

# Party Time



Next week I'll be preparing food for 80. Most people gasp at the thought and want to know how I do it. So I thought I'd lay out a few of my strategies in today's column.

I also wanted to share the party a bit with those of you who can't come. Believe me when I say I understand. There are thousands of you spread across the country. I feel lucky that 80 will be here to share in the festivities but I have a couple of little tricks up my sleeve so even if you can't come, you can participate.

As far as the food goes, I want to be able to play hostess more than caterer. What that means is I want to be spending time with the guests and not so much in the kitchen. Most of the food will be cold. It's summer, so why not? And those items that are not cold will be able to sit in chafing dishes and not have to be monitored very often.

I can prepare much of it two days ahead. A few local guests have volunteered to help with prep. That's always nice. Even if they are not cooks I can always use someone around who will chop and wash pans, pots and mixing bowls.

I decided to go kind of retro with my menu. I have chosen

recipes from the 50's and 60's in some cases. Of course I have to Zola-fy most of them, but that's easy for me now. I haven't finalized the menu yet but I'll share what I have with you now. This way you can help me plan my party. **Choose the menu items you'd most like to eat. Vote for your top three picks.** I'll be sure to write up the recipes for the top 3 most popular items so you can make these at home. That way, you can have a little party yourself.



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Looks pretty tasty doesn't it? All of those little V's are notations for things vegetarians would like. I always mark those. I'm pretty surprised how many are vegetarian but because it's summer I wanted to focus on fresh vegetables and a colorful display. All but two of the items are totally low carb. There isn't a reason in the world you can't eat like royalty but still eat healthy.

People will get to come back to replenish their little appetizer plates and get plenty to eat. So vote on your favorite menu item to get your favorite recipes!

Now for the entertainment.

I was invited to a party that was featuring a blues band headed up by Will Tilson. Chicago is famous for blues, so I thought that made a good theme for our first Garden Gala. What headed me in this direction was budget. I thought if the guy who hired that band could afford them, then likely I could, too. I was right. This band is 'dirt cheap'. But that doesn't mean they are a bad band. Oh contraire! Will Tilson is a musical phenome. He's

only 15 years old and has already played with some of the most famous blues musicians alive. He's bringing two other guys to play along with him and they are going to play for 3 hours. That's an evening!

I'm linking you to Will Tilson's site. He has 4 songs here that you can play and have your own little blues concert. I hope you enjoy!



Food and music. What better ways to celebrate the summer? And meeting new people, of course. I am so looking forward to meeting new dieters as well as old friends.

Cheers to you!