

5. Holiday Party Planning Tips

1. **Plan at least 4 weeks in advance of your event.** This will give you enough time to invite your guests, informing them to save the date and letting you know if they plan to attend. We recommend an invitation list of 25-30 guests.
2. **Consider funding your holiday party by planning a potluck and encouraging participants to bring a variety of dishes and drinks.** Anticipate a budget of \$5-10 per person if you plan to purchase cultural foods. An afternoon tea or coffee gathering with snacks and/or desserts will require a lower budget than a full dinner buffet. If you are hosting the event at your home or a friend's residence, the cost of your venue will be minimal.
3. **Avoid food that may not be permitted by some of your guests due to dietary or faith-based restrictions.** Given that many people are more health-conscious and prefer lighter meals, be sure to offer several vegetarian and/or vegan options. Also, be careful to avoid pork or any pork-based ingredients such as gelatin as well as items containing alcohol for those unable to consume those items.
4. **Include foods that come from the different traditions of refugees who may be attending.** A potluck inviting refugee guests to bring dishes from their homeland is ideal for introducing international foods. If you are planning to purchase food, consider going to a local refugee-led business or talk to ethnic community groups to find refugee caterers for the event.
5. **Be sensitive about taking photos.** Take pictures only after asking for permission and getting a release form signed. Not everyone is comfortable having their photos taken. If you wish, PRERNA may be able to provide you with a photographer and/or videographer. We will designate no more than two volunteers and can share those images with you after the event. If refugees are attending, check with them about their comfort with any anticipated media presence.
6. **Focus conversations among refugee and non-refugee guests on common interests.** Create an enjoyable event by welcoming all participants and talking about food, sports, music, films, television shows or even celebrities. These conversations can create a shared space where guests feel connected.
7. **Plan opportunities for cultural learning and sharing between refugee and non-refugee guests.** Give time for refugees to speak and share in ways they feel comfortable. Depending on the theme that you have chosen for your holiday party, find ways to incorporate examples of the special day. For example, recipes could be shared for a Thanksgiving holiday party.
8. **Make your commitment to welcoming refugees visible throughout your event space.** Have messages of "Welcome" in various languages and/or "Refugees Welcome" on tables and/or walls, if possible. Sign-in guests and pass out name tags when they arrive.