

Tips for Hosting an At-Home Easter Brunch

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Springtime entertaining doesn't come naturally to everyone. Lucky for you, we've enlisted the help of Kim Hopper, owner of Sierra Bonita Catering Company. Read on for her expert advice on how to host the perfect at-home Easter brunch.

1. When playing hostess (or host), one of the biggest challenges is planning the menu. "You will likely be dealing with different dietary needs [and] preferences, so variety is key," says Hopper. Give yourself ample time to stock up on ingredients by writing out a menu and shopping list about a week in advance. Staying organized will also prevent frazzled trips to the grocery store for last-minute items.
2. According to Hopper, a typical brunch spread consists of a combination of sweet and savory items, with at least one egg-based dish. For the main course, she suggests a build-your-own fruit and yogurt parfait bar. In separate bowls, offer fresh berries, high-quality Greek yogurt and additional toppings, like granola, chopped nuts, dark chocolate shavings, honey and fresh sprigs of mint. In lieu of involved dishes like eggs benedict, she recommends whipping up a simple frittata. "They're delicious and filling, and you can make several different versions to appeal to a variety of tastes," she says. Stuff yours with seasonal veggies, meats, smoked salmon, or beans and cheese for a little Southwestern flare. Better yet, leftovers can be reheated and eaten the next day.
3. Take some of the load off by prepping in advance whenever possible. On Easter eve, Hopper recommends chopping vegetables and fruit, preparing batter for baked goods, squeezing citrus juice and transferring store-bought items like sauces and dips into more presentable dishes.
4. Don't be under the false impression that everything needs to be homemade. Supplementing your spread with delicacies from a local farmer's market, butcher shop or bakery is a charming way to elevate flavor without losing that personal touch. Hopper suggests looking for items like fresh baked goods, quiche, sausage, granola, artisan jams, honey and salsa.
5. No brunch is complete without a little booze. "You can never go wrong with mimosas [or] Bloody Marys," says Hopper. Both make for fun DIY drink bars, which will give guests something to do while you finish up in the kitchen. For Bloody Mary garnishes, Hopper likes hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper, cooked bacon strips, shrimp cocktail, olives and pickled veggies. When it comes to mimosas, don't be afraid to get creative. Mix things up and add a splash of fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice, peach nectar or Chambord.
6. Keeping the kiddos happy is easier than you'd think. In addition to simple finger foods and plain scrambled eggs, Hopper is a strong advocate of activity stations. Have them decorate their own cupcakes or Easter eggs at a separate table, leaving you and the rest of the adults free to catch up.
7. A beautiful setup is an absolute must, but you don't necessarily have to break the bank to impress your guests. "More than likely, you have plenty of things around your house and yard for setting the perfect," says Hopper. She suggests keeping place settings neutral or white and adding pops of color with fresh flowers, tall vases filled with citrus, and votive or tea candles. For serving ware, try mixing and matching family china and vintage pieces in spring colors.
8. Hopper's most important tip of all? Relax! "If something goes wrong, don't be so hard on yourself," she says. "Your friends and family aren't expecting you to be a flawless host. Keep in mind why you're all together. Everyone is there to celebrate the holiday and enjoy each other's company."