



## HOLIDAY COCKTAIL PARTIES BY THE NUMBERS

What's in a number? A lot, if you are hosting a holiday cocktail party! Knowing your numbers ensures that you will have sufficient food and drinks, which is a frequent fear for many hostesses, and that, subsequently, guests will have an enjoyable experience at your party. Below is my numbers chart that I've developed over the years from the wisdom shared by preferred caterers and rental companies. *Estimates based on a 2-hour cocktail party*

When to send out the invitation?	At least 2 weeks in advance of the event date
How much food?	10-12 bites per person, 20 bites if hors d'oeuvres are replacing dinner
How many kinds of hors d'oeuvres?	4-5 different kinds for up to 35 guests 7-9 different kinds for 35-60 guests 9+ different kinds for more than 60 guests
How many cocktail napkins?	6 per person; reduce if using small plates
How many drinks?	2 drinks per person the first hour; one drink per person each additional hour
How many glasses?	1 glass per person per hour
How much ice?	1 pound per person for serving drinks and chilling beverages (more in the summer)
How many servers?	1 per 25 guests (passed hors d'oeuvres)
How many bartenders?	1 per 75 guests (full bar); 1 per 100 guests (limited bar)
How much seating?	Seating for at least 1/3 of the guests; more seating if older guests
What size dance floor?	3 square feet of dance floor per <i>dancing</i> guest
How much do I tip?	Tipping the event team, including planners, is completely optional! For exceptional service, here is what is recommended: \$20-25 for waiters/bartenders; \$1 per guest for coat staff; \$1 per car for parking attendants; \$20-25 per band member; \$50 -100 for DJ;

Again, these numbers are rules of thumb. In practice, I always round up my numbers; it's good insurance for unexpected guests!

Wishing you all the merriest of holiday parties!