STAR-SPANGLED SOIREE

Throw your own Fourth of July bash with these tips and tricks from Maxwell Ryan, as seen in the July 2014 issue of Better Homes and Gardens® magazine.

Party checklist

☐ Buy groceries
☐ Make playlist
☐ Make or buy decorations
☐ Arrange seating areas
☐ Decorate table
☐ Set up buffet
☐ Prepare drink station
☐ Set up party decor
☐ Gather party favors and lawn game supplies
☐ Relax and have fun!
How-to:
1. Using a ruler and crafts knife, measure and cut poster board to a 15×15-inch square. Locate the center of the square and lightly mark.

2. Cut two 12×12-inch pieces of scrapbook paper on the diagonal.

3. Use spray adhesive on one side of the 15×15-inch poster board. Place one of the triangles of scrapbook paper with point touching center mark of poster board, and lay flat toward outside of the poster board. Repeat with the other three pieces until poster board is covered.

4. Place reinforcement label at the center mark and cut out the small circle in the center.

5. Place ruler corner to corner of square, bisecting it, and measure in 6 inches from the outside corners on both sides; lightly mark. Repeat on other diagonal.

6. Use crafts knife and ruler to cut on the marked lines.

7. In each corner, punch a hole to left of cut line approximately 1 inch in on the diagonal.

8. Place reinforcement labels over the holes.

9. Wearing protective eyewear, drill a hole with a ¾ drill bit approximately 1 inch from top of dowel.

10. Without creasing, bend punched corners one at a time toward the center with reinforcement labels facing out, overlapping as you go.

11. Place a washer on the machine screw. Insert screw through all four corners, then the center of the pinwheel. On the back side place a washer and a nut tightly against pinwheel.

12. Continue to assemble the pinwheel in this order: washer, wood bead, washer, wood bead, dowel, nut, and stop nut.

13. Spin!

Note: For a video how-to for these pinwheels, see the slideshow at BHG.com/JulyParty.
GIANT BUBBLES

Materials list
Large resealable container
½ cup dishwashing detergent
4½ cups water
4 Tbsp. glycerin
Bubble wands

How-to:
In a large container, mix detergent, water, and glycerin. For best results, cover and let stand overnight before using.

Note: Find glycerin in the cake decorating area of most crafts stores. Avoid generic dishwashing detergents, as they are watered down and won’t produce the best bubbles.
Caprese Salad
START TO FINISH 10 min.

6 to 8 medium red, yellow, and/or green tomatoes, sliced
8 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced
3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Fresh basil leaves

Arrange tomatoes and cheese on a serving platter. Drizzle with vinegar and olive oil and sprinkle with kosher salt and pepper. Scatter fresh basil leaves over salad. Makes 8 servings.

Minty Tea Cocktail
START TO FINISH 10 min.

8 black tea bags
½ cup fresh mint leaves
¼ cup lime juice
¼ cup dark rum
¼ cup honey
Ice cubes

Place tea bags and mint leaves in a large heatproof pitcher or bowl. Add 8 cups boiling water. Let steep 3 to 5 minutes. Remove and discard tea bags and mint. Cover and chill tea. Transfer tea to a large pitcher. Add lime juice, rum, and honey; stir well. Serve over ice. Makes 8 servings.

Bacon Corn Bread
PREP 15 min. BAKE 20 min.

1 cup yellow cornmeal
¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp. sugar
2½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 cup milk
2 eggs
¼ cup butter, melted
4 slices bacon, crisp-cooked, drained, and crumbled

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease an 8×8×2-inch baking pan; set aside. In a medium bowl stir together cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, and butter. Add the milk mixture all at once to the cornmeal mixture. Add the crumbled bacon. Stir just until moistened. Pour the batter into prepared pan.
2. Bake about 20 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Let cool slightly before serving. Makes 12 servings.

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Each serving: 154 cal, 37 g fat, 56 mg chol, 36 mg sodium, 9 g carb, 2 g fiber, 4 g pro.
Green Tea Cocktail

START TO FINISH 10 min.

6 cups brewed green tea, chilled
1 12-oz. can apple-raspberry juice blend concentrate
⅔ cup tequila
⅛ cup lemon juice
Ice cubes

Combine ingredients in a pitcher. Serve over ice.
Makes 8 servings.

Each serving 111 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 9 mg sodium, 0 g fiber, 20 g carb, 0 g pro.

Barbecue Chicken

PREP 45 min. MARINATE 2 hr. GRILL 50 min.

4 to 5 lbs. meaty chicken pieces (breasts, thighs, and drumsticks)
1½ cups dry sherry
1 cup finely chopped onion
⅛ cup lemon juice
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 15-oz. can tomato puree
⅛ cup honey
3 Tbsp. light-flavored molasses
⅛ tsp. dried thyme, crushed
⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar

1. Place chicken in a large resealable plastic bag set in a shallow dish. For marinade, in a medium bowl stir together sherry, onion, lemon juice, and garlic. Pour over chicken; seal bag. Marinate in the refrigerator 2 to 4 hours, turning bag occasionally. Drain chicken, reserving marinade. Cover; chill until ready to grill.
2. For sauce, in a large saucepan combine reserved marinade, tomato puree, honey, molasses, 1 tsp. salt, thyme, cayenne pepper, and ⅛ tsp. black pepper. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, about 30 minutes or until reduced to 2 cups. Remove from heat. Stir in vinegar. Divide sauce in half.
3. For a charcoal grill, arrange medium-hot coals around a drip pan. Place chicken pieces, bone sides down, on grill rack over drip pan. Cover and grill 50 minutes or until tender and no longer pink, brushing with half of the sauce during the last 15 minutes of grilling. (For a gas grill, adjust for indirect cooking over medium heat. Place chicken pieces, bone sides down, on the grill rack over unlit side.) Serve chicken with remaining sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Each serving 474 cal, 22 g fat, 115 mg chol, 595 mg sodium, 26 g carb, 2 g fiber, 30 g pro.