

Red, White, Blue and Green: July Fourth Party Tips

Red, white, blue and green: Holiday party tips with an eco-friendly flair this July Fourth

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Fireworks. Hot dogs. Small town parades and melting ice cream.



The Fourth of July is right around the corner. And that means barbecues, picnics and parties with a patriotic theme.

Whether you're planning a fancy party at your home or a picnic at the park to watch the fireworks, experts Anna Post from the Emily Post Institute, Seattle style expert Kelley Moore and Julie Fitzgerald from the Entertaining Company in Chicago offer up party tips to make your holiday sparkle.

If you're crafty and you have the time, Moore suggests decorating your table with blue bandanas. Buy a bunch at a craft store and stitch them together to create a tabletop linen. Or buy jeans at a local thrift store, cut out the pockets, wash them and sew them to a blue napkin to hold silverware.

"This is great for a barbecue," Moore says.

From there, chose decor. Want to make it a little fancier this year? Use red-and-white cloth liners for tables, and put the condiments in bowls instead of leaving them in their containers, Post suggests. You can add a little spice to everyday dishes. Make fancy mac'n cheese with gruyere and Swiss, Fitzgerald suggests, or skewers with Kobe beef. Or serve ice cream in dishes with red berries and blueberries for desert.



An American berry tart is seen in this May 30, 2010 photo. A holiday as big as the Fourth of July deserves a big dessert with serious panache like this Independence Day worthy fresh summer berry tart. (AP Photo/Larry Crowe) (AP)

RED:

If you live in a city like New York, where buying fireworks is illegal, you're probably headed to a rooftop or park to catch the spectacular city-run shows. Moore suggests putting two red buckets filled with ice into a little red wagon. In one bucket, place oysters right on the ice, and fill small bowls with lemon slices. The other bucket is for your favorite beverage. In between go the plates, napkins and a bottle opener. Voila! Instant party at the park for the fireworks.

Pick one drink and make it the signature drink of the day, Post suggests. Red and white sangria is an inexpensive and festive drink idea, says Fitzgerald.

For the kids table, Moore, who has a new Web show on entertaining, suggests painting wide red stripes on an inexpensive white linen. For a centerpiece, place arrangements of red licorice, Red Hots and red lollipops on the table. Place a red and white popcorn bag at each place setting so after the party each child can fill bags from the

centerpiece.

Decorate with potted flowers you can grow and keep all summer, or buy cut daisies, irises and roses as centerpieces and give them away as party favors.

Moore suggest buying miniature U.S. flags and placing them in pots in center of your table, and donating them to a local cemetery or nursing home after the party.

