

How to Throw a Patriotic Party

Written by Lauren Featherstone

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Want your Memorial Day or Fourth of July Party go off with a bang? Follow these easy tips to ensure patriotic success.



Themes: Of course this seems like a no brainer: red, white and blue. While that's true, there is no reason you can't combine two themes. For example, if you are near a body of water, pools included, you can have a beach-theme patriotic party. Decide if you're going to stick with a traditional red, white and blue party or add a second theme. Then, base your decorations, food and activities off of your decision.



Decorations: Anything and everything red, white and blue or stars and stripes. A few decoration musts are: Happy 4th of July or Happy Memorial Day banners, various sizes of American flags, table clothes, pop-up centerpieces, paper lanterns and garland. Don't forget festive plates, bowls, utensils, napkins and cups. For a beach-theme patriotic party you can use the same decorations, but find paler versions of red and blue, and use more white. Stars and stripes are already part of the beach scene, but throwing in some starfish in place of regular stars wouldn't hurt. Make your own sand centerpieces using clear drinking glasses, small vases, votive candles and red, white, and blue sand. Another option is creating luminaries with soup cans, water, nails, a hammer, scrap paper, a ruler, tape, and red, white and blue spray paint. Most decorations can be found at local party stores, online, or make them yourself like the centerpieces. www.marthastewart.com. www.go.tipjunkie.com.



Food: Patriotic parties are a great time to put a modern flair on classic dishes. It wouldn't be an all-American barbecue without hamburgers and hot dogs, but add a twist to your condiments bar by adding grilled onions, peppers, gourmet cheeses, chili and salsa to your usual ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, lettuce, tomatoes, onions and pickles. Sliders and mini hot dogs are always a good option for a party where people may

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be eating while standing up and chit chatting. Serve French fries in patriotic paper cones you can print out yourself online. It may seem like potato overload, but don't forget the potato salad and chips. After all that salt, sweeten your senses with fresh fruit--especially watermelon--apple pie, Pop Rock cookies, chocolate-dipped strawberries and cupcakes. For a late night snack, serve patriotic popcorn in old red, white and blue buckets. Decorate your food station with miniature food cards with fun names like "All-American Potato Salad" and "Down Home Dip." www.blog.mardigrasoutlet.com. www.cakespy.com. www.bloomdesignsonline.blogspot.com.



Activities: If you have a pool, swimming is always a great option during the hot summer months, but pool or no pool you can bring out the ball and net for a fun game of volleyball. Kids love a hula-hoop contest or a game of badminton, while adults can play a game of corn-hole. When all else fails, sit back, relax and enjoy the fireworks.