

# Profiteroles, Hibiscus and flaming red daisies – a garden party to relish

*The bright sun's rays  
Are dappled as they strike  
The manicured greensward.  
He, tall, lithe, teeth all aglow  
In cream slacks and pastel blouson,  
She, fair and fairylike in acres of shimmering gauze*

- Bob Sterry

Now, who does not love garden parties? The mere mention of the idea gives me goose bumps. Fresh scones with clotted cream, roasted chicken legs, cocktail sausages and freshly made lemonade - I could go on forever discussing the menu. If food does not motivate, then shrills of laughter coming from children playing hopscotch in the garden, ladies flaunting their summer dresses and men relaxing on recliner chairs surely will make a believer out of you.

Attending a garden party is effortless, dressing up for it or better yet, hosting it, is the more difficult part. Still feeling a bit queasy? Well, I always say this to my friends, a 'non-challenging' life is only meant for the feeble minded.

Opinions apart, there can be many reasons to host a garden party, a simple get-together of friends, picnic with family, children's birthday, baby shower, bridal shower or any other limited reunion celebrating a notable occasion.

There are few rules to the garden party. As it is hosted in a garden; backyard or a front yard, decorative embellishments are important. It is a must that garden parties be decorated in a special way helping to spark a sense of hospitality amongst the guests; the very moment they step in. Amorous bits and pieces like fresh flowers, candles, terracotta glazed flower pots, fancy china and lanterns

can be used as decorative elements.

The host must be particularly considerate about the choice of flowers, rather than going for the customary red rose and tuberose; tulips, lilies and gerbera daisies can be used to add more colour.

Next comes the issue of decorating the patio and the chairs. Satin clothes in colours like sea-green and turquoise can be used as a wrap. If the party is hosted in summer, an abundance of misting fans must be placed to create a cool atmosphere. Sudden rain-falls during monsoon can be a nuisance; small tents of different hues can be put up all across the garden to keep the guests dry and entertained. In the chills of winter, mini fire pits can be created in the centre of the garden to keep guests warm. Enough caution must be taken in preparing the fire pit.



Food plays a vital role in any party, and there is no reason why a garden party should be any different. Getting out of the traditional heavy and rich Mughal or 'deshi' food, garden parties mostly highlight continental favourites.

Soft drinks, lemonades, mocktails are an essential part of any garden party. There must be separate trays of cookies, pastries,



chicken roast, beef steaks, treacle, chocolates, and ice-creams, all placed separately with decorative card holders.

Stock up on enough fork, knives spoons and paper napkins; no one wants to see their guests whining the lack of cutlery. Enough natters about the main course and dessert; a garden party is never complete without cake and tea. Even if you have hoards of items for dessert, a decorative cake must be there to celebrate the occasion – whatever it may be.

Music is an essential part in most garden parties. Songs must be selected according to the mood of the guests. If it's a children's party then songs by Barney or Sesame Street can do wonders. If it's more for the adults, then soft soothing lounge music; Spanish or French always helps in uplifting moods. The host must always make sure that the music is melodious and sophisticated.

Last but not the least is the issue of dressing-up for such elegant parties. In our side of the region the women dress in soft silk, chiffon or georgette saris. Another favourite is the Chantilly lace paired with a satin blouse or embroidered jacket.

For men, it's either lounge suits or simple summer shirts with jeans. The children can dress up as their favourite book characters otherwise any other trends.

A trestle table covered in gingham tablecloth, ladies on diet needlessly quibbling on high calorie dessert, children playing tag by the bush, men chatting away on trifling information, soft music filling up the clement atmosphere, eclectic mix of giggles here and there – I repeat again; Who doesn't love a garden party?

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Photo: LS Archive

