

The Stress-Less Holiday Hosting Checklist

A simple timeline to help you prepare your home for guests without turning holiday hosting into a whole-house panic clean.

START HERE: Focus on the spaces your guests will actually use. Your home does not have to be perfect to be welcoming.

1 WEEK BEFORE

Clear the clutter and make a plan before the last-minute tasks begin.

- Decide which rooms and spaces guests will actually use.
- Clear the entryway and make room for extra shoes, coats and bags.
- Declutter the guest room or prepare your alternate sleeping space.
- Check guest linens, towels, pillows and blankets.
- Take inventory of the pantry, refrigerator and freezer before grocery shopping.
- Check serving dishes, platters, glasses and utensils you plan to use.
- Make a simple menu and grocery list so you know what needs refrigerator and pantry space.

2-3 DAYS BEFORE

Set up the spaces that will make hosting easier for you and your guests.

- Grocery shop and group holiday ingredients together.
- Clear refrigerator space for prepared dishes and leftovers.
- Stock the guest bathroom with toilet paper, soap and fresh towels.
- Create a small basket of overnight essentials if guests are staying.
- Clear unnecessary appliances, papers and clutter from kitchen counters.
- Choose a designated drink, coffee or dessert station to reduce kitchen traffic.
- Match food-storage containers with lids so they are ready for leftovers.

THE DAY BEFORE

Do the things that will help tomorrow feel calmer.

- Set the table or gather the dishes, linens and serving pieces you will need.
- Prep any food that can be made ahead.
- Empty the dishwasher so it is ready for the next day's dishes.
- Empty kitchen and guest-bathroom trash cans.
- Put away everyday items taking up valuable counter or surface space.
- Make the guest bed and set out fresh towels.
- Choose a place for purses, coats, shoes and bags when guests arrive.
- Do a quick reset of the main living areas - not the whole house.

THE MORNING OF

Keep your focus on function, not perfection.

- Run and empty the dishwasher if needed.
- Clear the kitchen sink and counters before cooking begins.
- Set out drinks, coffee supplies or self-serve items.
- Put extra toilet paper somewhere guests can easily find it.
- Check the entryway for a clear walking path and space for belongings.
- Move anything that still needs a home into one contained basket to deal with later.
- Give yourself a stopping time for cleaning and organizing.

30 MINUTES BEFORE GUESTS ARRIVE

This is not the time to reorganize a closet. Stick to the quick wins.

- Do a fast surface reset in the entryway, kitchen and main gathering space.
- Wipe down the guest bathroom and replace hand towels.
- Empty visible trash cans.
- Turn on lamps or lighting and adjust the temperature if needed.
- Put away cleaning supplies.
- Take a minute to look around - then stop.

Your Hosting Game Plan

A little planning goes a long way. Decide what matters most for your gathering - and what can wait until another day.

The three spaces guests will use most:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What can I prep ahead?

What can I delegate?

Where will coats, bags and shoes go?

Where will leftovers go?

What am I giving myself permission NOT to organize before guests arrive?

The goal isn't a perfect home. It's a home that works.

Need a little more help getting your home ready for the holidays? Chaos Managed creates practical, personalized organization systems designed around the way your family actually lives.

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