



I think we can agree that throwing a low-key dinner party often doesn't end up feeling that low key. An intimate guest list has a way of expanding, so instead of hosting a dinner party, let's just call it inviting friends over to hang out and eat food and drink rose tea.

SUMMER DREAMS



ed with songs that all of you can enjoy. Here are a few all-time favourites: Summer of '69 - Bryan Adams, Red Wine - U2, California Girls - The Beach Boys, No woman No cry - Bob Marley, and of course Mamma Mia soundtracks of Abba and all-time favourite tracks of BoneyM.

Chances are everyone's going to be having so much fun that the get-together will run into the evening. Plan to party past sundown and set up lights to illuminate your garden or balcony and make things look magical under the stars, a simple set of string lights hung on a fence or lanterns clustered on the ground will suffice.

But our biggest tip when it comes to planning an outdoor party this summer: have fun! As long as the weather's in your favour, the drinks are flowing, there's plenty of food and everyone's smiling, you're pretty much guaranteed a great time. So, pour yourself a glass of lemonade, put on your shades and have a blast while the sun's shining bright. From the food you serve to the songs you play, make sure your party goes as smoothly as a summer breeze.

- By RBR

menu instead.

After all it's Eid, and your ladies will want to indulge, so make a dish of polao with extra virgin olive oil, chicken or quail roast to give you a break from all that Eid beef. However, a deshi style spiced up mutton liver and a bowl of beef bhuna must do the rounds as well. But remember, don't fuss too much if you're tired or pressed for time. Instead, out-source the whole thing. However, bake a jar of chewy molasses-spiced cookies using your masala tea spices, and keep an assortment of teas ready- make sure your electric kettle is handy since you don't want to run around for hot water refills for the teas.

Plan the menu around your guest list and prep early. Making food ahead of time can alleviate stress. Have a fan handy to add a laid-back summer vibe to your party. Don't forget to shoo the bugs from the scene by setting a pretty pot of herbs like mint on your table.

What's a party without fun tunes to go with it? Make a sunny-day playlist and have it softly playing through speakers as the day goes on. Make sure it's upbeat and fill

inducing atmosphere. Single stem flowers are making a comeback. Opt for a sculptural stem, like an oversized tropical leaf, a calla lily, or a big-headed bloom of white spider lilies or tiger lilies or frangi-pani, and throw in just a few sprigs of ferns for maximum effect. And to add a bit of summery charm, tie your napkins with flowers instead of napkin holders. This laid-back decor creates a mellow, fuss-free atmosphere that's perfect for enjoying quality time with your best friends.

When it comes to appetisers, cheese is a sure thing and our deshi cheese or Ashtogram cheese is always a hit, keep some beef bacon wrapped breadsticks and homemade salsa handy. Don't go for too much of an appetiser spread, since it's a late lunch; fuss over the main

The laid-back bash

Now that we have settled on what to call our party, let's not forget Eid ul Azha is right around the corner, no matter how stress-free we want to be, that will ultimately not be so; still, let's try to meet friends and hold an intimate party and chill awhile.

As it is, Qurbani Eid has its nerve wrenching moments, so to let off the pressure, you can have a no stuffiness involved late afternoon lunch with just finger foods, quick mocktails, easy decorations, and plenty of holiday spirit. However, Eid means a little extravaganza and particularly during this Eid, food takes the centre stage. So for a deshi twist in the menu with a slightly elaborate spread in mind, you can run a few cheat codes and make the tough part of cooking heavy meals easier.

First off, your invitees and where to seat them; just stick to your intimate four besties, because they too need a break from the hassles of Qurbani Eid and opt for a pleasant late lunch outside the dining room. Your roof-top garden is the ideal place, and if you don't have one, then your balcony overlooking the lake or the azure sky is fine. This location is just to break the monotony of being walled in. The more you see the sky or the greens, the more you become relaxed and calm.

The entire idea of this post Eid get-together is to relax, for which it's just the four of you, meeting to share a mutual reason to smile and laugh; and the brilliant idea to shake up a large pitcher of lemonade

may go well since the gang is together.

Next, it's time to dress up your home a bit, and you can decorate for this party without even breaking a sweat. For this elegant project, place a pink chequered table cloth or a white crochet lace one with vases full of garden blooms.

For any *al fresco* garden party, adorning the tables with natural blooms or greenery is a must. Let your table reflect the bright colours of the season by mixing up different shades of seasonal flowers for decorative arrangements. Plus the botanical richness of herbs and flowers' smell can play a big role in creating a welcoming and an appetite-

