



# THE ULTIMATE SECRET SANTA PLANNING GUIDE

## **Your Complete Guide to the Ultimate Office Party Ice Breaker**

Everything you need to host the most fun, engaging, and memorable office party ice breaker—in 15 minutes or less!

Perfect for Secret Santa parties, holiday gatherings, team building, and Zoom celebrations.

- ☐ Quick Setup (3 min)
- ☐ Works In-Person or Virtual
- ☐ 8-50+ People
- ☐ 15-20 Minute Game

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Quick Start Guide:** For Organizers Who Want to Start NOW
2. **How to Play:** Rules
3. **For Organizers:** Setup, Tips & Tricks
4. **For Players:** How to Win & Have Fun
5. **Zoom/Teams Edition:** Virtual Party Guide
6. **Game Variations:** Four Ways to Play
7. **Prize Ideas:** What Winners Love
8. **Troubleshooting:** Common Issues Solved
9. **Checklist:** Everything You Need

# 1. QUICK START GUIDE

## Ready in 3 Minutes!

Don't have time to read the whole guide? Here's everything you need to start RIGHT NOW:

1	PRINT	Print the 8 bingo cards (included PDF)
2	PREP	Grab pens/markers for people to mark squares
3	PRIZE	Have a small prize ready (\$5-20 gift card)
4	EXPLAIN	Say: "Find people who match each square! First to get 5 in a row wins. Center is FREE. GO!"
5	PLAY	Set 15-minute timer. Let people mingle!
6	WIN	First person to yell BINGO! reads their line and wins

 **Pro Tip:** Start with easy squares like 'Wearing red or green' to get people talking immediately!

That's it! You're ready to host an amazing ice breaker. Read on for more tips and variations.

## 2. HOW TO PLAY

### The Rules

#### The Goal:

Get 5 squares in a row—horizontal ( $\leftrightarrow$ ), vertical ( $\updownarrow$ ), or diagonal (■ ■)

#### How It Works:

- ➔ Each person gets a unique 5×5 bingo card with 25 squares
- ➔ Each square describes a person (e.g., 'Has kids under 10' or 'Loves spicy food')
- ➔ Walk around and find people who match each description
- ➔ When you find someone, mark that square off
- ➔ The center square is FREE (already marked)
- ➔ First person to complete a line of 5 yells 'BINGO!' and wins

#### Important Rules:

- ➔ You CAN ask the same person for multiple squares
- ➔ You CAN mark a square if YOU match the description
- ➔ People can self-identify (raise hand, shout 'That's me!')
- ➔ DON'T lie to get squares (keep it honest and fun!)

#### Winning:

When you complete 5 in a row, yell **BINGO!** The organizer will verify by asking you to read your winning line. If correct, you win the prize!

# 3. FOR ORGANIZERS

## Setup, Tips & Tricks

### Before the Party:

- ☐ **Print cards:** Print all 8 pages of the bingo PDF. Use color if possible, but B&W; works too.
- ☐ **Gather supplies:** Pens, markers, or highlighters for people to mark squares.
- ☐ **Choose a prize:** \$5-20 gift card, candy basket, best parking spot for a week, etc.
- ☐ **Print extras:** Have 2-3 extra cards in case people lose theirs.

### During the Game:

- ☐ **Set a timer:** 15 minutes is perfect. Announce '5 minutes left!' to create urgency.
- ☐ **Encourage mingling:** Say 'You have to talk to at least 5 different people!'
- ☐ **Play music:** Background holiday music sets the mood.
- ☐ **Join in:** Organizers can play too!

### Verification:

When someone yells **BINGO**, ask them to read their winning line. Spot-check by asking a person or two to verify. If correct, award the prize!

### Organizer Pro Tips:

- ☐ **Start strong:** Begin with 'Who's wearing red or green?' to get people talking immediately.
- ☐ **Group size matters:** 8-20 people = one winner. 20-40 people = multiple rounds or team mode.
- ☐ **Time management:** If nobody's getting close after 10 min, extend to 20 min or allow self-marking.
- ☐ **Energy boost:** Halfway through, say 'Someone's getting close! Pick up the pace!'.
- ☐ **Photo op:** Take a group photo at the start when everyone has their cards.

# 4. FOR PLAYERS

## How to Win & Have Fun

### Winning Strategies:

- ☐ **Scan your card:** Look for easy squares first ('Wearing red', 'Has coffee').
- ☐ **Ask groups:** Instead of one-on-one, ask 'Anyone here play golf?' to get multiple responses.
- ☐ **Bundle questions:** 'Do you have kids, play video games, or love spicy food?' = 3 squares at once.
- ☐ **Focus on a line:** Pick one horizontal/vertical/diagonal line and complete it first.
- ☐ **Don't forget yourself:** If YOU match a square, mark it off!

### Social Tips:

- ☐ This is an **ice breaker**—the goal is to MEET people and have FUN!
- ☐ Learn people's names as you go.
- ☐ Ask follow-up questions ('Oh you play guitar? How long?')
- ☐ Introduce people to each other ('Hey Sarah, Mike also does yoga!')
- ☐ Don't be shy—everyone's in the same boat!

### Remember:

Winning is fun, but the REAL win is breaking the ice and getting to know your coworkers! The conversations you start during Bingo often continue throughout the party.

# 5. ZOOM / TEAMS EDITION

## Virtual Party Guide

Secret Santa Bingo works GREAT on Zoom! Here's how to adapt it:

### Before the Zoom Party:

- ☐ Email the bingo PDF to all participants 24 hours in advance.
- ☐ Tell them to either print it OR open it on their phone/second screen.
- ☐ Remind them to have a pen/marker ready.
- ☐ Test your screen share feature.

### During the Virtual Game:

- ☐ **Encourage video:** Much more fun when you can see people!
- ☐ **Use breakout rooms:** Groups of 8-10 people for easier conversation.
- ☐ **Use chat:** People can type answers ('Anyone with pets?')
- ☐ **Use reactions:** Thumbs up 👍, waving hand 🙌, etc. to respond.
- ☐ **Unmute freely:** Tell people it's OK to unmute and shout out matches.

### Verification:

When someone claims **BINGO**, ask them to unmute and read their winning line. Optionally, have them share their screen to show their marked card. Quick spot-check by asking one person from their line to verify.

### 💡 Pro Tip:

- ✓ Keep breakout rooms open so people can pop between rooms.
- ✓ Have co-hosts help monitor multiple rooms.
- ✓ Use a countdown timer website and share your screen.
- ✓ Take a screenshot of everyone with their cards at the start.
- ✓ Email prize gift cards immediately to winners (Amazon, Starbucks, etc.).

# 6. GAME VARIATIONS

## Four Ways to Play

### 1. Quick Game (10-15 minutes)

- First person to get ANY line wins
- ONE winner, ONE prize
- Best for: Time-crunched parties, large groups

### 2. Blackout (25-30 minutes)

- Fill the ENTIRE card (all 25 squares)
- More challenging and competitive
- Best for: Smaller groups (8-15), longer parties

### 3. Multiple Rounds (30-40 minutes)

- Round 1: First horizontal line
- Round 2: First vertical line
- Round 3: First diagonal line
- Round 4: Four corners
- Round 5: Blackout
- **5 winners, 5 prizes!**
- Best for: Main event, lots of prizes to give away
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### 4. Team Mode (15-20 minutes)

- Teams of 3-4 share ONE card
- Work together to find matches
- First team to get bingo wins
- Best for: Large groups (30+), team building



# 7. PRIZE IDEAS

## What Winners Love

You don't need expensive prizes! Here are ideas that work great:

- ✓ Amazon, Starbucks, local restaurants gift cards
- ✓ Extra hour PTO, leave 30 min early, arrive 30 min late
- ✓ Best Parking spot for a week (huge winner!)
- ✓ Gift basket, fancy chocolates, local treats
- ✓ 'Bingo Champion' certificate, silly trophy
- ✓ 1-month Netflix, Spotify, Disney+
- ✓ Bag of fancy coffee, local coffee shop gift card
- ✓ Desk toy, fun mug, office plant, cozy socks

💰 **Budget Tip:** For multiple rounds, start with smaller prizes (\$5-10) and make the final prize bigger (\$20-30) to build excitement!

# 8. TROUBLESHOOTING

## Common Issues Solved

<p><b>Nobody's getting bingo!</b> Nobody's getting bingo!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Extend the time to 20-25 minutes.</li><li>→ Allow people to mark squares if THEY match.</li><li>→ Give hints: 'Ask about hobbies!' or 'Check who's wearing holiday colors!'.</li></ul>	<p><b>Someone got bingo in 2 minutes!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ That's GREAT! They were strategic and fast</li><li>→ Award the prize, then do another round.</li><li>→ Try Blackout mode next for more challenge</li></ul>
<p><b>People aren't mingling on Zoom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Use breakout rooms (8-10 people each)</li><li>→ Encourage unmuting: 'It's OK to talk!'</li><li>→ Use chat for questions: 'Type Y if this is you!'</li><li>→ Make it shorter (10 minutes) to maintain energy</li></ul>	<p><b>We need more than 8 cards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Print multiple copies</li><li>→ People won't notice duplicates in groups of 20+</li><li>→ Or use team mode (3-4 people share one card)</li></ul>
<p><b>Someone might be lying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Ask them to read their winning line aloud</li><li>→ Encourage unmuting: 'It's OK to talk!'</li><li>→ Spot-check: 'Sarah, you have kids under 10?'</li><li>→ Usually people are honest—it's just a game!</li><li>→ If cheating is a concern, require verification for each square</li></ul>	<p><b>The game feels slow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Create urgency: '5 minutes left, people!'</li><li>→ Announce progress: 'Someone's on 4 in a row!'</li><li>→ Play upbeat music in the background</li><li>→ Offer a bonus prize for second place</li></ul>

## 9. PRE-PARTY CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/> Printed 8 bingo cards (or emailed PDF for Zoom)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pens/markers ready for marking squares
<input type="checkbox"/> Prize(s) purchased and ready
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra cards printed (2-3 backups)
<input type="checkbox"/> Timer set up (phone or website)
<input type="checkbox"/> Rules explanation ready (30 seconds)
<input type="checkbox"/> Music playlist queued (optional but fun)
<input type="checkbox"/> Camera ready for group photo

### READY TO GO!

You have everything you need to host an amazing ice breaker! Your party guests are going to love this. Have fun, take photos, and enjoy watching your team connect!

Don't forget to download the Bingo Cards!



**Have an amazing party!**