

BRIDAL SHOWER CHECKLIST

Gather your troops

- Offer to take charge as head party planner.
- Find cohosts (about one per every anticipated 5-7 attendees).
- Notify the bride's mother and sisters about the shower taking shape, the city where it will be thrown (if they live out of town), and the hostesses helping out.

Contact the bride

- Tell the woman of the hour that you'd like to throw a shower in her honor.
- Ask the bride for "blackout dates" (when she's already booked) and any dates when she may happen to be in the city where you are planning to throw the shower (if she lives out of town).
- Inquire about whom she'd like on her shower guest list.

Set the date

- Meet with coplanners to select three possible dates for the shower.
- Send dates to the bride to approve one.
- Share the selected date with the bride's mother, mother-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law, and bridesmaids, as these ladies typically attend all showers thrown for the bride.

Nail down specifics

- Build a budget by deciding how much money each hostess will contribute (all party givers throw in the same amount typically).
- Book a venue that's available and reasonably priced, keeping in mind that showers are often thrown in someone's home.
- Choose a theme, seeking the bride's input if necessary.
- Finalize the time and guest list, remembering that the party is a 3-4 hour event.

Spread the word

- Collect missing addresses (mail and email) from the bride.
- Send a save-the-date via mail or email, if you think one's necessary, 8-10 weeks before the shower.

- Send shower invites by mail no later than one month before the celebration that includes all the details—even where the bride is registered and desired attire—and how to R.S.V.P.
- Share the shower details with the groom, who will stop by toward the end of the celebration to surprise the bride and meet unacquainted invitees.

Get creative

- Create a menu, by hiring a caterer or assigning dishes to hostesses (there's no protocol on how much or little to serve or a "standard" policy on providing alcohol).
- Plan an activity, from an interactive, low-maintenance game to a complete wine education from a sommelier (work within your budget and theme!).
- Dream up the decor, staying sweet and simple with all-white arrangements, or going grand and thematic with photo booths and calligraphed seat assignments.
- Pack up a small take-home favor, from a potted plant to homemade granola, for celebrants by nodding to the shower's theme.

Plan ahead

- If the party will have assigned seating, ask for the bride's input on who should sit where.
- Even if you're throwing the party in a home, consider hiring waitstaff (or asking around for kitchen helpers) to refill glasses, clear plates, and stock platters, so the hostesses can enjoy the party, too.
- Assign the maid-of-honor the task of keeping track of who gifts what as the bride opens presents from attendees. Give the list to the bride post-party.
- Consider reserving rooms at a nearby hotel for out-of-town guests, or finding gracious hostesses to put them up for a night or two.
- If alcohol will be provided, or if most attendees will not have a car, then have a few drivers (hired chauffeurs or willing friends) available to transport partygoers to their next location.