

TACO & NACHO BAR

Event Date: _____

Timeline & Checklist Planner

Guest RSVPs: _____

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

Planning Tasks

- ☐ Choose the date, time, and location.
- ☐ Determine your guest list.
- ☐ Estimate the number of people attending.
- ☐ Decide whether the taco bar will be the main meal or part of a larger buffet.
- ☐ Choose your taco proteins.
- ☐ Decide whether to include a nacho station.
- ☐ Select side dishes and desserts.
- ☐ Plan drinks and beverages.
- ☐ Check for food allergies and dietary restrictions.
- ☐ Choose your party theme or color scheme.

- ☐ Decide whether guests will bring food or drinks potluck-style. Choose buffet theme

Gather Materials

- ☐ Party invitations (digital and/or paper)
- ☐ Menu plan (or assign for potluck)
- ☐ Finalize guest list
- ☐ Serving dishes
- ☐ Slow cookers or warming trays
- ☐ Tablecloths or table runners
- ☐ Decorations (banners, centerpieces)—DIY or buy
- ☐ Print food labels & menus

1 WEEK BEFORE: Finalize the Menu

PROTEIN

- ☐ Ground beef
- ☐ Shredded chicken
- ☐ Carnitas
- ☐ Taco-seasoned ground turkey
- ☐ Black beans
- ☐ Refried beans

SHELLS & BASES

- ☐ Hard taco shells
- ☐ Soft flour tortillas
- ☐ Corn tortillas
- ☐ Tortilla chips
- ☐ Taco bowls
- ☐ Rice

CHEESES

- ☐ Shredded cheddar

- ☐ Mexican cheese blend

- ☐ Pepper Jack
- ☐ Queso

TOPPINGS

- ☐ Shredded lettuce
- ☐ Diced tomatoes
- ☐ Diced onions
- ☐ Green onions
- ☐ Cilantro
- ☐ Jalapeños
- ☐ Black olives
- ☐ Corn
- ☐ Avocado
- ☐ Pico de gallo
- ☐ Pickled onions
- ☐ Pickled jalapeños

SAUCES & CONDIMENTS

- ☐ Mild salsa
- ☐ Medium salsa
- ☐ Hot salsa
- ☐ Salsa verde
- ☐ Taco sauce
- ☐ Sour cream
- ☐ Mexican crema
- ☐ Hot sauce

SIDES

- ☐ Mexican rice
- ☐ Refried beans
- ☐ Black beans
- ☐ Street corn
- ☐ Mexican salad
- ☐ Fruit
- ☐ Guacamole

DESSERTS

- ☐ Churros
- ☐ Sopapilla cheesecake
- ☐ Cinnamon sugar chips
- ☐ Tres Leches cupcakes
- ☐ Cookies or brownies
- ☐ Fried Ice Cream

DRINKS

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Soda
- ☐ Tea
- ☐ Lemonade
- ☐ Agua fresca
- ☐ Horchata
- ☐ Topo Chico sparkling water
- ☐ Margaritas (if appropriate for your event)

3-5 DAYS BEFORE

Shopping & Prep

- ☐ Complete grocery shopping.
- ☐ Purchase ice.
- ☐ Buy disposable plates and utensils if needed.
- ☐ Purchase beverages.
- ☐ Pick up fresh produce.
- ☐ Check pantry for spices and seasonings.
- ☐ Wash serving dishes.

- ☐ Gather serving utensils.
- ☐ Check slow cookers and warming equipment.
- ☐ Prepare decorations.
- ☐ Print food labels.
- ☐ Print menu signs.

Hosting Equipment

- ☐ Slow cookers
- ☐ Warming trays

- ☐ Chafing dishes
- ☐ Serving bowls
- ☐ Serving platters
- ☐ Tongs
- ☐ Serving spoons
- ☐ Ladles
- ☐ Chip bowls or baskets
- ☐ Small bowls for toppings
- ☐ Squeeze bottles
- ☐ Ice buckets
- ☐ Beverage dispensers

1-2 DAYS BEFORE: Shopping & Prep

This is your **make-ahead** window. Getting as much done now as possible will make party day much easier.

FOOD PREP

- ☐ Cook taco meat.
- ☐ Prepare shredded chicken.
- ☐ Cook carnitas or other meats.
- ☐ Prepare beans.
- ☐ Make rice.
- ☐ Prepare desserts.
- ☐ Make salsa if using homemade.

- ☐ Prepare queso.
- ☐ Wash lettuce.
- ☐ Chop onions.
- ☐ Dice tomatoes.
- ☐ Chop cilantro.
- ☐ Prepare corn.
- ☐ Drain and rinse beans.
- ☐ Portion toppings into containers.

ORGANIZATION

- ☐ Label containers.

- ☐ Group toppings together in the refrigerator.
- ☐ Organize serving dishes.
- ☐ Set aside serving utensils.
- ☐ Create a buffet layout.
- ☐ Set up decorations that won't interfere with food preparation.
- ☐ Prepare a trash and recycling area.

TIP: Wait until day of to cut avocados and make guacamole to guarantee freshness

DAY OF THE PARTY: Morning Of/Hours Before

FOOD

- ☐ Prepare guacamole.
- ☐ Chop any remaining fresh toppings.
- ☐ Prepare queso.
- ☐ Reheat taco meat.
- ☐ Reheat chicken or other proteins.
- ☐ Prepare rice and beans.
- ☐ Arrange toppings in serving bowls.
- ☐ Put cold ingredients in the refrigerator until needed.
- ☐ Prepare desserts.

PARTY SETUP

- ☐ Set up buffet tables.
- ☐ Add tablecloths.
- ☐ Arrange decorations.
- ☐ Set out plates and bowls.
- ☐ Arrange napkins and utensils.
- ☐ Set up food labels.
- ☐ Set up the drink station.
- ☐ Fill beverage containers.
- ☐ Prepare ice.
- ☐ Set up trash and recycling bins.

1 HOUR BEFORE: Taco & Nacho Bar Setup

TIP: Arrange your buffet in the order guests will use it.

1. Plates & Bowls
2. Taco Shells, Tortilla Chips & Tortillas
3. Meat & Beans
4. Rice
5. Cheeses & Queso
6. Fresh Toppings
7. Salsa & Sauces
8. Extra Chips & Nacho Toppings
9. Napkins & Utensils



FINAL TASKS

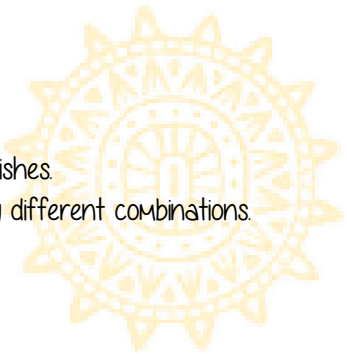
- ☐ Put hot food into slow cookers or warming trays.
- ☐ Set out taco shells.
- ☐ Warm tortillas.
- ☐ Put chips into baskets or bowls.
- ☐ Set out toppings.
- ☐ Set out queso.
- ☐ Add food labels.

TIP: For larger gatherings, consider creating two separate stations: a taco buffet and a nacho bar. This keeps the line moving and prevents guests from crowding around the same toppings.

DURING THE PARTY

- ☐ Refill popular toppings.
- ☐ Monitor hot food temperatures.
- ☐ Add fresh chips as needed.
- ☐ Replenish drinks and ice.

- ☐ Keep cold foods chilled.
- ☐ Remove empty serving dishes.
- ☐ Encourage guests to try different combinations.
- ☐ Enjoy your guests!



AFTER THE PARTY

FOOD

- ☐ Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
- ☐ Store taco meat in airtight containers.
- ☐ Package toppings separately.
- ☐ Label leftovers with dates.
- ☐ Freeze extra meat if appropriate.

- ☐ Clean slow cookers.
- ☐ Wipe down tables.
- ☐ Empty trash.
- ☐ Clean the kitchen.
- ☐ Pack away decorations.
- ☐ Store reusable party supplies.

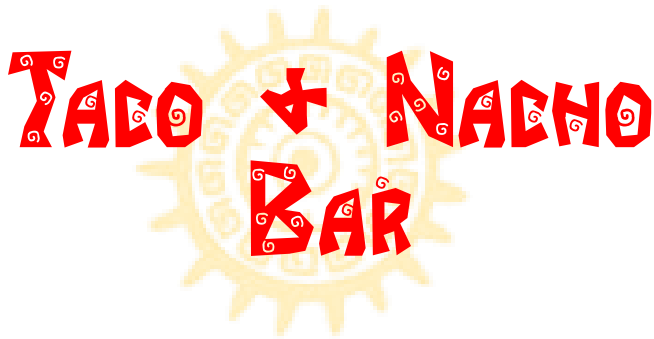
CLEANUP

- ☐ Clear buffet tables.
- ☐ Wash serving dishes.



NOTES FOR FUTURE TACO & NACHO BAR

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Event Date: _____

Guest RSVPs: _____

QUICK PLANNING GUIDE

Create a "Build Your Own Taco" sign with simple instructions:

Grab a shell → Pick your protein → Add cheese → Pile on the toppings → Choose your salsa → Dig in!

PLANNING

- ☐ Choose date
- ☐ Set guest count
- ☐ Plan menu
- ☐ Check dietary needs
- ☐ Send invitations
- ☐ Choose theme

FOOD

- ☐ Proteins
- ☐ Taco shells
- ☐ Tortillas
- ☐ Tortilla chips
- ☐ Cheese
- ☐ Toppings
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Queso
- ☐ Sides
- ☐ Desserts
- ☐ Drinks

EQUIPMENT

- ☐ Slow cookers
- ☐ Warming trays
- ☐ Serving bowls
- ☐ Serving utensils
- ☐ Plates
- ☐ Napkins

- ☐ Cups
- ☐ Utensils
- ☐ Ice
- ☐ Food labels

DECOR

- ☐ Tablecloth
- ☐ Centerpieces
- ☐ Banner
- ☐ Food signs
- ☐ Themed decorations
- ☐ Lighting

PARTY DAY

- ☐ Prep fresh toppings
- ☐ Heat proteins
- ☐ Warm tortillas
- ☐ Set up buffet
- ☐ Set up drinks
- ☐ Add food labels
- ☐ Put out chips
- ☐ Refill as needed
- ☐ Enjoy the party!

