



HOST A SUMMER GARDEN TEA PARTY

*Written By Sally Beaudette
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The Setting

Where else to have a garden party but outside? The sun is shining, the sky is blue — just make sure to get your ears when you put on sunscreen (unless, of course, you're planning on being truly classical with your tea party and mandating wide-brimmed floral hats)! No expensive venue is necessary to have a lovely old time. So set up near a garden with lots of flowers, or if you can't manage that, on a balcony or patio, and cover your tea-table with real or fake blooms. Think outside the flowerbox: make tissue-paper gardenias or float single rose blossoms in low dishes of water. There are a hundred and one ways to present flowers beyond vases and garden beds. If you're stuck on a covered porch, can you hang flowers from the ceiling? (Speaking of ceilings — make sure to check the weather forecast before you send out your invitations!)

The Ambience

Beyond flowers (and flowers and flowers!) what are you going to do to set the scene for your guests? Do you have a delicate wicker or latticed outdoor table set you can use? If not, perhaps a colorful or themed tablecloth for whatever table-and-chairs you have to offer. Set up small candles — they're called tealights for a reason — if you're having your party in the evening. Break out the best china you have to use (provided it isn't covered in cardinals and holly-berries). If that's not the tone that you're looking for, there's no law against paper plates and Mason jars. If you're going for a more casual feel, still think about how you can make the experience special: bows or chalk-penned names on the jars, hand drawn place cards, or paper napkins with a summery pattern. Some delicate music might be nice — search on Spotify or YouTube for a summer tea playlist.

The Food

Make up your own menu, or use one of ours below:

Savories: Cheese-and-cracker plate; Green salad w/ radish and orange slices; Sour cream scones with clotted cream and blackberry preserves; Biscuits with whipped honey butter

Tea Sandwiches: Chicken salad; Lobster salad; Cucumber mint

Desserts: French macarons; Fresh fruit tarts; Light pastries

Recipes can easily be found online, and you can make menu cards online, too, or pen them by hand on good-quality paper. Pinterest is an invaluable resource for recipe ideas.

The Guests

Your guests need to know where and when to come! Send out pretty invitations with all the usual suspects for information (time, address, and so on). A brief description of what the event will entail, and perhaps a suggestion that they come in costume, should also be included.





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The Tea

The most crucial part of a garden tea, of course, is the tea. For a morning tea, a black-tea base infused with fruity flavor will provide pep as well as delicious flavor. The Cozy Tea Cart's Piña Colada is splendid iced, or, for a slightly spicier kick, try the Ginger Dreamsicle. If you prefer green tea, Strawberry Green has a lovely light flavor that also works well chilled. The Cherry Burst white tea epitomizes summer, as well as the White Blueberry. Any white tea is low enough in caffeine to be fine for evening, but for those seeking a truly caffeine-free herbal that doesn't sacrifice flavor, try the Luscious Escape Rooibos. Less-fruity teas can make a nice iced drink too: Madagascar Vanilla black tea or caffeine-free Vanilla Indulgence rooibos both chill well, and a plain black tea like Glenburn Autumn Crescendo can be whipped up into a season-appropriate Arnold Palmer with the addition of a generous splash of lemonade. The best tea parties have a variety of options!

However you wish to throw yours — with plastic cups and Jimmy Buffet on a sun-porch, or in the middle of the garden, on luxury china, to DeBussy — with good tea and good friends, your party is sure to be a success!

