

Little Dinner Guest

As the entertaining season approaches us, we usually work on menus and ideas for beautiful tables and fun events. Often times the fact that small children will also be in attendance is dismissed with providing toys, videos, coloring books, crayons and other things to keep them busy.

I always try to keep in mind that parents may also feel a little anxiety with bringing children into other homes, especially mine, which is about as "non" child-proof as it gets! Typically there are lit candles everywhere, (the bathroom ones are always fun for kids) open tread staircase, an open down staircase to the basement (no door) and the best is the horizontal railing just prime for an adventurous little one to climb up and over, oh did I mention my house is on a creek with no fence! Maybe the title of this post should have been "The Childs Hazard Home"!

It's easy (and judgmental) to say parents should just watch their kids all the time, but that's not always 100% possible, besides if parents feel like they have to work even harder in bring children along, then really what's the point in an evening out with kids? Therefore, as a good host it's part of your responsibility to keep them entertained by involving them into the evening as much as possible. As the evening progresses there may be the need for a movie or books, however, that should be their choice not yours!

I had the pleasure of hosting my Nephew Hans and his family for dinner this weekend, his two beautiful children Isla 4 and Shepard 3, were a delight to entertain! I decided to do a Mexican themed menu, thinking the food and flavors would be easily adaptable to little kid's palates. My goal was to integrate the children into the afternoon not segregate them. So I thought of some fun ideas that I could incorporate into the meal without taking away from the adult time that the parents were probably looking forward to as well!

So in serving drinks I choose to offer the kids Jarritos, these are Mexican sodas that come in fun flavors and colors. When it came to deserts we had an array of very authentic Mexican candy and the all-time favorite Mexican treat of Churros! We explained to the kids that these were Mexican candies and while this definitely was not a geography lesson, I felt I contributed just a little to their cultural awareness rather than just load them up with sugar ...okay so it was all sugar but there was a little lesson involved there as well. I think the biggest lesson was that the Tamarind paste candy wrapped to look like little tamales were not their favorite and the delicious strawberry filled Churros were!

So embrace the company of the little ones at your dinner table, it may not be oblivious to them or you at that precise moment, but a few special touches can go a long way in their world.



My beautiful great niece Isla trying Mexican marzipan candy!