

# Ideas for a Kentucky Derby Party



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

- Fried chicken
- Country ham and biscuits
- 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](http://www.thespruceeats.com/kentucky-hot-brown-turkey-sandwich-3061915)
- Bourbon balls
- Burgoo stew. You can find recipes online such as <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/221096/traditional-kentucky-burgoo/>
- 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](http://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.

**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.
- The Winning Draw.  
Each guest draws a horse's name from a hat. 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 horseshoes in the yard, or have the kids bring their own stick horses to race.

**Attire.** For women, fancy hats are perfect –big flowered one especially. For men, think classic seersucker suits or 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.

## Sources and Recommended Reading

*The Kentucky Derby: How the Run for the Roses Became America's Premier Sporting Event* (2013) by James C. Nicholson

*Two Minutes to Glory: The Official History of the Kentucky Derby* (2007) by Pamela Brodowsky

Movies: *50 to 1* (about 2009 Derby Winner Mine That Bird); *Secretariat* (2010 Disney movie starring Diane Lane)

*D is for Derby* (2014) by Helen L. Wilb



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