

# How to throw a holiday open house

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you are willing to face the next day.

## The bar

Set up the bar ahead of time. Put out glasses, a bucket for ice, and small bowls for citrus wedges and olives.

Consider filling a large container or bucket with drinks and ice so everything stays cold and people can help themselves.

Don't feel obligated to offer every beverage under the sun. Pick a few alcoholic and a few non-alcoholic ones, and just make sure you have enough of them.

## Decorations:

### Color, flowers, candles

You can certainly go all-in on the holiday decorations with garlands, wreaths, and light displays, or you can stay simple and still channel holiday cheer. Pops of color add a lot, and can be as simple as supermarket flowers in low vases; bowls of fruit; and votive candles spread throughout the space.

## Music/entertainment

If there's one thing that adds instant energy to a party, it's music. You can create a playlist (or ask a teenager for help!), or turn to streaming services like Spotify or Pandora; choose a theme and let the app create a continuous soundtrack. Or consider employing live talent (a small local band, a pianist, even your kids) if you have the space for it.

## Other tips

Decide how "open" your open house will be. Are you going to leave the door unlocked, or do you need to make sure someone is answering the doorbell (or apartment buzzer) throughout the evening?

Designate sufficient space for coats: Clear out a front closet, buy or rent a coat rack, or just pick a bedroom and direct

guests to put their coats there. If you are piling them on a bed, cover it first with a durable, washable bedspread.

Make a garbage can visible. (Or more than one.)

Be prepared to replenish the food as needed so the platters look appealing and the food doesn't sit too long.

Divide up responsibilities with your family, and think about hiring help (college students are often looking for some holiday income).

If you don't have space for a bar, clear off a bookshelf and make that the bar for the evening — it looks quite great.

Feeling a little better? Now take a moment to look around and see how many great people you have in your life.

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## Wrapping up the holidays in an eco-friendly way

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can use it for gift tags and cards, and then the paper can be soaked in water and planted by the gift recipient.

Los Angeles design studio Art Paper Scissors offers packets of little drawstring Hanukkah countdown goodie bags made of unbleached muslin printed with heat-transferred blue numbers.

InterfaithLiving in Silver Spring, Maryland, offers designs on Etsy.com that combine Christmas and Hanukkah images and messages printed on recycled, recyclable Kraft paper.



# Yukon Gold potatoes are the gold standard for this gratin

By America's Test Kitchen

Potato gratin is a notoriously heavy side dish, laden with cream and gooey cheese. We wanted to shift the focus of this classic side dish to the potatoes.

We chose Yukon Gold potatoes for their rich flavor and moderate starch content, which helped them hold their shape when cooked. Tossing the potatoes with fruity, flavorful extra-virgin olive oil heightened the flavor of the potatoes but didn't overpower them.

For a crisp, cheesy topping, we mixed more olive oil with panko bread crumbs and sprinkled the dish with sharp, salty Pecorino-Romano. For added depth, we added sautéed onions, fresh thyme, and garlic.

America's Test Kitchen provided this article to The Associated Press. More recipes, cooking tips, and ingredient and product reviews are available at <www.americastestkitchen.com>.



Joe Keller/America's Test Kitchen via AP

## Olive Oil Potato Gratin

Servings: 6-8

Start to finish: 2 hours

- 2 ounces Pecorino-Romano cheese, grated (1 cup)
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup panko bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper
- 2 onions, halved and sliced thin
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/8-inch thick, preferably with a mandoline

Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 400° Fahrenheit. Grease 13" x 9" baking dish. Combine Pecorino, three tablespoons oil, panko, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in a bowl. Set aside.

Heat two tablespoons oil in 12" skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onions, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook, stirring frequently, until browned, about 15 minutes. Add garlic and 1/2 teaspoon thyme and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add 1/4 cup broth and cook until nearly evaporated, scraping up any browned bits, about two minutes. Remove from heat. Set aside.

Toss potatoes, remaining three tablespoons oil, one teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon thyme together in a bowl. Arrange half of the potatoes in prepared dish, spread onion mixture in even layer over potatoes, and distribute remaining potatoes over onions. Pour remaining 3/4 cup broth over potatoes. Cover dish tightly with aluminum foil and bake for one hour.

Remove foil, top gratin with reserved Pecorino mixture, and continue to bake until top is golden brown and potatoes are completely tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 313 calories (160 calories from fat); 18 g fat (5 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 15 mg cholesterol; 545 mg sodium; 30 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 11 g protein.

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**The Year of the Pig begins February 5, 2019.**

Display advertising space reservations for our special Year of the Pig issue are due **Monday, January 21 at 5:00pm.**

The Asian Reporter's Lunar New Year special issue will be published on **Monday, February 4, 2019.**

## Economic chill dulls Chinese appetite for some luxury

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the past three months because of the economy. But he says the political tensions between China and the U.S. haven't been a factor — yet.

"When your confidence in the economy is off, whether it's here in the United States or in the China, you're going to cut back on your overall spending," he said.

AP writers Violet Law and Alice Fung in Hong Kong, AP researchers Yu Bing and Shanshan Wang in Beijing, and AP business writers Colleen Barry in Milan, Dee-Ann Durbin in Detroit, and Anne D'Innocenzio in New York contributed.

**The staff at The Asian Reporter wish you and your family a safe and happy 2019!**