

Ideas for a Kentucky Derby Party



Food. Southern favorites are always appropriate. Consider such things as:

- Kentucky Hot Brown sandwiches. Turkey, bacon and cheese sandwiches smothered in a cheesy sauce, invented in Louisville in 1926. You can find recipes online at sites such as www.thespruceeats.com/kentucky-hot-brown-turkey-sandwich-3061915
- Country ham and biscuits
- Bourbon balls
- Fried chicken
- Derby pie, a chocolate and walnut tart. You can find recipes online (such as <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/258239/kentucky-derby-pie/>). Or, simply order a premade one from Kern's Kitchen: www.goldbelly.com/kerns-kitchen

Cocktails. The mint julep is the iconic drink of the Kentucky Derby. Traditionally it is served in a silver julep cup, although tall glasses are equally appropriate. A perfect non-alcoholic option would be sweetened iced tea.

Decorations. Take a hint from the Kentucky Derby's nickname, the Run for the Roses, and decorate with red roses. You can use small bouquets of red roses as centerpieces, maybe even placed in traditional silver julep cups. Brightly colored tablecloths and napkins can honor the jockeys' colorful uniforms, called silks.

Programs. You can order official souvenir Kentucky Derby programs so your guests really feel like they're at the races. Churchill Downs will ship them out after the post position draw (minimum five program order).

Games. The actual race only takes two minutes, so keep your guests entertained before and after with a few Derby-inspired games

- Hat Contest

Invite all guests to wear a hat to your party and offer a prize for the best hat. The prize could be a horse-themed scarf for women or bow tie for men. Vineyard Vines is the official style of the Kentucky Derby and usually has derby-themed options.

- The Winning Draw.

Each guest draws a horse's name out of a hat to cheer for during the race. The guest paired with the winning horse wins a prize, maybe a red rose or a bottle of bourbon or even a chocolate-walnut tart.

- For Kids

Set up a game of horseshoes in the yard, or have the kids bring their own stick horses for their very own Run for the Roses.

Attire. For women, fancy hats are perfect –big flowered one especially – and dresses. For men, think classic seersucker suits or pants and shirts in bright shades of green, yellow, red or orange, and dress shirts in bright hues. A colorful bow tie or tie pulls it together.

Woodford Reserve Classic Mint Julep

- 2 oz. bourbon (the traditional is Woodford Reserve®)
- 1/2 oz. Simple Syrup (find recipes online or purchase at a liquor store)
- 3 Fresh Mint Leaves
- Crushed Ice

Muddle the mint leaves and rub them inside the glass. To the same glass, add simple syrup, bourbon and crushed ice. Stir. Garnish with more ice and fresh mint.