

# Ready your home for holiday guests

The holiday season is about more than just rushing to stores to stock up on presents. Socializing and hosting friends and family members to catch up on a year's worth of news also makes this time of year so special.

Before friends and family arrive, holiday hosts must take steps to prepare their homes for their guests. The following home prep plan can make relatively easy work of tidying up the house and ensuring it is inviting to guests.

## Start with the entrance

Hosting can motivate homeowners to finish certain home improvement projects that enhance the appearance of their homes. Tidy up your home's entryway to make it more welcoming. Be sure the front door and walkways are well lit. Remove obstructions and trim back bushes and other plant life. Festive decorations can brighten up the space. Don't forget a welcome mat to reinforce to guests that they truly are welcome at your home.

## Quick cleaning

Sometimes the joy of hosting can be overshadowed by the task of preparing for your guests. Although a thorough cleaning of the

home is great if you have the time, it may not be necessary. Go from room to room identifying spaces that are in need of a thorough cleaning. Spend time in the kitchen clearing clutter from the counters and make sure the dining space is clean and the table is presentable. A table runner and a centerpiece of festive flowers can brighten up the space instantly. Fluff cushions on sofas and give floors or carpets a quick vacuuming. Always be sure the bathrooms are clean and fresh, with laundered hand towels at the ready. Children's bedrooms and other areas of the house may not require such a critical eye. Simply keep doors closed in off-limits rooms.

## Create a guest sanctuary

Overnight guests should have a designated space they can use as a retreat. If you do not have a guest room, consider having children bunk with one another and designating one of the kids' rooms for your guests. Fresh linens, an alarm clock, a television, and Internet access are nice touches.

A guest room also can be set up in a den or office with a pull-out sofa bed. Provide access to a nearby bathroom so guests can enjoy some privacy.

Hosting children is easier than hosting adults because they won't require the same level of privacy and space. An extra mattress tucked under the bed in your child's room can be an impromptu place for kids to retire.

## Stock up on supplies

Purchase extra travel-sized toiletries at the drug store so your guests' needs are covered in case they forget something. Store them in a zip-top bag and let guests know where these items are kept.

Purchase a guest set of towels, sheets and pillowcases. Keep these in an air-tight storage

bag or bin, so when guests arrive, they will have their own set of linens. Launder these linens after use.

## Stock up on food

Ask guests which foods and beverages they prefer and try to have some on hand. Use your spare time to prepare some meals and freeze them. This way if someone drops by unexpectedly, you can simply defrost a meal and have it ready in no time. Keep a tin of cookies and tea bags ready for those who pop in for a snack and conversation.

With the holiday season in full swing, holiday hosts must ready their homes for overnight guests.



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