

# SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

## 20 easy ways to celebrate

From quick cocktail recipes to party planning apps, our tips and tricks will make your entertaining easy

### 1 SERVE THE COOLEST DRINKS IN TOWN

Celebrating with a few drinks? Cut lemons into slices and then arrange them on a plastic board, before popping them in the freezer for a couple of hours. It will save you fiddling around when guests arrive – and will keep drinks cool.

### 2 CLEVER CARPET TIP

Moving furniture to make room for guests? Get rid of any dents left in the carpet by placing ice cubes on them. Then simply vacuum to dry.

### 3 CHEESE, PLEASE...

If you're serving a cheeseboard, take the cheese out of the fridge for a few hours to let it breathe. Cover it with a tea towel until serving to absorb any excess moisture.

### Best ever spring party cocktail...

#### 4 MAKE THE PERFECT WHITE SANGRIA

This can be made ahead – perfect for parties!

**You will need:** 4 x 75cl bottles dry white wine + 1 litre ginger ale + ½ cup peach schnapps + ½ cup cognac + ¼ cup white sugar + 4 oranges, sliced + 2 green apples, cut into cubes + 2 mangoes, peeled and sliced  
**Combine all the ingredients – except the wine and ginger ale – in a jug and chill for an hour. Add the wine and ginger ale before serving.**

### 5 Be a birthday wizard Birthday Sweet is a free app that lets you set reminders about upcoming birthdays and send e-cards to friends and family

### Welcome guests in style!

#### FOUR SIMPLE TIPS TO MAKE YOUR GUESTS FEEL AT HOME

- 7 Dot a drop of essential oil or perfume on top of a light bulb. The heat from the bulb will warm the oil and give off a lovely fragrance.
- 8 Clean Venetian blinds by closing them, then wipe with a tumble dryer sheet. It will create an anti-static barrier that helps prevent dust from building up again.
- 9 Solve your steamy

- bathroom mirrors by wiping them with a cotton wool pad topped with shaving foam. Use another clean pad to take off and then polish with a fresh, clean towel.
- 10 Freshen up your bathroom: put two drops of essential oil on the cardboard tube inside the loo roll. The scent will be released each time the roll is turned.



#### 6 LOVE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Cleaning the house before guests arrive? You can still care for the environment thanks to new company Splosh. It has eliminated nearly all its packaging with highly concentrated washing-up liquid, detergents and cleaners. See splosh.com.

#### TWO PARTY SNACKS TO IMPRESS

Jane Curran, woman&home's food editor, suggests simple nibbles that are sure to wow any crowd.

- 11 Crostini are great for parties as you can add all sorts of toppings. Thinly slice a baguette, drizzle with olive oil and crisp in the oven for ten minutes on a medium heat.
- 12 Quick canapés: try skewering a cube of melon with a slice of prosciutto or bake chipolatas with a drizzle of maple syrup and some wholegrain mustard.



#### FOUR FAB FIZZES

w&h wine expert Tim Atkin MW selects his four favourite fizzes.

- 13 Prosecco Corte Alta (£6.99, 11%, Majestic) Apples and pears with a hint of sweetness. Good party fizz.
- 14 2009 Vintage Cava (£12.99, 12%, Marks & Spencer) Superior Cava, with attractive bottle age, made from local Spanish grapes.
- 15 2007 Taste the Difference English Sparkling Wine (£19.99, 11.5%, Sainsbury's) Appealingly dry, hedgerow-scented English fizz.
- 16 2005 Tesco Finest Vintage Champagne Grand Cru (£24.99, 12.5%) Mature, toasty and complex.

### 17 Good wood Spruce up your wooden table with Guardsman Ring and Mark Remover, £3.99, lakeland.co.uk

### Classy cleaner Having a party? Get your house in order before guests arrive. w&h homes editor Alison Davidson suggests some easy ways to help...



- 18 PRETTY STORAGE If you're tidying a room in a hurry, this sturdy floral bag is ideal. You can fit oodles in it easily and it's so pretty. The Camouflage Company for Collier Campbell Multi-Purpose Cube, £16.50, qvcuk.com.

- 19 QUICK FIX If you want to hang temporary decorations such as bunting without marking your walls, try the clever Command hooks. Micro Hooks with Command strips, £1.99 for three, from Asda, Homebase, Tesco and Robert Dyas.



- 20 BE SAFE It's scary to think about but there are 59,000 house fires every year, so having a fire extinguisher in the home is essential, especially if you're having a party. Safe-T extinguisher, £79.50, safe-t.eu w&h

## 10 apps to help you plan a party

**SIMPLE SOIREE, £1.49** Create guest lists, send out invites by email, receive RSVPs and plan food. A free Lite version is available, but with a limit on the items you can list.

**MARTHA STEWART CRAFTSTUDIO, £2.99** Design cards, invitations and thank you notes on your iPad. Share your creations digitally or upload to Snapfish to print.

**INTERFLORA, FREE** Browse and order flowers on the go. Need to send last-minute blooms? Have them delivered that day if you order before 3pm, Monday to Saturday.

**KIDDICARE, FREE** Not sure what to buy for a christening gift? This app has more than 4,500 products to choose from and you can have gifts delivered to your door.

**LAITHWAITES WINE, FREE** Read reviews and recommendations about wines and Champagne on your phone. You can buy a bottle through this app too.

**EBOOK MAGIC, £2.99** This iPad app lets you custom-make photo albums. Upload photos, place them on pages and add text. Share your eBook online, or order a printed version through the app.

**WEDDINGHAPPY, FREE** Create an online wedding checklist: book caterers, order flowers and arrange your first dress fitting.

**GIFTGEN, FREE** Choose a price range, age range and gender, and this app will suggest gift ideas from high street and web retailers. You can then buy the gifts directly.

**IBARTENDER, 69P** This app has a clever Discover feature, which gives you cocktail ideas using the ingredients you have to hand at home. Spoilt for choice? Shake your device and it will choose one for you!

**CLICK A TAXI, FREE** Book a cab for your guests directly on your device. This app covers licensed UK taxi firms and live notifications tell you how far away your driver is.

