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—PAUL DiMEO, carpenter
on ABC's *Extreme
Makeover: Home Edition*

MORE TIPS

ENTERTAINMENT. A great mix of music is really all you need at a party. I usually hook up my iPod through my sound system, then set it on random or create a mix. If you really want to wow guests, create an outdoor movie theater. All you need is a laptop with a DVD player and portable speakers to plug in, a clean flat surface (like a garage door or wall), a projector (which you can rent pretty inexpensively), and a movie that complements your theme. Since I'm going with a beach theme, I'll opt for *Riding Giants* or *Jaws*.
FOOD AND DRINKS.

Keep it simple. For my soiree, I'm going with a good old-fashioned barbecue potluck. That way I can focus on the patio, the main course, and a signature drink of the night—mine is the mai tai.



OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING

Follow Paul DiMeo's not-so-extreme tips for a fun and simple fall party

With summer behind us, the annual migration from outdoor to indoor living is right around the corner. What better way to celebrate the last days of nice weather than by inviting friends and family to a fall patio party?

INVITES. Stick with a theme for your invitations so people get their first impression of the party upon receipt of the invite. For my party, I plan to select something with a beach or summer theme.

DECOR. Use existing patio furniture and spend your time and money on creative decorations to personalize and energize your space. Use flowering potted plants rather than cut-flower bouquets as centerpieces; they will last longer and make great party favors. For an outdoor party, I love to use industrial-style construction paper as a tablecloth. You can get it on a 3-foot-wide roll, which usually covers most tables. Paper tablecloths provide a clean palette to be creative with

crayons or markers, a great way to get people interacting when they arrive. And cleanup after the party is a snap.

If you don't have patio furniture, don't worry. It's very simple to create outdoor seating. Pick up two or three sawhorses (depending on the length of table you want) at any hardware store and a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch piece of plywood. Prop the plywood on the sawhorses to create a quick table that can be used anytime.

Lighting is key to creating the perfect ambience. I like to combine overhead and ground lighting, so paper lanterns and candle torches in beach pails with sand or dirt work well. Have some fun mixing and matching the colors and sizes to display on your patio. Put some in the front for guests to enjoy as they enter the party.

ATTITUDE. Have fun! What's most important is that as the host, you enjoy the party, too. Relax and enjoy your outdoor space with friends and family.