

Title:

Elegant Entertaining Without Breaking The Bank

Word Count:

547

Summary:

Good news for the next time you're considering hosting a party. You don't have to feel dizzy, overwhelmed and full of questions: I don't have a creative bone in my body--how will I decorate without spending a fortune? What will I serve? You can relax and take a deep breath.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Good news for the next time you're considering hosting a party. You don't have to feel dizzy, overwhelmed and full of questions: I don't have a creative bone in my body--how will I decorate without spending a fortune? What will I serve? You can relax and take a deep breath. Here are a few hints on how to create an affordable elegance that you can enjoy just as much as your guests.

How will I decorate without spending a fortune? You don't have to spend huge amounts of money on anything that will only be used once. Start by looking around your home and see what you can use to complement a specific theme. For example, if you're hosting a luncheon for family or a group of friends, gather potted plants from inside and outside your home and place them in the dining area for a lush, garden theme. Make place cards by writing each guest's name on a leaf.

For an inexpensive table centerpiece, head outside! Fill a long platter or wicker basket with pinecones, fresh fruit, nuts, small white birch logs and baby pumpkins. The Pampered Chef, the premier direct seller of kitchen tools, has some beautiful and versatile tabletop pieces to help you, such as a Woven Selections Rectangle Tray or Simple Additions® Entertaining Set. Finish off by sprinkling dried flower petals around the table. You'll be surprised at how much fun you can have and how much money you'll save simply by using your imagination.

What will I serve? Here's where most people worry needlessly. If you are making a main course, keep it simple and stick with what you know. Take advantage of

convenience items such as prechopped vegetables or rotisserie chickens. Don't be afraid to ask friends or family to bring a simple side such as a marinated salad or potato dish. For less formal gatherings, purchase snacks that your guests can graze on-mixed nuts, cold cuts, crackers and exotic cheeses, prepared salads and fresh salsa and chips. The Pampered Chef® has many simple yet sensational recipe ideas to help you get in and out of the kitchen quickly, so you can join your friends in the festivities. To please even the most discriminating palate, serve an elegant appetizer such as Baked Brie. Along with your favorite beverages, and festive music, you're well on your way to hosting this year's "Affair to Remember!"

Baked Brie with Apples

& Cranberries

Prep time: 15 minutes

1/2 cup chopped apple

(1/2 medium apple)

1/4 cup sliced natural almonds

1/4 cup dried cranberries

1 tablespoon packed brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon Pantry Korintje Cinnamon

1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted

1 round (8 ounces) Brie cheese (about 4 inches in diameter)

Crackers or cocktail bread slices

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Coarsely chop apple with food chopper. Combine apple, almonds, cranberries, brown sugar and cinnamon in small batter bowl; mix gently. Stir in butter just until ingredients are moistened.

2. Cut Brie in half horizontally using utility knife. Place one half of Brie,

rind side down, on small bar pan. Spoon half of the apple mixture onto bottom half of Brie, spreading evenly. Top with remaining half of Brie, rind side up. Spoon remaining apple mixture over top. Bake 12-15 minutes or until cheese is soft and just begins to melt. Serve with assorted crackers or cocktail bread slices. Yield: 8 servings