

BEST HOME CHRISTMAS PARTY

TAKEAWAYS FOR HOME

After sending out the invitations, dressing up the place and dealing with last-minute jaunts to the supermarket, you'll probably be ready for bed. So the only viable option is to cater. Here's a pick of our favourites.

1. The good folks at Coriander Leaf will plan, style and visualise your soiree down to the flatware. Buffets are restricted to dips, finger foods and salads, though if you're after something a bit swankier, they offer a personal chef and service option. 76 Robertson Quay, #02-01 The Evason. Tel: 6732 3354

2. No party is complete without sweet cakes and nibbles. Big O Cafe offers a self-pick-up catering service for up to 80 people (five days notice required) of anything from their in-house menu (including turkey and other roast goodies), plus, has a to-die-for ChocoFudge Logcake and Spike "D" durian flavoured logcake.

3. Add a distinct air of class to your dinner party with Marmalade at Home, a one-stop swish catering service. They can either tailor a special menu or just pick from their brunch, buffet, lunch and dinner sets. Tel: 6883 2258

4. If quiche or roasted vegetable fritatta squares and mini caramelised onion and Pancetta sound good to you, call Sharon or Helena at Epicurious. Their home catering services (for parties below 30 people) include canapés, hot mains, and desserts. 60 Robertson Quay, #01-02 The Quayside. Tel: 9678 6022.

5. The newly launched catering service Fostre offers reasonably priced menus for simple gatherings and more elaborate dos alike. They do anything from snazzy canapés to carvings of roasted beef strip loins. Table settings, chairs and linen are also provided. Order everything online at www.fostre.com or call 6288 0133.

6. The catering team from the Hilton hotel will bring Christmas to your doorstep with a festive menu that includes traditional fare like steamed langouste, mushroom consomme, stuffed roast turkey with cranberry gravy and log-cakes. All you need to do is to break out the champagne. Call 6730 3269.

7. And saving the best for last — if you're the happy recipient of a fat bonus and want to spread it around — the caterer of choice must be Les Amis. Live it up with fine Chinaware, silver cutlery, linen, service staff, personalised menu cards and of course, Les Amis' fabulous cuisine. The Joneses will have a hard time keeping up with you on this one. Call 6733 2225.



TAKE IT FROM THE PROS

How do Singapore's social party-throwers do it? We ask three local personalities.

- "Keep it chic and simple — the more elaborate the theme the more stressed out you will be. It's in the details; add a sprig of mint in your jug of iced water. And always have fresh flowers, like a single stem with a few stalks of bamboo looks great or a single orchid plant." — *Samia Ahad, home entertainer extraordinaire and owner of Coriander Leaf.*
- "It's all about a fun and exciting people mix. So, mix up the guest list, throw in a couple of wild cards, but make sure everyone knows at least one other person really well for comfort. And cardinal rule number one is never, ever run out of booze." — *Shareen Khattar, vivacious hostess and co-partner of the Marmalade group.*

IN TIMES OF NEED

Keep these emergency numbers handy. You never know when Murphy's Law will strike.

- **Tuck Lee Iceworks (Tel: 6474 2062) will deliver ice if you buy at least two bags (\$8 each) from them.**
- **For those blown fuse moments, Greenwood Electrical and Plumbing offers a handy 24-hour service. Tel: 6467 2493,**
- **The nearest hospital and taxi service.**
- **Your favourite fast food hotlines — to keep hunger pangs at bay.**

■ "Beg, borrow, steal or hire help! Borrow your friends' maids to help with cleaning up. Appoint a musically-inclined friend to be DJ. Co-opt a friend to be the hostess' assistant to help with serving drinks and introducing people. Encourage involvement; I make my guests fix their own drinks, and one for me. I also get them to help arrange the canapes while I dress." — *Sharon Lim, co-proprietor of Epicurious.*