Menu One
[ appetizers ]

Overview
Level: Beginner (no cooking required)
Number of Guests: 8
Food: Build Your Own Charcuterie Platter

Charcuterie
Build your platter from the following suggestions
Arrange items on a large board or serving platter
Select 3 - 6 types of cheese (pick soft, semi-soft/semi-hard, and hard varieties)
Crackers and bread
Select 2 - 3 cured meats (salami, prosciutto, pepperoni)
Nuts (almonds, pistachios, etc)
Pickles/small olives or other pickled treats
A few spreads like jam (try fig!) and grainy mustard
Dried fruit or grapes

Dessert
Choose from the following: fancy chocolates, bite size brownies, mini cupcakes, little cookies, or anything that looks good from the bakery section of the grocery store. Keep it bite-size. 1 - 3 items.

Beverages
Beer, wine, sparkling/flat water. For a fancy upgrade, try infusing your water with fruit.

Supplies
Large board or tray for charcuterie, small plates, forks or toothpicks, knives for spreading, napkins, cups/glasses. Bowls for scraps.

Shop Local
Trader Joe’s, Holiday Market, Western Market, and Provisions.

Pro-Tips
If you’re worried you won’t have enough food put out cut veggies, and/or hummus and pita to extend the meal. Keep it simple. You can always ask your guests to bring their fav beer or wine to share!
Menu Two
[ casual theme night ]

OVERVIEW
Level: Intermediate (some cooking required)
Number of Guests: 8
Food: Taco Bar

BUILD YOUR OWN TACOS
Make a large batch of your favorite tacos (keep warm in a crock pot)
Essential Toppings: tortillas (use the smaller soft taco or street taco size), shredded lettuce, shredded cheese, diced tomato, salsa, sour cream
If you're feeling fancy: rice, beans (whole or refried), taco sauce
Chips and dips (pick one or two): salsa, pico de gallo, guacamole

DESSERT
Optional. Try cinnamon ice cream, spicy Mexican chocolates, or add a little cayenne to a box brownie mix for a fun kick.

BEVERAGES
Margaritas, Mexican beer, sparkling/flat water.

SUPPLIES
Plates, napkins, utensils, cups, bowls for the toppings, crock pot (or similar) to keep taco meat warm.

EXPLORE THE INTERNATIONAL AISLE
You can make your own taco seasoning or explore the variety of spice packets and marinades available in the international aisle of your favorite grocery store. Check for dessert or Mexican pop in that aisle as well. Instead of ground beef tacos, try pork, chicken, or ground turkey to switch it up.

PRO-TIPS
The bar idea can easily apply to many other casual theme parties: bagel bar, burger bar, hot dog bar, sandwich, etc. Just have a large supply of the main dish and load up on fun toppings.
Inviting vegetarians? Check out Morning Star crumbles in the freezer section.
Menu Three
[ sit down dinner ]

OVERVIEW
Level: Hard-ish (cooking required)
Number of Guests: 8
Food: Pasta

ITALIAN DINNER
Salad (Choose one. Make your own, you can do it!): Antipasto, Caprese, Mixed Field Greens
Bread (pick out something yummy from the bakery/freezer section)
Add olive oil and dried Italian herbs to the table for dipping (bonus points if you serve the
bread warm)
Pasta Dish (choose one, or pick your own, and make): Lasagna, Spaghetti with
Meatballs, Risotto, Pesto or Gnocchi
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

BEVERAGES
Wine, sparkling/flat water. Serve coffee with
dessert for a special touch.

DESSERT
Make or purchase cannoli or tiramisu.

SUPPLIES
Pots and pans, wine glasses, water glasses, utensils, napkins (bonus points for cloth), plates, assorted table
decorations: unscented candles, flowers, place cards, etc.

RECIPE SUGGESTIONS
Spaghetti and Meatballs, How to Cook Everything by Mark Bitman (pg. 531)
Pasta and Pesto with Potatoes and Green Beans, Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking by Marcella
Hazan (p. 177)
Roasted Vegetable Lasagna, Make it Ahead by Ina Garten (p. 127)

PRO-TIPS
If you’re making a new recipe try it out a week or two in advance. Don’t be afraid to switch up pasta
shapes for your favorite. Ribbed pasta is great for holding sauce. When a recipe calls for reserving
pasta cooking liquid do it! It makes the sauce so much better.