

# SUMMER BUMMER People are coming by last minute and some may stay the night

**SOLUTION** First things first: Don't panic! Easy décor and simple food and drink ideas are at your fingertips (or at least just a grocery trip away). Here are some fail-safe get-ready strategies:

**Give your guest room the once-over** There's no need to redecorate when expecting visitors. "A guest room should have a good reading lamp and a box of tissues," says decorator-designer Charlotte Moss. Make sure to also have fresh linens, extra blankets and current magazines on hand. To give it a boutique-hotel vibe, spritz sheets with a favorite scent or put sachets in drawers.

**Décor can do more than just look pretty** Leave out a colorful bowl of fruit on a dresser or side table for guests to enjoy. Choose fruits that don't require refrigeration or cutting up, like grapes, bananas, figs and pears. And arrange lavender in a glass vase for the bedside table—its subtle scent is known to have a relaxing effect.

**Prep the bathroom** Stock pretty soaps, a hair dryer, towels, a robe, new toothbrushes and toothpaste. Also if you have them, mini bath products, like the ones from hotel stays, "make guests feel as though they aren't imposing," says N.Y.C. boutique owner Roberta Freymann.

**Anticipate cravings** Buy sweets, and plate them nicely. "Choose desserts in the same palette," says N.Y.C. event planner Amy Atlas. Love fuchsia? Display pink macaroons, raspberry tarts and linzer cookies "on a solid-color tray so each kind stands out."



Plastic Disco tumbler, Zak! Designs, \$4; laprima shops.com.

## Forgo paper plates

For easy indoor or outdoor entertaining, use inexpensive, reusable plastic plates and cups, but pair them with linen napkins and nice flatware. "It looks special—and is better for the environment," says tabletop designer Kim Seybert.



Melamine Confetti dinner plates, Zak! Designs, \$7 each; laprima shops.com.



Linen cocktail napkins, Sferra; \$19/6; sferra.com.

## Make food look good

A little styling can transform grocery-store staples, like taking a premade pie and topping it with confectioners' sugar. For savory dishes (potato salad or grilled chicken), "chop up fresh parsley or cilantro and sprinkle on top," says Mary Giuliani of Mary Giuliani Catering & Events in N.Y.C.



**Party Punch** This simple recipe will please most palates. Skip the vodka to make it completely family friendly. (It'll still taste great!)

**Basil-Strawberry Lemonade with Vodka**  
YIELDS 20 CUPS

- 1 bottle vodka (750 ml)
- 2 liters sparkling water
- 2 10 oz. packages frozen strawberries
- 1 12 oz. can frozen lemonade
- 1 Fresh basil to garnish

Combine all ingredients in a bowl, stir and serve.



**Pull off a simple arrangement**

Grocery store carnations (or other hardy options like sunflowers or daisies) are easily elevated to the wow category. "Gather several bunches of the same flower in one color in a glass vase for a striking effect," says celebrity florist Denise Porcaro of Flower Girl in N.Y.C.



Melamine Colorways ladle, \$5, and Plastic Flare serving bowl, \$22, both by Zakk Designs; [laprimashops.com](http://laprimashops.com).

**Serve punch**

Instead of making individual cocktails, opt for a summer drink you can stash in the fridge, like this creative lemonade thirst quencher (recipe, above). "It tastes even better the next day because the strawberries have time to steep," says Giuliani of her go-to hot-weather recipe. If storing overnight, keep in a closed container to preserve bubbles.



Melamine green tray, Not Neutral, \$18; [notneutral.com](http://notneutral.com).