

# ENGAGEMENT PARTY ETIQUETTE

## *All Unwritten Rules*

Congratulations on your engagement! A party can be the ideal time to announce the news to your nearest and dearest. We have the answers to all of your questions about engagement party etiquette. Everyone is aware of the hens and bucks and all of the fun and frivolity that can go on there, but who do you invite to an engagement party? Do you receive gifts? Who should throw the party? These are all common questions, so we have brought the answers to you so you can brush up on engagement party etiquette before the event. Who should throw the party?

Traditionally the parents of the engaged couple will host the party. But a number of factors could impact on this, such as your partner's family living in another state or even country. In this case, you might opt to have one engagement party hosted by willing parents, or even have one with each family so that no one misses out. If you are having multiple parties, you should invite guests to only one party, not both. If neither of your families are close by, you can opt to hire a venue. That said, this is the 21st century and if you are having a destination wedding or elopement and would like a big celebration for your engagement instead, you can take on the responsibility yourselves so you can celebrate with everyone. Who pays?

If someone is hosting the party for you, it is generally them who covers the costs. If you are hosting your own formal party at a venue, traditionally it's your responsibility to cover the bill and if a dinner is too expensive, you can consider a cocktail party or even a pot luck in your own back yard if that is more your style.

You can tailor the event to suit any budget. It is becoming more common to hold informal drinks at a venue and in this case, it's okay for guests to purchase their own drinks and you can consider putting up an initial bar tab or providing some nibbles. Who should you invite?

It is tradition that everyone who is invited to your wedding should also be invited to your engagement party. But there is an exception to every rule. In this case, if you decide to host your own wedding and keep the list small, you might want to throw a larger engagement party. The key here is to let everyone know that this is what you have in mind so that people don't feel on the outer or that they have done something to upset you when they don't receive a wedding invitation. Try to make the guest list a balance between you and your partner's friends and family, so that one side isn't dominant. Often, this is the first time before your wedding that all of these people will mix together, and ideally, you want them to mingle and get along! Thinking for both sides

Since the engagement party custom was designed to help you start building bridges between your families, if you have input into the location and style of the engagement party, it is best to consider what will make not only yourselves but your parents and partner's parents comfortable. If one of you has a very formal family, an impromptu picnic in the park might not be the most appropriate setting for getting to know one another and a five-course sit-down dinner might be intimidating for some who prefer the more casual setting. Finding a medium is key.





Maybe a stand-up cocktail party with a live band would be the ideal way to keep all parties happy. When should you have the party? You might like to take some time to revel in your new engagement and start some initial discussions with your partner about how long you would like to enjoy this status before heading down the aisle. A smaller impromptu family gathering could be nice shortly after becoming engaged, but many wedding experts recommend that you have an all-out engagement party within a month of accepting a proposal. You'll have some time to adjust and usually between three to four months after the question was popped. A good guideline. Plus, planning an engagement party takes time! Acknowledge everyone If you have limited control over the guest list, which may be the case if someone else is hosting the party for you, there will be people that you might not be crazy about interacting with.

But in the end, all of your guests have made an effort to be there, so be sure to acknowledge everyone (yes, everyone) even if it is with a smile, a hand shake or hug and a simple "Thank you for coming". It's a busy event for you so be sure to excuse yourself if you need to move on and acknowledge other people.

To help break the ice between groups of people who have never met before, you can go old school and make introductions between them. Traditionally, the woman or the oldest person is introduced first and you can add a bit of background information about each person to give them something to talk about.

This means that guests can mingle among themselves and you are free to work the room with your partner. What to do about gifts

While guests have not traditionally brought presents to engagement parties, this is changing. The key is to decide what you are comfortable with. If you prefer not to receive gifts from guests, make a point of saying so on the invitations. It could be something simple like, "Your presence

is our present", or "The gift of your attendance is all we wish for". This will let people off the hook and if there are some people who would like to buy you a gift, thank them privately and place it out of sight of other guests to avoid making those who followed your request feel uncomfortable.

If you would like to avoid any questions about what you would like people to buy you, you can set up a gift registry.

Place items on your registry with the idea in mind that the guests may also buy you a wedding gift or contribute to a wishing well down the track.

When you do put together a registry, you can add a small note on your invitation or add a link to a Facebook event. If people approach you to ask what you would like, you can give them the direct link to your registry and wedding website. If you'd prefer the traditional approach, generally engaged couples open any gifts they receive after the party and send thank you notes.

Who should give a speech? Generally, the father of the bride leads a toast to the couple and the couple will respond with a toast to their families. When guests propose a toast to you, it's traditional to remain seated and not to raise your glass or drink, because the guests are toasting you, not the other way around.

It's customary that you, your fiancé or both of you respond to the toast with a few words of your own. If you are clueless about what to say, just thank people for coming and express your excitement about the joining of two families. It's also nice to thank each set of parents and toast their support and love.

Don't forget the wedding...

Unless you are intentionally hosting a larger engagement party due to planning a smaller, intimate wedding, you really don't want to upstage the main event. But if you are planning on having a long engagement or love event planning, then create an impact with your engagement party and excite your guests for the wedding that is to come!

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# Wedding

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