

Valentine Dinner Party Ideas, Part 2



So happy you are here with me today to see the Valentine Dinner Party Ideas, Part 2 blog post. If you missed Part 1 yesterday, you can view it [here](#). There is so much that goes into this party, it would be overwhelming to do it in one post, so I hope you enjoy the rest of it today.

The Table



Setting a beautiful table is something I love to do. It sends a message to our guests that they are important to us and that this evening is special. Whether you like Valentine's Day or not, we think this is the perfect holiday to gather with those we cherish. So why not make a spectacular table?



For the last Valentine dinner party, I did not use a tablecloth. This year, though, I am drawn to the colorful Indian block prints. One of my Instagram friends, Darviny @dayswithdarviny, sources this beautiful fabric. I sent her pictures of my china and she gave me pink options to choose.



My husband made the raised 12" x 6' long center shelf (see post [here](#)). This focal point is the perfect place to stage all the flowers. Using individual vessels of different heights and sizes, I made the centerpiece out of an abundant display of roses, tulips, hyacinths (which smell heavenly), hydrangeas, snapdragons, and eucalyptus.



Flowers from Torchio Nursery

This year I ordered the flowers from [Torchio Nursery](#) in San Francisco. Instead of going to 3 or 4 locations to find a nice array, this nursery sends out a weekly list of what is available and then ships them to me.



Candle holders by West Elm

Adding tapers and votive candles, the centerpiece is complete.



This year, I also hung heart-shaped garlands – some purchased, some homemade (see post [here](#)) – from the ceiling using clear Command hooks. The white heart garland came from the shop at [Whitfill Nursery](#), and the 3-dimensional heart garland came from LaMia Casa on Etsy [here](#).



Since this is a Valentine celebration, I decide my Royal Doulton Romance Collection china is most appropriate. Napkins are pink linen, found on sale at Pottery Barn. I also opt for Wallace Napoleon Bee Gold accent flatware, which can be found [here](#). Very affordable brushed gold chargers (link [here](#).) The printed menu cards are at each place setting.



Typically we have rattan chairs around the table. However, in attempts to make it more elegant and comfortable, we bring out upholstered white wing and Parson chairs.

The Day of the Event

The table is set; gifts are in place at the table and the

caterers arrive. Now it is time to get ready. Unfortunately I tend to leave outfit selection to the last minute. The black taffeta skirt (from Ann Taylor) I decide to wear is many years old. It seems that the zipper doesn't quite make it to the top without a great deal of not breathing. The dreaded thickening of the waist after menopause...ugh!



Nonetheless I wear it. Fortunately, it fits beautifully beneath my dusty rose cashmere sweater (J. Crew), which covers any malfunctions. I slip on heels just before guests arrive.

Cocktail Hour



A few days before the event, I collect all the answers to the guests' questions and create a "Who Am I" sheet printed on yes, pink card stock. During the cocktail hour on the front porch, each guest is given a drink and the Who Am I sheet.



Who Am I sheet

The goal is to mingle, ask questions and write in the name of the person who provides the answer. Naturally, it is a fun way to spark conversation and get to know other guests on a different level.



Edible Glitter in Champagne; glasses by Waterford

We serve champagne and Ruby Red Grapefruit Greyhounds with Rosemary Simple Syrup, both a pretty pink. Recipe is [here](#). One of our guests always brings some fun cocktail additive. This time it is Rose Gold Brew Glitter, an edible glitter that we add to the champagne flutes. Very pretty and festive! Resource it [here](#).



The hors d'oeuvres are individually plated for couples. Our bartender and servers wear masks. After fun games, delicious hors d'oeuvres and drinks, we make our way to the back terrace for dinner.

At the Table



Once we are seated at the table, the guests open their gifts. We get to share what we discover during the cocktail hour as the salad is served. This helps keep conversation flowing and stimulates lots of laughter!

The Wine



My husband carefully selects the wine pairings to go with each course. When the wine is being served, we share a thorough description of the wine region, year of harvest, maker and tasting notes.



The wine glasses are mostly vintage pink glass and add to the dinner theme.



Toasts about friendship, love, wisdom and peace are printed on paper ahead of time. Female guests read them to welcome the wine, salad, entree and dessert.

Dinner



Salad

By this time, conversation is very lively and the food is delicious. As I look down the table, I see happy faces and beautiful flowers.



Dessert

After Dinner



After the last course and wine, we continue to play the game of getting to know everyone a bit better. Soon a Waterford crystal [*biscuit jar*](#) filled with questions makes its way around the table. It is a delight to hear stories and shared memories from each couple.

Though a great deal of planning and work go into this evening, it is one of our most favorite events.

Expect the Unexpected



And then the winds kick up

We were watching the weather all week. The temperature predictions kept dropping, saying it might be really chilly. Then, the day of the dinner, the wind picks up. In my mind they seemed to be gale force winds, blowing everything over on the table. The candles will not stay lighted and my beautiful heart shaped garlands become a tangled mess.

But what can you do? The addition of propane heaters are a big help. Blankets and shawls are available for guests. Try and focus on what is important: engaging with your guests and living in the moment.

I hope you enjoy all the details and ideas regarding our Valentine Dinner Party. Even though our party is much smaller

this year, we cherish our friendships and time together.

Mary



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