



# Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge #275

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks  
29 Overocker Rd, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603  
(845) 545-6660  
[events@bpoe275.org](mailto:events@bpoe275.org)

## When should you host a holiday event?

The holiday season may seem like it's still far away, but it will quickly sneak up on us all. It's not too early for you to get a start on your holiday event planning. After all, holiday events have a reputation. Break away from the stigma of canned fun and make your 2022 holiday event one for the books!

The priority of any holiday gathering should be about giving back and saying thank you. As holiday events have come to symbolize a gesture of gratitude, it's important to ensure a fun, memorable experience is had. From the menu to the bar tab, there are many unique and creative ways to host an unforgettable event—while staying within your budget.

### *Flexibility is Key*

Picking the perfect date is important. Most companies schedule holiday celebrations for Friday or Saturday evenings, so many of these timeframes may already be filled. By choosing an alternate day or time, you may have more options to choose from. Since these dates are very in demand, if you're planning a bit last minute or are budget constrained, consider having your event in early January.

Most importantly, The Elks Lodge can assist with every phase of arranging the meeting or event. You can then focus on coordinating more exciting elements, such as entertainment and activities.

### *Audience Engagement*

Non-traditional holiday events are also worth consideration. For example, there is a growing trend of companies hosting family-friendly outings, rather than adult-only functions. With these events, you can provide activities for all ages, such as breakfast with Santa, cookie-decorating stations, arts and crafts projects, and more.

It's that time of year when friends, families, and coworkers convene and connect, toasting to previous months and precious loved ones. Holiday events are a tradition of sharing warmth and spreading happiness—both of which are needed now more than ever. But they don't just happen—they take careful holiday event planning, from the timing and to the refreshments and activities. Want to host a Hanukkah, Christmas, or sans stress? Ahead, we'll walk through all the steps for planning and executing a fun, festive fete.

### *Planning a holiday event for families*

If you want to throw a event that includes families and children (perhaps even your own), we recommend waiting until early Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

### *Planning a holiday event for adults*

If you want to use your designated sitter night to hang with a crowd that's more mature (at least in age), host your big holiday event on a Friday or Saturday night to make sure people have time to recover.

If you and your crew don't have a weekend night to spare, you can easily throw something during the week—turn the literal and figurative volume down a notch. We find that Thursdays work well for either casual cocktails but others swear by Mondays. Nobody looks forward to a Monday, so give your friends something to put on the agenda. Think "happy hour"—if not literally 5 p.m., then a time that allows your guests a commute from work and reasonable return home.

### *Holiday event planning details*

For a event to go well, you'll need to think about a few things first. Before you figure out when, you should jot down your guest list

### *Find your dream holiday event theme*

Often, with the right combination of music and drinks, corralling your nearest and dearest is entertainment enough. But it never hurts to have some methods for merry-making up your sequined sleeve, especially if they suit the night's theme. Here are ways to keep friends and family having fun at your Christmas event.

A theme sets the tone for the entire event. Try to settle on one prior to sending invitations so that guests know what to expect and how to dress. Looking for holiday event inspiration? How about "Winter Wonderland"?

- Exchange holiday gifts. 'Tis the season for giving, after all. Organize a Secret Santa, White Elephant, or Favorite Things gift exchange, so everyone leaves with a treasured trinket (or at least a laugh).
- Have an ugly sweater contest. It's silly, it's cheesy, and it's a whole lot of fun. Don your worst holiday garb and vote on the very best worst look. Lucky for you, we have online ugly sweater event invitations too!
- Pose at the holiday photo booth. A striking backdrop, a tripod for a camera or smartphones, and some cute props are all you need for photographic fun. Use an instant film camera to send snaps home with your guests, or upload the camera reel into a shared album the next day.
- Sing karaoke or Christmas carols. Christmas *Carol*-oke anyone? Capitalize on the familiarity of holiday tunes with a holly jolly singalong.

### *What do you serve at a holiday event?*

The holidays wouldn't be the same without food, and it's a good idea to offer a little something at your fête. Whether you serve light bites or a full meal, make a note on the invitation so that guests know whether or not to eat beforehand. Your serving style will likely depend on the size of your celebration.. A full sit-down dinner is also lovely if desired. Finger foods and a buffet can be easier on the wallet and allow for more mingling. We're rebranding the KISS principle for holiday event planning: Keep It Simple/Special. In other words, it's better to have three to four great apps than a bunch of options. We love large platters that look abundant and serve lots of people without much fuss. Beyond meat and cheese trays, The Elks Lodge offers a variety of appetizer ideas.

Many hosts are intimidated by the bar tab, and some forego a holiday event altogether in fear of it becoming too expensive. Others decline paid beverage options and opt for a cash bar instead. If finances are tight, consider doing a limited drink menu with some themed drinks. However, it is possible to serve drinks while staying within your budget. Stick to one or two cocktails in a large format like a large beverage dispenser, punch bowl, or pitcher. Avoid playing bartender with made-to-order drinks. Sticking with punch bowls or beer and wine is one affordable option.

Have a hot cocoa bar. Set up a spread of toppings (marshmallows, candy canes, sprinkles, and spices) for revelers to make their hot chocolate. If it's an adults-only event, add a selection of liqueurs for spiking.

### *When to get started*

Now! The holiday season is competitive for event spaces so the sooner you nail down your date, the better. Speak our Event Planner Heather, at The Elks Lodge today!



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