

# How to Throw the Ultimate Holiday Party

Written by Nadine Toren

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[Television personality](#) and AZfoothills.com columnist [Nadine Toren](#) is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers “on the scene.” Every day she’ll introduce you to [celebrities](#), [athletes](#), and give you an inside look into local events and hot spots. She’ll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers [around town](#).



**Get on Santa's good list by planning the best Christmas bash! Check out the keys to hosting a fab and festive party this season.**

It's time. Your holiday party is around the corner, and you really want to make things perfect, right? Well, if you're aiming for the ultimate Christmas soiree, we have some must-try tips, courtesy of two lovely Valley ladies.

Thanks to Kelly Ehlers, owner of Evoke Brand Strategies, and Lauren Smith, Agency 210 event-planner, your December celebration just got better. For starters, they say you'll want to kick things off with a kick-ass invitation, and for that, ditch paper and stamps for something digital. Yes, by going paperless, you'll save green while going green. The gals suggest creating a customized invitation through Paperless Post ([www.paperlesspost.com](http://www.paperlesspost.com)) because the savvy site gives you the control you'd have with handmade invitations; however, it easily allows you to distribute your invites via social networks like Facebook. You can also download the RedStamp App ([www.redstamp.com/app](http://www.redstamp.com/app)), a free way to send notes on-the-go. (Think of it as a digital post-it.) This app is ideal for a last-minute party or an immediate thank you message.

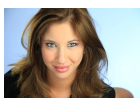
And once your invites hit the digital mailbox, you'll want to hammer down a soiree theme, and for 2011, Ehlers and Smith say D-I-Y! Yep, the do-it-yourself style is totally in, so skip on the lavish, pricey décor. Consider incorporating family heirlooms and treasures; go back to the basics. For a delightful touch, simmer a dash of mulling spices and cinnamon sticks in a pot of water to instantly set the mood—that will give your AZ household the smell of the season.

As for food, get a truck. Let me explain. Yes, you can still ask your guest to bring a dish, but if you want something different, opt for a food truck. This somewhat-affordable mobile vendor is totally chic and unique—these guys are the gurus of on-the-go eating. According to the Phoenix Street Food organization, there are still trucks for hire this season...but you need to book fast. Some ideas: Duck Duck Pig, Pizza Daux, and the Super Farm Super Truck.

And of course, you'll need something to wash down the nosh; so for sippers, skip pricey top shelf cocktails; instead, select limited options infused with flair. Ehlers and Smith suggest offering 1-2 beers from an AZ brewery, like San Tan or Four Peaks. You can also serve a choice of white or red vino; Ehlers and Smith give Arizona Stronghold ([www.azstronghold.com](http://www.azstronghold.com)) two thumbs up. Finally, create one signature cocktail—something classic and festive. (You might want to try Reagan's Orange Bitters, garnished with a cinnamon stick and cherry.)

Finally, capture the candid memories by using fun applications like PhotoBooth (<http://www.apple.com/ipad/built-in-apps/photobooth.html>) and Camera+ (<http://campl.us/>). Both services offer creative twists to pictures, and aid in taking pics from your smart phone. (Plus, they're simple to share on Facebook.)

For more hot tips, check out [www.evokebrands.com](http://www.evokebrands.com) and [www.agency210.com](http://www.agency210.com).



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