



## Don't Forget These Five Things That Are Often Overlooked When Planning A Summer Party

*Avoid a mid-party crisis by following these tips on what not to forget when hosting an event this season.*

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It's an all too familiar scene: your summer party is quickly approaching, and it seems that you're set with the essential hot dog buns, cold beer and upbeat playlist. However, with the excitement of your upcoming outdoor bash on your mind, it's easy to forget the simple details that can upgrade your party from an average poolside gathering to the most epic summertime celebration.

That's why ESTATENVY spoke with Tricia Marella, an event manager at the Hyatt Lodge in Oakbrook, Illinois. She shared five tips with us on what not to forget when planning your

summer party, as well as unique ideas for themes and decor.

### 1.) What Would You Want if You Were Attending Your Own Party?

When planning any party, consider yourself a guest rather than a host. This will allow you to envision the best food, drink and activity options for your party goers. Many party planners are quick to jump to staple summer foods like hamburgers, hot dogs and brats for a summer party spread. But Marella warns that this can cause a problem for guests who are ready to dive into the food but are faced with dietary issues. “What if you have a vegetarian or gluten-free guest at your party?” said Marella. “With a rise in healthy eating and nutritional setbacks, it’s important to provide a variety of foods to cater to all types of party attendees.”

**Summertime Menu Tip:** Marella says the best way to create a unique summer menu is to spice up a classic idea. “One party we hosted featured a southern-flare barbecue style lineup with foods like shrimp ‘n’ grits, chorizo, flights of brisket and mac ‘n’ cheese,” she said.

### 2.) Overestimate Your Number of Guests

You’ll need enough space and seating to accommodate all of your guests, so be sure to account for extra attendees in case space is an issue. “Many summer parties are held on an outdoor deck or patio, which can cause an issue for seating and space with larger parties,” said Marella. “Make sure you order extra seats or utilize all of your ledge space to comfortably fit all of your guests.”

**Cozy Seating Can Add Ambiance:** For a more intimate backyard soiree, place comfortable cushions, pillows and blankets around your back porch or outdoor entertainment space. To add to this cozy atmosphere, string soft globe lights along your outdoor deck or porch.

### 3.) Have a Backup Plan

“At the hotel, we always have a backup plan set for summer parties due to that temperamental Chicago weather,” said Marella. To avoid the rain soaking your guests, consider having a tent handy in your garage in case of a downpour. Aside from rain, nights can get breezy and chilly, even in the summertime. Lighting your outdoor fireplace or placing heat lamps throughout your backyard will not only keep your guests warm during cool summer nights, but also add to the overall environment.

**A Summer Party Classic, the Bonfire Pit:** Firing up your bonfire pit can keep guests toasty despite the summer night breeze and create a nostalgic, festive aura for your evening gathering.

### 4.) Offer Attendees Something New

Summer parties can become forgettable when you offer guests the same old food or drinks. “We’ve seen tequila sunrises, shandys and all of that,” said Marella on overused beverage options. She suggests instead offering your guests something new by providing them with unique adult beverages. “The best kinds of drinks are the ones we’ve customized and put our own flare on. For example, one bride wanted a pink-colored drink for her summertime rehearsal dinner. So, we concocted our own summer cocktail featuring different liquors and flavors to provide our guests with a fresh, unique beverage,” added Marella. For summertime, still think fruity, colorful and refreshing but with your own spin.

**The Name Game: Create Your Own Drink Titles:** “When our clients ask us to come up with specialty drinks for their events, we like to create fun, new names for the cocktails,” said Marella. “This adds an element of individuality to the party and makes it special for attendees.”

#### 5.) It’s the Little Things that Count

Try to find places around your outdoor party spaces that you can fill with extra summertime accents. “Summertime is exemplified by vibrancy and colors, so try using things like various fresh fruits as centerpieces on serving tables,” Marella shares. You can also use colorful table coverings or other outdoor decor to add to your summertime party theme.

**Wine Bottles and Boxes, A Year-Round Decor Hit:** Marella says one of her favorite design tips is getting creative with empty wine bottles and crates and using them to create a unique party display. “You can add things like fake grapes to the display and place your wine selection on top of the empty wine crates for an authentic look,” Marella said.

In general, it’s best to keep your guests’ wants and needs at the forefront of your planning efforts when coming up with themes, menu options and activities for your summer party. By following these helpful tips, your summer bash will be a hit.