

The Guest List

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Online invitations are convenient (assuming your potential guests have computers); however, they're not appropriate for all occasions, as their casual feel tends to undermine the importance of an event. Read on to determine what's right for your party.



> ONLINE ONLY

E-vites, or electronic invitations, are free to send and receive. You also save on stamps — and trees — as you won't have to keep lists or use paper. All you do is select a design, add the desired information, enter your guests' email addresses, and click "send." You can keep track of who is coming and who hasn't yet replied (your invitees will also know who else has been invited). Often, guests have the option to ask questions or add comments when they RSVP. You can add polls, let guests select items to bring (perfect for potlucks), and offer guests the option to invite a friend or significant other. E-vites are also great if you're in a time crunch and don't have enough time to address and mail out invitations.

Best For: Informal parties and get-togethers, such as movie nights, game nights, girls' night out or casual dinner parties

Cons: Will your guests think you're cheap? Older family members might not be online. E-vites can get lost in busy inboxes. Email addresses change frequently.

Recommended Sites: Evite.com, Facebook.com, BlueMountain.com

> PRINT PREFERRED

Print invitations are a must-have for any elegant occasion. Express your individual tastes by customizing the card with calligraphy, design and even personal photos. With hundreds of printers and styles to choose from, the creative possibilities are endless. This traditional option also provides privacy, allowing only those invited to attend (unlike emails that could be forwarded, unbeknown to the original sender). Printed invitations also have sentimental value, and cards are often kept as mementos (think scrapbooks, albums or desk ornaments).

Best For: Birthdays, anniversaries, showers, engagement parties, weddings, other formal celebrations

Cons: Depending on how large the guest list is, print invitations can get expensive. Mailing hundreds of invites is time-consuming.

GO GREEN

Make Your Invites Eco-Friendly



Just because there's a towering stack of print invitations on your desk doesn't mean that dozens of trees were compromised in the making. Alternative paper sources and inks offer an eco-friendly twist on traditional invitations.

Vegetable-Based Ink

Soy ink is a "green ink" that is popular in the print industry. Unlike standard petroleum inks, which are made from nonrenewable resources, these eco-friendly inks are composed of renewable resources such as soy, flax and canola. Petroleum ink is also hazardous to the environment as it emits more than 30 percent volatile organic compounds, a main contributor to air pollution. Soy and vegetable-based inks are formulated for a 2 to 15 percent VOC.

Recycled Paper

Crumbled misprinted documents, letters or any paper product can be recycled to create new paper for reuse. This ecological procedure requires less energy, water and chemicals to manufacture than fresh paper. Recycled paper is typically inexpensive and easily available, and it looks and feels the same as new paper.

Seeded Paper

Produced from post-consumer materials, this biodegradable paper contains seeds that are pressed into the paper pulp during the manufacturing process. The idea is simple: plant the paper in soil, water, and watch the seeds grow while the paper becomes compost. With seeded paper, guests will receive a beautiful invitation and a complimentary botanical party favor. ■

> Increase your odds of getting an accurate RSVP count: Include a phone number, email address or stamped return envelope with the invitation.