

How to Throw a Stylish, Eco-Friendly Party

Want to turn your event into the sustainable party of the year?

Planning a party? From birthdays to baby showers, you can throw an environmentally-friendly celebration that will be kind to the earth and save you money. Our party culture is rife with disposable decorations, plates, napkins and cups, and events can generate tons of waste. Here are some tips on how to let the good times roll without putting a strain on Mother Nature.

- Sending digital invites not only saves you money on postage, it also reduces paper waste.
- Latex and Mylar balloons can't be recycled and create unnecessary waste. When released, they can [pose a risk to animals](#) and pollute natural environments. Opt for lanterns made from recycled paper instead. Follow the instructions [here](#) to make your own using upcycled fabrics and wrapping paper.
- Forego the disposable decorations and get yourself some fabric bunting. Fabric bunting can be reused for every occasion. You can even make your own by following the tutorial [here](#).
- Most cut flowers are imported from warmer climates and carry a [hefty carbon footprint](#). They are treated with a cocktail of pesticides, many of which are banned in Canada and the U.S. Instead of cut flowers, get flowing potted plants which you can distribute to guests as party favours once your celebration is done.
- Using crockery and cutlery not only means that you avoid the waste that disposables create, it also takes your celebration up a notch. Wash your dirty dishes in the dishwasher with the 'heated dry' setting turned off to save on energy.
- Use linen table cloths and napkins to cut down on waste. Adding a towel to your dryer or drying linens on the line will reduce energy usage.
- Encourage guests to take left-over food home to reduce waste.
- Create a discussion group on a social network, so party guests who live close to each other can carpool to your event. Include public transport and biking routes in your invitation.
- Using party lights? Always opt for LEDs and try to get solar-powered ones where possible. Soya-candles are also a great energy-saving lighting option.
- When catering, focus on seasonal, organic fare that is locally grown.
- [32% of greenhouse gas emissions](#) are caused by beef farming, so opt for more vegetarian dishes and sustainable seafood.
- It takes [seven litres of water](#) to create a plastic bottle, so aim to serve drinks in bulk rather than small bottles of water or cans of soda.
- Serve fair-trade coffee and organic juices, beer and wine.
- Provide condiments in bulk, so as to avoid the waste generated by all those tiny packets.
- Place recycling bins around the venue, so that guests don't throw recyclables in the trash.
- Compost any food waste that your party generates.
- Clean up with natural cleaning products or [make your own](#) from ingredients you have in your kitchen.

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