

THE FABLED ALCHEMIST

Holiday Open *House Plan*

One self-serve punch, a grazing board and food you make ahead, for 8, 12 or 20 drop-in guests.

Your numbers 2
How much to serve 3
The drink table 4
The punch 5
The menu 6
Shopping list 7
Serving and the board 8
Weeks before 9
Party days 10
Platter clock 11
Table labels 12

SCAN FOR THE FULL GUIDE

Your *numbers*

Fill these in first. Pages 3 and 7 scale from them.

Date _____

Open from / until
about 4 hours; put the end time on the invite _____

Guests who said yes
plan for every yes _____

Drink servings
yeses × 3 _____

How many to plan *for*

Plan food and drinks for everyone who says yes. Guests come in waves, so the room usually feels less crowded than the number on the list.

Notes

How much to *serve*

Each guest stays about 3 hours and has about one drink an hour.

Drinks

GUESTS	SERVINGS	PUNCH BATCHES	ICE
8	24	2	5 lb
12	36	2	10 lb
20	60	3	15 lb

3 servings each. One punch batch makes **20 servings**. Ice assumes every drink gets a glass of ice and punch is the only drink, rounded up to whole 5-lb bags. Serving water or coffee too? You'll use less.

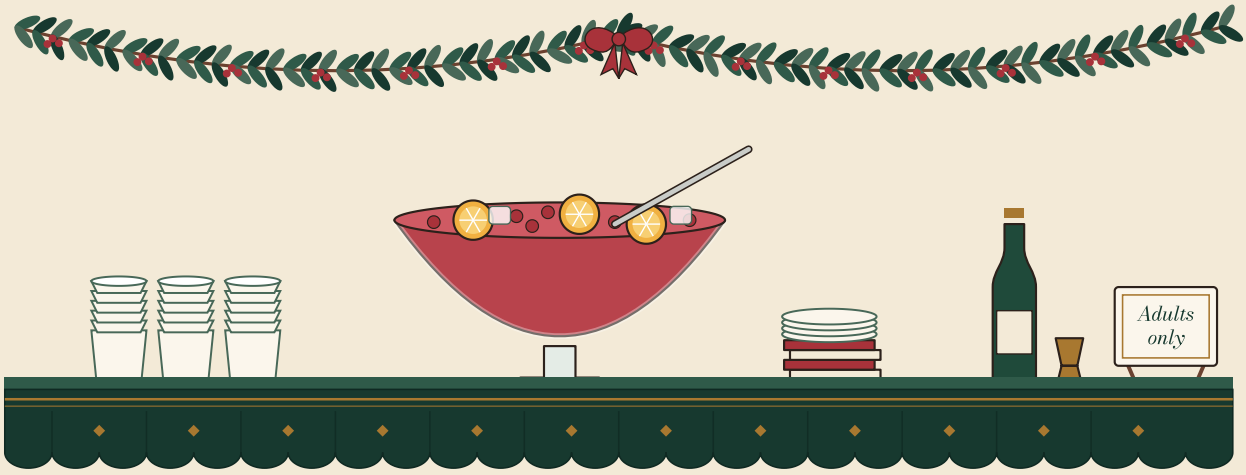
Food

GUESTS	TOTAL BITES	CHEESE FOR THE BOARD
8	80 to 104	12 to 16 oz
12	120 to 156	18 to 24 oz
20	200 to 260	30 to 40 oz

10 to 13 bites per guest for a 2 to 3 hour stay, and **1 1/2 to 2 oz** of cheese each. A bite is one piece: a meatball, a crostini, a cracker with cheese, a cookie. The board counts toward the total. Keep about three quarters of the food savory.

The drink *table*

One self-serve bowl, with the adults' bottle at the far end.



For adults, the *cheaper way*

Skip a second bowl. Set one bottle, a jigger and a small sign at the end of the table. About **1.6 oz** per glass, worked out from a 10-serving punch that uses 2 cups of vodka. Taste one before you pour for the room.

Refill from the chilled base and add ginger ale only when you refill, so every bowl is bubbly.

Notes

The alcohol-free *punch*

The main bowl. Makes 20 servings.

Ingredients

- [ ] **2 quarts** ginger ale
- [ ] **1 bottle (46 fl oz)** cranberry juice
- [ ] **1 can (46 fl oz)** pineapple juice
- [ ] **1 can (12 fl oz)** frozen orange juice concentrate
- [ ] Ice cubes
- [ ] Optional: orange slices and fresh cranberries to float

Method

1. Stir the cranberry juice, pineapple juice and orange juice concentrate together. This base keeps in the fridge.
2. Add the ginger ale slowly just before serving, then the ice.
3. Float the orange slices and cranberries on top.

Notes

A make-ahead menu of *five*

Fill "How many" so the dishes add up to your bites total from page 3.

DISH	WHY IT WORKS	MAKE AHEAD	HOW MANY
Slow-cooker meatballs	Hot, self-serve with toothpicks	Cook the day before, warm in the cooker	
Mushroom and Gruyere pastry squares	A warm bite that needs no sauce	Assemble earlier that day, refrigerate, bake shortly before guests arrive	
White bean crostini	Holds at room temperature	Make the spread ahead, assemble up to 30 minutes before	
Grazing board	Cold, easy to refill, no cooking	Wash and portion that morning	
Cookies or one sweet	A small treat to finish	Bake and freeze, or buy	

A hot dip or pigs in a blanket can replace any hot dish. Pastry square and crostini recipes are in our **cocktail party food guide**.

If something goes *wrong*

The punch went flat	The ginger ale went in too early. Keep it cold and add it only when you refill.
Everyone arrives at once	Put out a small first platter and keep backups chilled. Refill by the clock.
You run out of food	Crackers and fruit are the cheapest way to fill a board fast.

Shopping *list*

2 punch batches for 8 or 12 guests, 3 for 20. Check the cupboard first.

GOT IT	ITEM	8 GUESTS	12 GUESTS	20 GUESTS
Punch				
☐	Cranberry juice, 46 fl oz bottles	2	2	3
☐	Pineapple juice, 46 fl oz cans	2	2	3
☐	Frozen orange juice concentrate, 12 fl oz cans	2	2	3
☐	Ginger ale	4 quarts	4 quarts	6 quarts
☐	Ice, 5-lb bags	1	2	3
☐	Oranges and fresh cranberries for floating			
☐	Cups, about one per drink	24	36	60
☐	Optional: one bottle for adults, a jigger and a sign			
Food				
☐	Cheese for the board	12 to 16 oz	18 to 24 oz	30 to 40 oz
☐	Crackers, fruit, nuts and one sweet for the board			
☐	Meatballs or a hot dip, from a recipe you trust			
☐	Pastry squares and crostini ingredients			
☐	Cookies, baked or bought			

Blank amounts depend on your menu: write them in from page 6.

Serving and the *board*

Use what you own.

Serving and extras

- [ ] Punch bowl or drink dispenser, and a ladle
- [ ] Small plates and napkins
- [ ] Toothpicks for the meatballs
- [ ] 1 or 2 small slow cookers or warming dishes
- [ ] A serving tray for the board and the cups
- [ ] Sticky notes and a pen for labels and platter times
- [ ] A trash bin and a spot for used cups

The grazing board, five to seven *groups*

1. 2 or 3 cheeses
2. 1 meat, or skip it to save money
3. Crackers or sliced bread
4. Fresh fruit, such as grapes or clementines
5. Nuts
6. Something sweet: dried fruit or a few chocolates
7. A small bowl of jam or mustard

The weeks *before*

Start three weeks out and the party week is mostly shopping and chilling.

3 to 4 weeks	☐ Send invitations with a start time, an end time and "stop by any time"
2 to 3 weeks	☐ Buy non-perishables, serving pieces, cups, plates and frozen food ☐ Choose the drink and the dishes; try any new recipe now
1 week	☐ Bake and freeze the cookies ☐ Check the punch bowl, ladle and slow cookers; pick a coat spot
2 to 3 days	☐ Buy the cheese, produce and juices ☐ Put a sticky note on each serving dish for what goes where

Notes

The day before and the *day of*

Cold things wait in the fridge; hot things go in last.

Day before	☐ Make the dip or meatballs and refrigerate them
	☐ Stir the punch base and chill it; chill the ginger ale
	☐ Set out platters, utensils and cups, labeled
Morning of	☐ Pick up the ice; wash and portion the fruit, slice the oranges
	☐ Cut the cheese and wrap it; set up the drink and food tables
Hour before	☐ Heat the hot dish and bake the first tray
	☐ Fill the bowl, add the ginger ale, put out the first board
During	☐ Top up small trays about every 15 minutes, large trays about every 30
	☐ Swap in a fresh platter from the fridge instead of topping off the old one
Last hour	☐ Pack leftovers within the 2-hour limit and send guests home with some

Platter *clock*

Write the time each platter goes out. Perishables come off the table 2 hours later, or 1 hour if the room is above 90°F.

PLATTER	OUT AT	OFF BY	BACKUP IN FRIDGE?

Hot food at **140°F or warmer**, cold food at **40°F or colder**. Hot backups wait in a **200°F to 250°F** oven.

Recipes, photos and the full guide at **thefabledalchemist.com**

Table *labels*

Cut on the gray dashes, fold on the solid brass line, and stand each card in front of its dish. Check every package and write in any allergen.

◇ **Holiday Punch** ALCOHOL-FREE · CONTAINS: ____	◇ **For the Adults** ADULTS ONLY · TASTE FIRST	◇ **Meatballs** CONTAINS: _____
◇ **Mushroom and Gruyere Squares** CONTAINS DAIRY, _____	◇ **White Bean Crostini** CONTAINS: _____	◇ **Grazing Board** CONTAINS: _____
◇ **Cookies** CONTAINS: _____	◇ CONTAINS: _____	◇ CONTAINS: _____