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cheers!

SERVING ALCOHOL

Everyone's fallen into the beverage abyss: Should you buy more red wine than white wine? How do you make a Singapore Sling? Should you use real or plastic glasses? This chapter will help you successfully plan your party's beverage needs.

First and foremost: SAFETY. Be aware of how much alcohol is being consumed and by whom. If you do not feel comfortable with this or if there are too many guests to keep track of, enlist the help of friends or a designated driver who is sober and can assess the situation. (Be sure to pay for the driver's gas.) Hiring a trained barman and/or waiters can alleviate this pressure. If you anticipate a rowdy party, you may even want to hire an off-duty police officer who does security work on the side. The officer can keep an eye on the crowd and act as a designated driver. As trained professionals, they will be able to spot any guests that have been celebrating excessively and help you deal with the situation effectively.

What and how much to buy really depends on the make-up of the guest list. For example, one would assume that the alcohol consumed by bachelor party revelers is going to be far more than the alcohol consumed at a mid-afternoon ladies' luncheon. The easiest way to find out is to ask your guests. Are they wine drinkers, beer drinkers, or teetotalers?

Alcohol is usually one of the biggest party expenses, so consider your budget. For larger groups, serving hard liquor can be less expensive than wine. A 750-ml bottle of wine will yield about five drinks, whereas a 750-ml bottle of spirits (rum, vodka, gin, etc.) will yield about sixteen cocktails.

If you anticipate all of your guests arriving at the same time or if you have a large number of guests, split the bar into two areas, or place glasses of pre-poured wine on an entry table. This way guests can help themselves and alleviate bar-traffic congestion.

choices for glassware

Budget plays an important role in choosing the glasses for a party. The tone of an elegant cocktail party can be dashed when the perfectly chilled Chardonnay is served out of Styrofoam cups. If you own enough glasses and are prepared to wash and dry them throughout the party, then go for it. If you plan to entertain frequently, you can start a collection of inexpensive glasses from home stores or discount stores. Renting all-purpose, 10-ounce glasses can be a great way to go if budget permits. If money is limited, start the event with real glasses and switch to disposable glasses for the latter part of the evening. Most rental companies request that glasses need only be rinsed and returned in the original boxes. A good quality plastic glass can be used for informal outdoor events.

iced down

How many times have you had to run out mid-party to the local liquor store for extra ice? Ice is an inexpensive part of the bar set-up, so opt for more rather than less. Estimate 1½ to 2 pounds per person. "Chilling tubs" are large, heavy-duty plastic containers that cost about \$5 each from club or discount stores. Fill them with ice and a little water to chill white wine and other drinks. This takes about 30 minutes and leaves your refrigerator (and bathtub) free. It takes about 40 to 50 pounds of ice to fill one chilling tub. A great "do it for less" tip is to fill your empty washing machine with ice and chill cans in it. As the ice melts, the water drains away. Unplug the washer before the party just in case one of your tipsy guests wonders, "What would happen if I turned it on?"

BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION GUIDES

For the first hour of the party, assume 2 drinks per person. For the remainder of party, allow for 1 drink per person for each hour thereafter.

For instance, if you have 50 guests attending a 4-hour party, you should plan on serving 250 drinks:

- 50 guests x 2 drinks (per person for the first hour) = 100 servings
- 50 guests x 3 drinks (1 drink per hour for 3 hours) = 150 servings

100 servings for the first hour
 + 150 servings for the next 3 hours
 250 servings total for a 4-hour party



cool ice

If your party is fairly small and you feel creative, try making ice cubes to match the drinks you are serving. Freeze orange juice in ice cube trays and add to sangria, or place pieces of fruit in the ice trays before adding water to make colorful and flavorful ice cubes for a summer fruit punch.

bar essentials

Don't forget other bar essentials like paper cocktail napkins (five per guest), lemons, limes, bottle openers for wine and beer, ice buckets, and tongs.

cocktail extras

For a cocktail party, you may want to add olives, cocktail onions, cherries, celery sticks, a blender, cocktail shaker, and salt for margaritas.

bottle yields

bottle size	beverage type	yield	serving size
750 milliliters	Champagne	6 servings	4 ounces
750 milliliters	Wine	5 servings	5 ounces
750 milliliters	Spirits	16 cocktails	1½ ounces
1 liter	Spirits	22 cocktails	1½ ounces
1½ liters	Spirits	33 cocktails	1½ ounces
1 liter	Mineral water	4 servings	8 ounces
2 liter	Soda	8 servings	8 ounces
12 ounces	Beer	1 serving	12 ounces



bar service

Inevitably someone will ask for a “sex on the beach” or a “monkey’s uncle” cocktail. Unless you have a fully stocked bar and a whiz of a bartender, avoid this by asking your guests, “Would you like a drink?” followed by, “We have wine, beer, or soda.”

partial bar (chart is based on a 3 to 3½-hour-long event)

ingredients	12 guests	25 guests	50 guests	75 guests
White wine	7 (750-ml) bottles	15 (750-ml) bottles	30 (750-ml) bottles	45 (750-ml) bottles
Red wine	4 (750-ml) bottles	8 (750-ml) bottles	16 (750-ml) bottles	24 (750-ml) bottles
Beer	18 (12-ounce) bottles	32 (12-ounce) bottles	64 (12-ounce) bottles	96 (12-ounce) bottles
Mineral water	3 (1-liter) bottles	5 (1-liter) bottles	10 (1-liter) bottles	15 (1-liter) bottles
7-Up or Sprite	1 (2-liter) bottle	3 (2-liter) bottles	6 (2-liter) bottles	9 (2-liter) bottles
Cola	2 (2-liter) bottles	4 (2-liter) bottles	8 (2-liter) bottles	12 (2-liter) bottles
Diet cola	2 (2-liter) bottles	4 (2-liter) bottles	8 (2-liter) bottles	12 (2-liter) bottles
Glasses	30 (10-ounce) glasses	75 (10-ounce) glasses	150 (10-ounce) glasses	225 (10-ounce) glasses
Ice	18 pounds	38 pounds	75 pounds	115 pounds

full bar (chart is based on a 3 to 3½-hour-long event)

ingredients	12 guests	25 guests	50 guests	75 guests
White wine	4 (750-ml) bottles	9 (750-ml) bottles	18 (750-ml) bottles	27 (750-ml) bottles
Red wine	3 (750-ml) bottles	7 (750-ml) bottles	14 (750-ml) bottles	21 (750-ml) bottles
Beer	5 (12-ounce) bottles	12 (12-ounce) bottles	24 (12-ounce) bottles	36 (12-ounce) bottles
Gin	1 (750-ml) bottle	2 (750-ml) bottles	4 (750-ml) bottles	6 (750-ml) bottles
Rum	1 (750-ml) bottle	2 (750-ml) bottles	4 (750-ml) bottles	6 (750-ml) bottles
Vodka	1 (750-ml) bottle	3 (750-ml) bottles	6 (750-ml) bottles	9 (750-ml) bottles
Scotch	1 (750-ml) bottle	1 (750-ml) bottle	2 (750-ml) bottles	3 (750-ml) bottles
Bourbon	1 (750-ml) bottle	1 (750-ml) bottle	2 (750-ml) bottles	3 (750-ml) bottles
Mineral water	4 (1-liter) bottles	6 (1-liter) bottles	12 (1-liter) bottles	18 (1-liter) bottles
7-Up or Sprite	1 (2-liter) bottle	2 (2-liter) bottles	4 (2-liter) bottles	6 (2-liter) bottles
Cola	1 (2-liter) bottle	3 (2-liter) bottles	6 (2-liter) bottles	9 (2-liter) bottles
Diet cola	1 (2-liter) bottle	3 (2-liter) bottles	6 (2-liter) bottles	9 (2-liter) bottles
Tonic	1 (2-liter) bottle	3 (2-liter) bottles	6 (2-liter) bottles	9 (2-liter) bottles
Glasses	30 (10-ounce) glasses	75 (10-ounce) glasses	150 (10-ounce) glasses	225 (10-ounce) glasses
Ice	24 pounds	50 pounds	100 pounds	150 pounds

coffee service

If you are serving coffee, stock up on half-and-half, sugar, and sugar substitutes. Consider adding flavored syrups or liqueurs to the selection such as Irish cream and Kahlúa, or chocolate mint sticks as stirrers.

The measurements below allow for one 5-ounce cup of coffee, 2 teaspoons of cream and sugar, and ½ packets of sugar substitute per person. If you have large coffee mugs or expect your guests to drink two cups of coffee each, double the recipe. Party-size coffee pots often have measurements included on the inside.

coffee service

ingredients	12 (5-ounce) cups	25 (5-ounce) cups	50 (5-ounce) cups	75 (5-ounce) cups
Ground coffee	4 ounces (1¼ cups)	8 ounces (2½ cups)	1 pound (5 cups)	1½ pounds (7½ cups)
Bottled or filtered water	2 quarts plus 1 cup	1 gallon plus 1 pint	2 gallons plus 1 quart	3½ gallons
Half-and-half or cream	½ cup (4 ounces)	1 cup (8 ounces)	2 cups (16 ounces)	3 cups (24 ounces)
Sugar	½ cup (3½ ounces)	1 cup (7 ounces)	2 cups (14 ounces)	3 cups (21 ounces)
Sugar substitute	18 packets	36 packets	72 packets	108 packets