

# How to host an eco-friendly holiday office party

Office parties are staples of the holiday season. Whether they're lavish affairs or more intimate gatherings, such parties tend to produce more waste than celebrants may realize.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, household waste increases by more than 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. It's fair to assume that office holiday parties are equally wasteful, and eco-conscious party planners can take steps to cut back on that waste without affecting the celebratory nature of the festivities.

• Send e-vites in lieu of paper invitations. Many businesses invite clients and some colleagues to their holiday parties. When inviting such guests, party planners can do so via e-vites

or email instead of paper invitations. EPA estimates suggest that paper products like gift wrap and shopping bags create as much as four million tons of waste each year during the holiday season. Forgoing paper invitations can help cut back on that waste and save businesses the cost of mailing invitations.

• Book a venue that values sustainability. When shopping around for venues to host the party, planners can focus their searches on establishments that have adopted various sustainable practices. Some venues may include only sustainably-sourced foods on their menus, while others might have been built entirely or largely with sustainable materials. Venues that use energy-efficient appliances in their kitchens and throughout their

entertaining spaces also can be found.

• Arrange for transportation. Getting guests to and from office holiday parties is a tall task for party planners. Hosts and planners must always keep the safety of their guests in mind, and arranging for transportation can reduce the likelihood of alcohol-related traffic accidents. In addition, such arrangements reduce fuel consumption.

• Use only reusable materials. Many businesses host their holiday parties from the comforts of their own offices. In such instances, parties are often catered. Planners who want to cut back on office party waste can make sure buffet-style offerings are served on reusable plates, and that guests eat with reusable

utensils. Decorate tables with reusable tablecloths that, along with dinnerware and silverware, can be used year after year.

• Decorate with the environment in mind. Decorations can be wasteful as well, especially when businesses choose new themes for their holiday parties each year.

When decorating office spaces or venues for holiday parties, planners should attempt to reuse as many decorations from previous years' festivities as possible. Store lights and other decorations, such as mistletoe, rather than discarding them after the party. When existing decorations need

to be replaced, purchase eco-friendly items, such as LED lights or items made from reclaimed or sustainable materials.

Holiday office parties can be wasteful. But party planners can employ several simple strategies to make such parties more eco-friendly.

## Serve up warmth for the holidays

People often associate holiday imbibing with eggnog, but many other beverages can be enjoyed this time of year. Wassail is a hot, mulled cider that was traditionally consumed while wassailing, a ritual of Medieval English Christmas and Twelfth Night celebrations. A warm beverage and caroling go hand-in-hand.

Wassail can be made in many different ways, depending on one's tastes. But cider is an integral ingredient in most wassail recipes. Home cocktail creators can use this basic recipe and modify as they see fit.

### Wassail

Serves 8 to 10

- 1/2 gallon apple cider
- 2 cups orange juice or pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 8 whole cloves
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 cup orange juice
- Whiskey, if desired

Add all ingredients to a large pot over medium heat. Allow to boil. Reduce and simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. Strain out the cloves and cinnamon sticks. For an alcoholic drink, add whiskey to desired taste.

Wassail is traditionally served out of a communal punch bowl, but can also be presented in individual mugs garnished with cinnamon sticks.

## HOLIDAY WASTE *continued from page 8*

leftovers can plan on preparing less food this year. Consider how much guests are likely to eat and plan meals accordingly instead of buying enough food to feed a small army. Donate leftovers to nearby shelters so nothing goes to waste.

• Recycle live Christmas trees. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, 25.9 million real trees were sold in the United States in 2015. Trees put out on the curb for collection after the holiday season has ended typically end up in landfills, but some communities recycle Christmas trees each year. Real tree enthusiasts can contact community officials to determine if they can recycle rather than discard their trees.

The holiday season is a wasteful time of year, but there are ways for celebrants to dramatically reduce their carbon footprints between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

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# EXPLORE Great Bend FOR THE HOLIDAYS

## November

- 22 First Day of the TLC Pet Salon Christmas Tree & Senior Gift Bag (2232 10th St.)
- 23 Explore GB Black Friday
- 23 Refined Medley Open House (10 am - 5:30 pm, 1601 Kansas Ave)
- 24 Explore GB Small Business Saturday and Cookie Contest
- 24 Home for the Holidays Festival & Parade (Downtown Great Bend)
- 26-28 GBRC Deck The Halls (3:30-5 pm, Eisenhower Elementary 1212 Garfield St)
- 27 Giving Tuesday
- 27-29 GBRC Deck The Halls (3:30-5 pm, Lincoln Elementary, 5630 Broadway Ave)
- 27 GBRC Santa Elves (3:30-5pm, Jefferson Elementary 2716 24th St)
- 28 BCC History of Dance Presentation (7:30 pm, Studio 34, 245 NE 30 Rd)
- 29 BCC Student Recital (4 pm Morrison Chapel, 245 NE 30 Rd)

- NOV 24 - HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS FESTIVAL & PARADE**
- 10 am - 4 pm Great Bend Cookie Contest
- 10 am - 4 pm Holiday Shopping in Great Bend
- 10 am - 5 pm Holiday Pop Up Market (Dilly and Doc, 1119 Main St)
- 4-8 pm Living Nativity Portraits: (Jack Kilby Square)
- 5:30 pm Home for the Holidays Parade: (Main Street)
- 6:30 pm
  - Light the Square! (Jack Kilby Square)
  - Annual Lighting of Mayor's Tree (Jack Kilby Square) Mayor Joe Andrasek
  - Announcement of Cookie Contest, Parade, and Explore Great Bend Winners!
  - Visit Santas Around the World and see 24 life-sized Santas (1223 Main)
  - Tell Santa Your Wishlist (1223 Main)
  - Horse-drawn carriage/wagon rides (Jack Kilby Square)
  - Free Train Rides (Jack Kilby Square)
  - Free Hot Dogs, Hot Chocolate, Funnel Cakes (Jack Kilby Square)

# December

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- 1 15th Annual Jingle Bell Swing "Big Band" Holiday Dance (8-11 pm, American Legion Hall, 1011 Kansas Ave)
- 1 KWEC Holiday Open House (9 am - 12 pm, 592 NE K 156 Hwy)
- 3 BCC Holiday Concert (7:30 pm, Fine Arts Auditorium 245 NE 30 Rd)
- 3 Santas Workshop (8-9 pm, City Auditorium, 1214 Stone St)
- 4-6 GBRC Deck The Halls (3:30-5 pm, Jefferson Elementary 2716 24th St)
- 5 GBRC Santa Elves (3:30-5 pm, Lincoln Elementary, 5630 Broadway Ave.)
- 6 GBRC Santa Elves (3:30-5 pm, Eisenhower Elementary, 1212 Garfield St)
- 8 Last Day for the Shafer Art Gallery Barton County Arts Council Friends & Acquaintances Art Exhibit (10 am - 5 pm, 245 NE 30 Rd)
- 9 HS Vespers Concert (2 pm, HS Auditorium, 2027 Morton St)
- 9 Youth Choir Concert (3:30 pm, HS Auditorium, 2027 Morton St)
- 9 BCHS Annual Open House "Ghosts of Christmas Past" (1-4 pm, 85 S Hwy 281)

- 10 HS Vocal Christmas Concert (7:30 pm, HS Auditorium, 2027 Morton St)
- 10 GBRC Adaptive Holiday Activity: Holiday Plate (7:30-8:30 pm, Rec Center, 1214 Stone St)
- 12 GBRC Christmas Gift Ceramics (3:30-5 pm, Rec Center - 1214 Stone St)
- 12 GBRC Christmas Entertaining Meals (12pm, Rec Center - 1214 Stone St)
- 17 KWEC Cheyenne Bottoms Christmas Bird Count (582 NE 156 Highway)
- 17 HS Orchestra Concert (8 pm, HS Auditorium, 2027 Morton St)
- 17 HS Band Concert (7 pm, HS Gym, 2027 Morton St)
- 20 Last Day of the TLC Pet Salon Christmas Tree & Senior Gift Bag (2232 10th St.)
- 20 GBRC Adaptive Holiday Activity: Easy Cooking - Christmas Cookies (7:30-8:30 pm, Rec)
- 21 GBRC Adaptive Activity: Christmas Dance (7-9 pm, Activity Center)
- 25 Merry Christmas!
- 29 Last Day of Free Ice Skating (Jack Kilby Square)
- 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE!

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For the latest holiday calendar info, go to [greatbendks.net](http://greatbendks.net)



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