

Mexican Dinner

Tablecloths, runners, glass vases with candles. Chili peppers around the candle. Use Mexican blankets and sombreros.

Cowboy Caviar	Creamy Salsa
King Ranch Chicken	Beef Carnitas
Rice/Beans	Kahlua Trifle/Churros
Margaritas	Sangria
Corona	

Cowboy Caviar:

In bowl combine 2T Red wine vinegar, 2t hot sauce, 1/2t oil, 1 garlic clove (minced) and 1/8t pepper. Peel, pit and cut 1 avocado into the vinegar and toss to coat. Drain and rinse 1 can black eyed peas and 1 can corn and add to avocado. Chop 4 Roma tomatoes and 2/3 c sliced green onions and add to mixture. Mix gently, add salt to taste, chill and serve with chips.

Creamy Salsa:

Mix one block of cream cheese with 1/2 a jar of salsa. Mix with blender and add more salsa based on your consistency wanted. Chill and serve with chips.

King Ranch Chicken:

6 chicken breasts boiled and pulled from the bone; 1 green pepper(chopped); 1 can cream of mushroom soup and 1 can cream of chicken soup, 1 cup chicken broth, 1 can Rotel mixed together. 1 package corn tortillas (cut in quarters), 1 large onion (chopped), 1/2 lb shredded cheddar cheese. Grease a 9x13, layer 1/2 of the tortillas, 1/2 of the chicken, 1/2 of the soup, 1/2 of the pepper, onion and cheese. Repeat layers ending with cheese. Bake covered for 30 minutes at 350. Take foil off and bake another 30 minutes until bubbly and golden. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

Beef Carnitas:

8-10 lb Beef tip roast (knuckle). 2 packets of powdered Fajita seasoning 1 large oven roasting bag. Remove the majority of extra fat from meat and cut into 1 inch pieces. Place in roasting bag and then in pan. Add both dry seasoning packets. DO NOT ADD WATER. Mix to coat well and let marinate overnight. Bake at 325 for 3 hours. Drain some liquid and place in dish to serve with tortillas. This recipe serves about 10-15.

Kahlua Trifle:

Bake 1 chocolate cake mix according to package. Once this has cooled poke holes in the cake with fork, pour 1 cup Kahlua over the cake and let sit overnight. The next day crush 12 Heath bars or buy the crumbled bars by the chocolate chips. Make 2 boxes of instant chocolate pudding and have 2 containers of cool whip thawed. Take a large bowl and place 1/3 of the cake mixture in bowl. Top with pudding, cool whip and candy. Repeat 2 more times, chill and serve.

Hawaiian Luau

Use tablecloths, runners, pails with sand and shells to decorate tables. Use pineapples, beach toys as decorations. Paper lanterns make nice decorations and I brought in boogie boards and surf boards for decorations.

Pork	Slaw
Macaroni Salad	Rice
Chicken Teriyaki	Coconut Macaroons (back of coconut bag)
Pina Colada Cake	White Chocolate Macadamia Cookies (Pillsbury)
Mai Tai	

Pork:

Do the same pork for the BBQ menu except do not add sauce. If you get a larger piece of pork 15-18 pounds (from Costco) make sure you adjust the dry seasoning. 3 packages to ½ cup oil. Count on ½ pound per person with side dishes but if you are feeding young Marines go for 1/3 pound per person.

Chicken Teriyaki:

You can use breast, thighs or drumsticks. Marinate in Teriyaki sauce and grill or bake ahead of time. Keep in sauce to stay moist.

Pina Colada Cake:

3 c flour, 1T baking powder, 1 c softened butter, 1t vanilla, 3 eggs, 1 can Bacardi Pina Colada mix, coconut, berries. Preheat oven to 350. Spray Bundt pan. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, butter vanilla and eggs in bowl. Mix pina colada mix with 1 can water in separate bowl. Pour 2 cups of mix into cake mix and save the remaining amount for icing. Pour cake mix into pan and bake for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let the cake cool 10 minutes then invert and ice once completely cool. ICING: 1 c powdered sugar and remaining pina colada mix. Put powdered sugar in bowl with pina colada mix and mix until there are no lumps. Drizzle over cake and top with coconut and fresh berries.

Salad Bar

Use tablecloths, burlap runners, flower pots to hold utensils or salads to decorate tables.

Strawberry Salad:

Mix 1-2 heads of romaine lettuce, 1.5c shredded MJ cheese, 1.5 pints sliced strawberries and 1 bag of slivered almonds (toasted). DRESSING: In blender mix 3/4c vegetable oil, 1/4c sugar, 1/2c red wine vinegar, 2 cloves of garlic, 1/2t salt, 1/2t paprika and 1/4t pepper. Toss dressing on salad and enjoy

Avocado Frito Salad:

1 large head of iceberg lettuce, 1/4c chopped green onion, 2 diced tomatoes, 1/2 c chopped black olives, 1/2 c grated cheddar cheese. In blender mix 1/2 c sour cream, 1/3 c oil, 1T lemon juice, 1 avocado (diced) 1/2t salt, 1/4t Tabasco, 1/2t chili powder and dash of garlic salt. Right before serving add 1 cup Fritos and toss with dressing. This is good as a side salad for Mexican food or I have added a can of drained black beans to serve as an entrée salad for ladies.

Chicken Salad:

Boil chicken with bones, cool and shred. Add mayo to make moist, 1-2 cut up gala apples with skin, pecan pieces and salt and pepper to taste. Chill and add mayo if needed. You can put this on mini croissants, little rolls or lettuce leaves.

Chinese Chicken Salad:

4-6 chicken breasts boiled, cooled and shredded. Mix with 2T sesame seeds, 2T slivered almonds, 1 large bag coleslaw with carrots, 2 green onions(chopped), 1 package Top Ramen uncooked noodles broken into pieces.(don't use low fat). DRESSING: 3T sugar, 1/2 c oil, 3T rice vinegar, 1t salt, 1/2T pepper and the Top Ramen seasoning packet. Pour over salad, toss and mix well. Make the night before for lunch or in the am for pm.

Mexican Cornbread Salad:

Make 2 small packages of Jiffy cornbread and set aside. Combine 1 pkg ranch dressing dry mix with 8 oz sour cream and 1 c mayo, set aside. In a large serving bowl place 1/2 of the cornbread (crumbled). Top with 1 can pinto beans(drained), 1.5c grated cheddar cheese, 1.5 c chopped tomatoes, 1/4c chopped bell peppers, 1/4c chopped green onions 1/2 of a 4.5ozcan of diced green chilies, 1 c crisp bacon, and 1/2 of a can of 15oz drained corn. Top with 1/2 of the ranch mixture. Repeat and end with dressing. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours

Angel Hair Make Ahead Salad:

Combine a package of cooked and drained angel hair pasta, 4T oil, 3T lemon juice, 1t seasoned salt and 1t accent. Refrigerate overnight. Add 1.5c of chopped celery, 1/2c chopped onion, 1 c chopped bell pepper, and 1-(2.5) oz. can sliced olives to pasta and mix. Mix 1.5c mayo with 1/2c grated parmesan cheese and add to pasta. Mix well and chill.

Toga Party

Toilet paper your trees, throw out beer cans on the lawn. Make Greek letters with boxes and foil and tape to house. Start with the Animal House CD and then fun party music.

Small Ham Sandwiches
Cheese/Salami/Crackers
Chili Dip/Chip & Dip
Trash Can Punch

Small Chicken Salad Sandwiches
Little Smokies/BBQ Crockpot
Pretzels

Trash Can Party

This is a great party to have with neighbor's right before a move. Use mix & match cups, plates, etc. Use old candles, leftover liquor and food from fridge. Hang laundry out in the yard!!

Hot Dogs
Jell-O

Pork & Beans
Twinkies and Ding Dongs

Shrimp Boil

Se tablecloths, runners with burlap, shells, pails and candles. A canvas drop cloth from a home improvement store also makes a great table covering. Paper towels on the roll for napkins work great. Have baby wipes on the table to wash hands.

Shrimp Boil w/ potatoes, corn, shrimp and Italian Sausages mild and spicy

French bread

ice cream sandwiches

Sliced watermelon

Gulf Coast Tea (Arnold Palmer with bourbon)

Shrimp Boil: (If you are in Maryland or Virginia you can add purchased steamed and seasoned Blue crabs to add to the top. They can be purchased by the dozen or the bushel and provide a big bang for your buck.)

Have 4 pots of water boiling when guests come. Each pot should have onion, orange slices, lemon slices and a crab boil bag in it. In each pot dump items to cook based on timing. Potatoes in one pot first, corn in next pot, sausage and then shrimp. Drain pots and put items in bowls to pass around unless it is a small enough group and you use butcher paper on the table and just dump the food on the table.

Lost My Shirt Party

Make this a pot luck party on tax day

Mardi Gras

This is a great party and can be quite economical. There are tons of web sites for reference.

Prop Closet

Black tablecloths
Chafing dishes.... I use them for every party.
White/Clear dishes and serving pieces
Festive runners for all occasions
Glass jars/hurricanes
Jelly jars
Tin pails
Clay Pots
Carafes
Trays
Lanterns
Tiki Torches
Candles (I buy white for every occasion)
Beach toys
Small blow up Kiddy Pool
Shot glasses
Silverware
Glasses

Great Finds and Websites

Ikea... This is a place for really inexpensive glass wear. Who knew!
TJ Maxx
Marshalls
World Market
Dollar Store
Oriental trading
Big Lots

Chocolate Bar

I use my whole dining room table for this. I set up 2 bowls strawberries/raspberries and the rest of the table is chocolate. In martini glasses I put Whoppers, Milk Duds, and Chocolate covered almonds. I make chocolate mousse and put it in shot glasses. I serve chocolate chip cookies, mini brownie bites, chocolate covered éclairs and 2 boxes of good chocolates on trays. You can also serve champagne with this if you are celebrating something special. You can put as much or as little based on your numbers. Besides spoons for the mousse the best part about this is no silverware or plates!!!

Denim and Diamond

Wear denim but bling it up with diamonds. Make signature drinks (Blue Jean Bomber and Diamond Downer) Make CD's for the guest with denim and diamond songs on them.

Chocolate/Champagne

Chocolate Cake

Chocolate Bread Pudding

Fudge Pie

Chocolate covered éclairs

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Chocolate Bread Pudding:

Cut up 1 large loaf of French bread and let it stale overnight. Preheat oven to 325. Lightly grease a 9x13 dish and place the stale bread in dish. In a large bowl whisk together 3c milk, 1/4c heavy cream and 1/2c Kahlua. In another bowl mix 1c sugar, 1c light brown sugar and 1/4c Hershey cocoa powder. Mix well. Add this mixture to the milk mixture and whisk to combine. Add 1T vanilla, 2T almond extract and 1.5t cinnamon to 6 large beaten eggs. Combine the egg mixture to the milk mixture and mix well. Stir in 8oz semisweet chocolate chips and pour evenly over the bread cubes. Let stand at least 20 minutes or until the bread has absorbed most of the liquid. Bake for 1 hour or until knife inserted comes out clean.

Fudge Pie:

Preheat oven to 375. Melt 2(2oz) squares of semisweet chocolate and 1/2 c butter together in a saucepan over low heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add 1c sugar, then 2 slightly beaten eggs. Beat well. Pour the filling into the pie crust and bake for 25 minutes. Serve warm or cold.