



The **BIG** **SOCIAL**

Hosting tips

by Chef Nicole Gomes

Prep what you can ahead of time. Completing certain tasks the night before—like setting the table or assembling platters of cheese, meats and pickles—will help keep the day-of as stress-free as possible.

Think of the flow. Set up the bar in an area that will divert traffic to a part of your home that tends to be less congested. Guests often gather in the kitchen by default, so consider placing the bar in the dining room.

Create a welcoming ambiance. Place vases of flowers and unscented candles throughout the house and curate a playlist. I like a selection of classic jazz and R&B (Nina Simone, Frank Sinatra, Etta James, Al Green, Bill Withers) to kick things off, then prefer to transition to more upbeat picks as the party progresses.

Help guests who don't know each other feel at ease. Have them introduce themselves by sharing their birthplace, their favourite food or even what brought them to the dinner. If the table is a large one, ask people to play musical chairs throughout dinner by switching seats with another guest or guests.



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