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“There may be people that have more talent than you, but there’s no excuse for anyone to work harder than you.”

- Derek Jeter



The Best Trick-or-Treat House on the Block!

apartmenttherapy.com | goodhousekeeping.com | morty.com

If the arrival of spooky season has you dreaming up costumes and decorations, you’re in good company. Halloween is a favorite holiday in the United States and one of the most fun! With these tips, you could have the best trick-or-treat house on the block.

Make it Obvious

Most importantly, ensure the front porch is well-lit to signal your house is open for trick-or-treating. The more lighting the better – consider lit-up jack-o-lanterns and decorations and add lighting for walkways to make the path clear. Adding fall- or Halloween-themed decorations can help advertise that costumed visitors are welcome. You can keep it simple with a wreath or some window decals, or you can put on a fantastic show with scary figures, colored lighting, spooky music, and a fog machine. (Don’t make it too scary though if you don’t want to scare the little ones off.)

It’s All About the Treats

If you want that coveted spot as THE house to visit, you’ve got to have great treats. Now, keep them store-bought and pre-packaged because parents worry about poisoned treats, but use your imagination, and get the good stuff. Give uncommon treats to be remembered. Here are some ideas: hot cocoa, microwave popcorn, fruit roll-ups, gum, chips, crackers, or full-sized candy bars.

It’s great to offer allergy-safe and non-food options to make sure there’s a treat for everybody. It can be super fun to fill a bowl with princess jewelry, glow sticks, slime, bookmarks, collectible cards, miniature plushies, temporary tattoos, stickers, or any small toys you can think of.

Make it an Experience

It’s so much more fun when you have fun with it. Wear a costume to hand out treats, play music or a spooky sounds playlist, or set up motion-activated figures and lights. You could put something spooky in the bottom of the treat bowl or even have a small activity like decorating miniature pumpkins with colorful markers, making balloon animals, or taking instant photographs and giving them to the parents.

Take the experience to the next level by inviting your neighbors to stop over. Make smores on a front yard campfire, offer refreshments, and set up activities for the kids.



Caramel Apple Nachos

simplyrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 1 green apple, such as Granny Smith
- 1 red apple, such as Gala
- 1/2 lemon
- 1/3 cup caramel sauce, warmed
- 1/3 cup white or semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted

Optional Toppings

- 2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons toffee bits
- 2 tablespoons chopped salted peanuts
- 2 tablespoons mini M&Ms
- 2 teaspoons sprinkles

Directions

- 1. Prepare the apples:** Cut the apples into slices, adding them to a medium bowl, squeezing lemon juice over the top, and tossing them as you go to keep them from turning brown.
- 2. Drizzle the caramel and chocolate:** Arrange the apple slices on a plate. Drizzle the caramel and melted chocolate over the top.
- 3. Top the caramel apple nachos:** Top the caramel apple nachos with your choice of toppings, such as mini chocolate chips, toffee bits, chopped salted peanuts, mini M&Ms, and/or sprinkles. Serve immediately. Any leftovers should be stored in the fridge for a day or two. The apples will turn brown and some of the toppings may soften, so these are best eaten right away.



How to be a Great Host and Avoid Stress

psychologytoday.com | theglobeandmail.com

Our homes are our most personal, most intimate spaces – even the best houseguests disrupt our lives. If you're looking forward to visiting with friends and family this season, communication is key. These quick tips will help you make the most of your time together and avoid stress or hard feelings.

Dinner or a Party

When hosting a party, include both the start and end times in the invitation and let your guests know what to expect. Include what kinds of food to expect, the attire, and any special activities you have planned – for example, if you've hired a photographer for a rare extended family photo, let everyone know to gather at 6 p.m. in front of the fireplace for photos.

At the end of the night, wrap things up with your guests. Gather their coats and belongings, pack up some dessert for them to take home, and move the conversation to the entryway. To usher out lingering guests, put away the food and drinks, stop the music, and start cleaning up. One particularly clever way to make sure the party ends on time is to plan an outing at the end of the party – like a stroll through a local holiday light display or a movie.

Overnight Houseguests

When hosting overnight guests, again, include the end time in the invitation and let your guests know what to expect. Before the visit begins, discuss transportation, arrival time, departure time, accommodations, and house rules. For example, will they be sleeping in the guest room or on the couch? Are there allergies or food preferences to consider? Do they understand that foul language is not allowed in front of the kids? And is everyone very clear on the last day?

Plan activities during the visit, and plan for downtime as well. Overplanning will leave everyone tired and tense with little time for relaxation. Try scheduling one main activity per day, and don't be afraid to plan independent time too so your guests can explore on their own. Provide a map with your favorite places marked or a visitor's guide highlighting events and attractions in the area.



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