

Tips on Planning a Baby Shower

What comes to mind after hearing the four magical words, "We're having a baby?" A baby shower, of course. Organizing a party with the expectant parents' closest friends and family members is the perfect way of expressing "Congratulations," or "We're happy for you," or "Best wishes."

Aimed at further boosting the parents-to-be's excitement for the future member of their family, the baby shower is usually hosted by a close friend or relative, at any time during the last months of the pregnancy.

Just like any other party, a baby shower requires careful planning to ensure that it will go as smoothly as possible, and be memorable for everyone. Although there are no rules cast in stone in preparing for a baby shower, there are some helpful tips to follow to help the host organize every aspect of the event.

1) Decide on the location.

Most baby showers are held at the parent-to-be's house, since the expectant mother's health needs to be considered. It is recommended for small, intimate parties, with only the closest friends and family members. Guests also tend to be more comfortable if the party's setting is at home.

If the expectant parents love the outdoors, a barbecue party at their garden, or a local park may also be an option. Naturally, the weather must be considered - baby shower does not literally mean soaking the guests in the rain.

For less complications, the host may reserve a secluded area in a restaurant or bar. It may be more costly, but at least the decoration, food and drinks, as well as the post-party cleanup will already be taken care of.

2) Choose the party's theme.

For easier decoration ideas, a theme may be decided upon. Consider the expectant parents' favorite movies or hangouts. Another option is to decorate the party site by re-creating the place where they had their honeymoon, such as a cruise ship, or Paris-inspired café.

Since the party will also be a celebration of the future baby, a childish atmosphere may also be considered. Choose cartoon characters, bright colors, and other designs depending on the baby's gender.

3) Finalize the menu.

The party's menu will depend upon the time of the event. In most baby showers, the host serves finger food, pastries and other baked goods for convenience. However, if the event will be held during lunch or dinner time, heavier meals will naturally be served. Alcoholic drinks may also be prepared, depending on the guests' preference.

4) Design a fun program.

Contrary to what most people believe, a baby shower is not only limited to mingling around, gift giving, eating and drinking. Fun games may also be included, such as charades, or those which will bring back the guests' childhood memories. Remember that the main point is to make sure everyone will have a good time, and various games will surely liven up the event.

5) Create the guest list and send out invitations.

Prepare a list of the expectant parents' closest friends and family members. Make sure to seek their approval before sending out invitations, to avoid any embarrassing mistakes later. Bear in mind that it's the parents' event, and not the host's, so their choice of people should matter the most.

Ready-made baby shower invitations are readily available in gift shops and craft stores. However, homemade invitations may also be used to provide the host's personal touch.

Send out invitations out two to four weeks before the party to give time for the guests to fix their schedule. Baby shower invitations follow the same format as any other invitation – it indicates the date, time, place, attire preferred, gift registry, if any, the host's contact numbers for RSVP. Just to be organized, prepare a final list of attendees a few days before the baby shower.