

Fun themes for the office Christmas party

The office Christmas party is a way to thank staff for their awesome work throughout the year. You're trying to make the whole team feel appreciated, and have a bit of fun at the same time. So put away the cringe-worthy banners and mini-trees, and try one of these new Christmas party ideas.

1. The Amazing Race Party

This is a Christmas party and team-building exercise rolled into one. Organise a scavenger hunt to different locations in your area—it's great if you can rope clients and other stakeholders into hosting some of the stops. The last pitstop should be back at the party room, where a feast and some refreshing drinks await the weary travellers.

2. Winter Wonderland Christmas Party

Embrace the season with a Winter Wonderland theme. Decorate your party space to look like a wintery palace, with white draping, fairy lights, ice sculptures, glittering snowflakes, and cuddly polar bears.

3. Santa's Workshop Christmas Party

What's Santa making in the North Pole? Why don't you find out! Set up your party room to look like Santa's workshop—a corner for Santa visits, piles of presents ready to go on the sleigh, and different workstations where busy elves have fun activities for guests to do. Get someone in your office to wear a Santa suit—you can usually find some willing participant. Everyone can take turns getting

their picture with Santa—as the night goes on, the pictures will no doubt get sillier and sillier. It can be fun to also supply a few props to make photographs even more interesting.

4. Christmas Around the World Christmas Party

Practically every country, every religion and every culture celebrates a festival around Christmas time, even if they don't call it Christmas or associate it with the same sentiments. Why not celebrate these differences with your own Christmas Round the World party theme! This is a particularly awesome theme idea if you have a multicultural office. Encourage people to dress in national or traditional costume, or to think about how their ancestors celebrated Christmas. Have a range of traditional foods from different

cultures, and play a medley of Christmas and seasonal songs from around the globe.

5. Christmas Murder Mystery Christmas Party

At a murder mystery party, members of the team are each given an identity at the beginning of the night. They are to play their "character" throughout the night. Someone at the party has been murdered, and the murderer is one of the people at the party. It's up to you and your fellow guests to figure out who the murderer is, and the murderer has to try and evade suspicion. It's great to bring along some props and costumes to help everyone get into character. You can find downloadable scripts for murder mystery evenings online.



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Do's and Dont's of Christmas Parties

Do avoid gossip

If it's an office Christmas party, make particularly sure to avoid office gossip. Keep small talk general. Be armed with a few social icebreakers—stories of family, children, holidays—that you can share with anyone and that will offend no one. Office gossip and alcohol are a combination that are probably not going to end well.

Don't drink too much

A few people approach a Christmas party as a source of free booze and free food and overindulge. You can let your hair down, but you are still being judged and watched by the people around you. Know your limit and stick to it.

Do attend

For an office party, your attendance is optional, but it is a good idea to make an appearance to show that you are part of the team.

Do bring a gift for the host or hostess

This doesn't apply to office parties, but if it's a house party make sure you turn up with a gift. It doesn't have to be a big present, just a small gesture.

Do say thank you or email your thanks

Of course it's always good manners to thank the organizer of the party and it's always a good idea to send a thank-you email or text

the following day to those who put the work into organizing the party to let them know that their efforts are appreciated.

Do dress appropriately

Make sure you know what the dress code is and stick to it. If you are worried speak to other people about what they are planning to wear.

Don't trap people in long conversations

An easy trap some people fall into is to find someone you like who you want to talk to and you stay with them for the entire evening. Try not to hog people, ten or 15 minutes is fine, but longer than that is inappropriate unless you have just met your soulmate.

Don't leave people standing on their own

If you see someone standing on their own at a party, approach them and try to engage them in conversation. If they are not well known to many of the people at the party, try to find out some of their interests, and introduce them to those you know who have similar interests.

Don't leave too early

Always stay for a reasonable amount of time, especially if there is a sit-down dinner. Leaving early may look antisocial or unappreciative. In most cases, a lot of time and energy has been spent planning the Christmas party, and the hostess could be upset if people leave too early.

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