan a meal that includes foods you are familiar with, and decorate with simplicity and style in mind.

The second key - divide and conquer. Delegate tasks to other family members. Even younger children can help with cleaning and setting the table. Also, break down bigger projects into daily tasks so you know what has to get done on a certain day to keep you on schedule. Here's how:

7 days to go

- Plan your menu. Incorporate items that you can make ahead of time so you aren't doing all of the baking and cooking in one day.
- Make a checklist. Write down all of the things that need to get done, and designate a person to do them.
- Invite guests. Make a list and then call them or send them an e-mail. Don't forget to keep track of who is coming and what they will bring (if anything).

6 days to go

- Clean out your refrigerator. You'll need room for new groceries and party food as the week progresses.
- Now that you know what items you have in the fridge, create your grocery list. Look at each recipe so you don't forget anything. Make sure you have enough ingredients on hand for the entire menu. Don't forget to eliminate recipes that other guests will be bringing.
- Create a supply list, too. Think about napkins, a new tablecloth, batteries, candles, decorations, etc. Do you have enough place settings and glassware? Write down these items, too.

5 days to go

- Go shopping. Buy your groceries and supplies now.
- Make one or two recipes from your meal plan and store in the freezer, if possible.

4 days to go

- Count chairs and tables. If you need more, round these items up today from friends, neighbors, or a party rental place.
- Create a timeline for the big day. Start with the time your event starts and plan backwards. Consider how long it takes for food to bake. If you are preparing a turkey, for example, plan

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time to prepare it, cook it, let it rest, and carve it. Don't forget to plan time to sit and relax and for your own shower!

3 days to go:

- Prepare another meal or two that you can freeze.
- Wash your place settings and glassware, especially if you are taking them out of storage. Polish silver if needed.

2 days to go:

- Start storing ice so that you have enough for the party.
- Prepare another recipe or two that you can freeze, or that will survive in the refrigerator. Make sure your family knows not to eat it!

1 day until the big day!

- Set the table and display your centerpiece or any other table decorations.
- Defrost the food that you made earlier in the week.
- Make all other recipe items that can be made a day in advance.
- Do a quick cleaning in each room – tidy up, dust, and vacuum.

Party time!

- Follow the time line you created earlier in the week.
- Have fun!

About the Author

As a Certified Professional Organizer and Certified Family Manager coach, Kathy Jenkins can help you run a more organized, efficient, and happy household and raise happy, healthy, responsible, and well-mannered children! Visit <http://www.cometoorderva.com> to learn more about her professional organizing services and one-on-one family manager coaching sessions. You can also follow her tips, advice, and recommendations by liking Come To Order on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/cometoorder>

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