

simple stylish meals
SIMPLE STYLISH MEALS

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in

introduction

INTRODUCTION

The nicest way to share delicious food is to do so with those nearest and dearest to you. I often spend so many hours in my kitchen preparing for family and friends, that it is important to me to relax and share those dishes. It is a special time; time for us all to tell stories about our busy schedules and to have a good laugh. I'm often happiest with my family and friends, with a good glass of wine, listening to the banter around me.

My philosophy on food has always been to only share it with a small group of people at a time because then I can savour each mouthful and have a really meaningful conversation at the same time. So when I invite guests, the most important thing is that they all get along. After all, they make or break a party.

My mother entertained on both a large and small scale. As children, we were always part of these celebrations, whether it was an intimate or casual dinner or a large party of 30 where the entire meal was decorated in a red theme (including the bread which she painted). Parties like these make for unforgettable memories.

The key to entertaining is, of course, organization: being prepared, keeping things simple and, then being able to enjoy it all as well. Work out your menu carefully. Make lists for shopping and then work backwards leaving only the last-minute cooking to the end.

Make sure the food preparation won't keep you in the kitchen all night instead of giving you time to chat to your guests. After all, they've come to see you and won't be sending food back to the kitchen if it isn't perfect. This simple philosophy is one that will keep you in good stead. It will help you relax and enjoy your guests' company rather than rushing around feeling harassed and exhausted.

Budget is also an important factor. With the price of food being so expensive, it is vital to take into account the size of the party as well as the dishes you wish to serve. I always advocate keeping things very simple so that costs don't go through the roof.

If possible, try to find recipes that suit the time you have available to cook. There are many wonderful meals that can be prepared the night before and then cooked the next evening.

Keeping the menu simple doesn't mean it has to be boring. If you don't enjoy preparing the meal, chances are you won't enjoy eating it. Remember: the evening is as much for you as it is for your guests.



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