



60th BIRTHDAY DINNER PARTY BY THE NUMBERS

What's in a number? A lot, if you are hosting a party! Knowing your numbers ensures that you will have sufficient food and drinks 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 3-hour dinner party.

When to start planning?	At least 4 weeks in advance of the event date; more time if you need to secure a venue
When to send out the invitation?	At least 2-4 weeks in advance of the event date; more time if guests are traveling from out-of-town
How much food?	3-4 hors d'oeuvres before a full meal (starter, entrée and dessert)
How many cocktail napkins?	3 per person
How many drinks?	2 drinks per person the first hour; one drink per person each additional hour
How much wine (for dinner service)?	6 glasses per bottle
How many glasses?	2 glasses per person plus stemware (including water glass) at each place setting
How much ice?	1 pound per person for serving drinks and chilling beverages (more in the summer)
How many servers?	1 per 25 guests buffet dinner 1 per 20 guests plated dinner
How many bartenders?	1 per 75 guests (full bar); 1 per 100 guests (limited bar)
How much seating?	4' round = 6 chairs = 108' linen 5' round = 8 chairs = 120' linen 6' round = 10 chairs = 132' linen 6' rectangle = 8 chairs = 90x132' linen 8' rectangle = 10 chairs = 90x156' linen 4' square = 8 chairs = 108x108' linen 5' square = 12 chairs = 120x120' linen
How much birthday cake?	Enough for 75% of your guests, especially since serving sizes are typically big

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