



Graduation Party Tips: What Nobody Tells You

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The month of May was spent preparing for my son's Graduation Open House and attending graduation parties. Planning a graduation party can be like planning a small wedding. I'm happy to say our party turned well and we had a good turn out despite the fact it was over Memorial Day weekend and it was raining several hours beforehand.

Due to the craziness of the day I didn't get very many pictures, but I wanted to share what I learned. I scoured [Pinterest](#) for hours searching for ideas, but I felt like there weren't a ton of ideas

or tips for planning an Open House Party where you may have 100 people or more. My advice is to keep things simple yet personal to your child's interests and activities. As much as I wanted to make this party about me, I was reminded that it's not about me and my blog. Therefore, I kept things a little simpler and subdued which is how my son likes things.



This is what I've learned and my tips:

Have an area set up where you showcase photos of the graduate and perhaps their accomplishments from high school. Banners are a great way to display their letters and pins. I ordered mine from [HJA Embroidery](#). It also makes a great keepsake for my son.



Have an area when guests walk in where they can leave gifts or cards. Also leave their yearbook out and a pen for friends and guests that may want to sign it.

If you are serving food for a large group, I would have some of it catered if you can afford it. We had a taco bar set up and ordered three different meats and taco shells. I had a friend offer to make several different salsas and guacamole sauce for us. Some other ideas from friends parties were to rent a food truck from a local restaurant which I thought was genius (no clean up involved) and a hot dog stand offering Chicago hot dogs and Polish sausage. My son loves Mexican food so that's why we decided on the taco bar. My neighbor used [San Antonio Market](#) in Kansas City for their party which is who we also ordered our meat and tortilla shells from. They provide authentic Mexican food and are very reasonably priced. Select foods people can eat with their fingers or just a fork or spoon.

Think about the flow of traffic when your setting up your food stations. We had the taco bar set up in my dining room. Guests walked through to the kitchen for drinks and a dessert table was set up in my sunroom.



My favorite meal is dessert. Avoid using lots of dark icing on cakes and cupcakes. You will want to use your child's high school or college colors, but use them as accent colors. Many of the dark dyes stain teeth and people won't eat them. I ordered white cupcakes with white icing and sprinkles in the school colors. The other half of the cupcakes were decorated with graduation caps my mom made. The tutorial for them is [here](#). An easy idea I found on Pinterest that my son loved is unwrapped Hostess HoHo's tied with a ribbon. They look like a diploma and by the end of the party there wasn't one left.



I love candy tables, but instead I purchased personalized candy bar wrappers from [Big Dot of Happiness](#). They made a nice take home treat, but be forewarned it takes awhile to wrap the bars unless you pay to have them wrapped for you. If you have a candy bar table my advice is to stick with candy your child enjoys. If you can find candy to match your color scheme great. I know a lot of people who used colored gum balls in vases and they look really cute, but very few people eat them. However, if your graduate loves gum balls then go for it!



Borrow items from friends. My neighbors party was the week before mine and I borrowed a few items her sister made like this adorable cupcake stand and 2014 on my dessert table. A tutorial for a cupcake stand can be found [here](#). I also borrowed beverage tubs, serving pieces and table cloths that I

knew friends owned. I have quite a bit of entertaining pieces, but when youâ€™re serving a large crowd you need multiple items and I donâ€™t have the space to store it all.

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My last piece of advice is to enlist the help of family or friends. I can be a bit of a control freak. Graduation is an overwhelming time. Don't be afraid to ask for help. I enlisted my Dad to replenish food and drinks as things got low and my mother helped with some of the prep work. You will be busy visiting with guests so it's important to have someone keep an eye on things.

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It's never too early to start planning and organizing for a graduation party. Your child's graduation will be here in the blink of an eye. It's a special time in their life. When I graduated there wasn't all the hoopla that exists today. Depending on your child and your family's budget you may not host a big party, but there are ways you can make the day special for them. I shared this [graduation wreath](#) in a past post or you can display photos of them throughout the years like I did on my kitchen bulletin board. You can also check out [this post](#) for more graduation inspiration.

Truth to be told, if you aren't planning a big party breathe a sigh of relief and just enjoy the moment.

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