



BIRTHDAY IN POP ART STYLE



What did parties in the 1950s use to be like? If you are curious and like all things vintage, try a birthday party that brings back the atmosphere, the memories and the fun of that decade.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

BEFORE THE PARTY

To prepare for the party, start with researching the 1950s. What were these years like in your area or country? What music did everyone listen to? What about the hottest dances? What were the trendiest clothes, accessories and hairdos? What were the most popular foods and drinks? How did people use to decorate their homes? More often than not, such memories are amusing and heartwarming. Include some details in the style of the 1950s into your party, and they will become the focal point of conversations and encourage your guests to share funny or nostalgic childhood stories. There are many different ways to create vintage atmosphere: you could play hit songs that date back to the 1950s, cook dishes and mix cocktails that used to be party favorites back then, decorate your room and table with the 1950s color palette and décor elements or give your guests some vintage accessories to wear during the party. Whatever your choice, this is going to be an experience to remember.

MUSIC

Here are a few suggestions on the music you could play during your 1950s party:

- Popular music stars of the early 1950s were Frank Sinatra, Patti Page, Tony Bennett, Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Dean Martin, Georgia Gibbs, Peggy Lee, Frankie Laine, Eddie Fisher, Nat King Cole and many others.
- Popular bands of that decade included “The Mills Brothers”, “The Chordettes”, “The Four Lads”, “The Fontane Sisters”, “The Hilltoppers”, “The Four Aces”, etc.
- The mid-1950s saw the rise of Rock-n-Roll musicians, such as Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Connie Francis, and such Rock-n-Roll and Doo Wop bands as “The Platters”, “The Coasters”, “The Flamingos” and “The Drifters”.
- Popular rockabilly musicians included Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, The Everly Brothers and Bill Haley.
- Jazz stars of the 1950s were Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday and many other talented artists.
- American folk music bands included “The Weavers”, “The Chad Trio” and “The Kingston Trio”.

DRINK AND FINGER FOOD IDEAS

Cocktail hours were first invented in the 1950s, so it might be an amusing idea to serve welcoming drinks and finger foods in the style of that era. At that time, soft drinks still mostly came in bottles, not cans, and in many homes fabric napkins were still preferred to the paper ones. The usual drinks served at such parties usually included wine, mineral water, ginger ale, punch (either alcoholic or non-alcoholic) and cocktails. The popular 1950s cocktails to serve as welcoming drinks as well as throughout the party could be Martini, Side Car, Gimlet, Tom Collins, Gin and Tonic, Whiskey Sour, Pina Colada, Mai Tai, Seabreeze, Zombie or Grasshopper, and the finger foods to go with them might include salted almonds, garlic olives, mini pizzas, deviled eggs, broiled stuffed mushrooms, broiled shrimp, silver dollar hamburgers, bacon wrap-arounds, deviled ham and cheese dip, canapés or tidbits in blankets. Add some more touch in the style of the 1950s by thinking of amusing names for your snacks, such as “Marilyn Monroe’s Whims”, “Sophie Loren’s Kisses” or “Marlon Brando’s Wild Ones”. Write the names on elegant cards and attach them to small sticks. To keep your name cards upright, stick them into a clementine or an apple, and place them next to the dishes with the finger food. You might also have a bouquet of fresh flowers, something simple and a little bit old-fashioned, such as carnations and greens in a cut glass vase.



AT THE PARTY

Welcoming of the Guests & Dinner (6.00 pm – 7.30 pm)

When the guests start arriving, offer them welcoming drinks and finger food, then follow the cocktails with a dinner in the style of the 1950s. Those were the times of hearty homemade dishes as there were no more post-war food limitations. If you decide to have an old-fashioned dinner, you might try some of the following dishes:

- Broth (mushroom or clam)
- Cream of chicken/celery/mushroom soup
- Lettuce or mixed salad with sour cream
- Cucumber or mixed salad with French dressing
- Molded salad (vegetables/chicken/salmon/crab)
- Potato salad
- Sole with orange sauce
- Grilled kabobs
- Baked ham with glaze
- Fluffy meat loaf
- Swedish meat balls
- Veal chops in curry sauce
- Ham patties
- Buttered or creamed vegetables.



The meal is going to be pretty heavy, so we suggest putting the dessert off until later and having some fun right after the main dish.

Games (7.30 pm – 9.30 pm)

Birthday Pop Art

Pop art, which emerged in the 1950s, was a new art movement that employed aspects of popular culture and emphasized mundane objects. Pop artists often used images from news, comic books and advertising to challenge the traditions of fine art as well as to respond to the ideas of abstract expressionism.



Collage is a technique frequently used to produce works of pop art, so, if you think that your guests might be interested, make a collage for the birthday person. Prepare a big sheet of paper or cardboard, glue and scissors; leaf through magazines and tear out pages containing advertisements and all kinds of daily objects or actions. If you can find some comic books, add those, too.

At the party, suggest the guests making a collage in the style of pop art as a gift for the birthday person. Whenever the guests feel like it, they approach this work of art in progress and add to it a photo or two. The photos serve as messages to wish the birthday person something nice or say the things that you have been meaning to say for a long time. For example, if you want to wish the birthday person good health, add a photo of apples or grapes, and if you think that the birthday person has a great sense of humor, find an image that shows people laughing or a comedian performing on stage. The birthday person, as well as everyone else, will have great fun trying to work out the messages expressed in the photos.

Dress-up Race

While the collage is being done, you might want to play some other games to keep everyone occupied. To prepare for the race, collect some funny clothes and accessories and put them in a bag. At the party, everyone sits in a circle. Some music is playing and the bag is being sent around. When the music is paused, the person who has the bag at that moment has to take one item out of it and put that item on as fast as possible. Then the music resumes playing and the bag is sent around again. The game goes on until everyone (or almost everyone) is dressed up 'nicely'. You might want to take photos of the 'outfits' – it is really a great fun.

Drive It Lazily

One person leaves the room, and the rest decide on an adverb, for example 'lazily'. The person comes back and has to guess what adverb had been chosen. He asks each guest a question which has to be answered in the manner of that adverb. If the guessing person still can't guess the adverb, he can ask each guest to act out some situation, for example, driving a car, in the manner of that adverb. Then another guest is chosen to leave the room, and the game continues.

Ask the guests to put the final touches to the collage and think of a title, and then give the gift to the birthday person.

Birthday Cake (9.30 pm – 10.00 pm)

By now everyone is most probably ready for some birthday cake. To stick to the style of 1950s, you might try one of these delicious cakes: Chiffon Pie (lime, orange, banana, strawberry, chocolate or pineapple), Coconut Cake, Chocolate Cherry Cake, Angel Food, Velvet Spice Cake, Chocolate Banana Cake, Peppermint Pie or Devil's Food Cake.

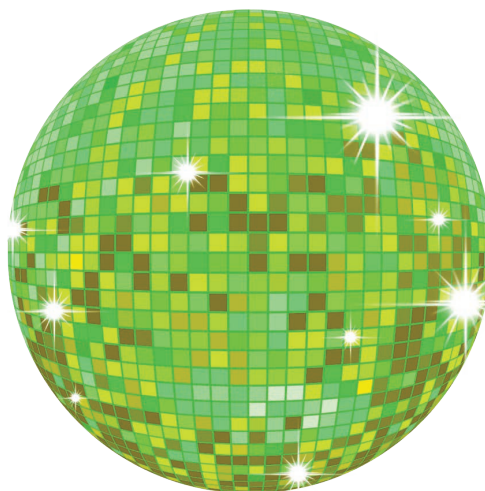
Sky Lanterns (10.00 pm – 10.15 pm)

Birthdays are about wishing, and the more the better. Invite the guests to go outside and give everyone Chinese sky lanterns. Allow some time to think of a wish. When everyone is ready, light the lanterns and launch them, all at the same time. This should turn out to be a beautiful highlight of the pleasant evening with your friends and family. If there is a river or a lake nearby, the sky lanterns can be replaced with water lanterns.



A Disco (10.15 pm – ...)

If you wish to continue the party, a disco of the 1950s could be a good option. If you and your guests are keen on singing, you might want to sing karaoke; or maybe you just want to enjoy each other's company and another drink or two.



We wish you a stunning party!