

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

How to Throw an Elegant, All-White Dinner Party (According to the Host of NYC's Dîner en Blanc)

In honor of the iconic fête, we asked cohost [Linda Davis](#) to disclose her best tips

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Dîner en Blanc's 2015 event in Charleston, South Carolina.

Photo: Jennifer Heffner

Dîner en Blanc, the world's largest pop-up party, returns to [New York](#) on September 15 for the sixth year in a row. A record 5,000 people will descend on a yet-to-be-disclosed location for an elegant all-white picnic replete with gourmet food, excellent wine, fabulous fashion, music, and revelry. The tradition started almost 30 years ago in Paris when François Pasquier, who had returned to his hometown after some time spent abroad, united a group of friends for a picnic and

asked everyone to wear white so they could find each other. The fête grew organically every year and spread to other cities, eventually becoming a worldwide phenomenon that now takes place in 70 cities across five continents. Linda Davis, cohost of [Dîner en Blanc New York](#), shared five tips for people who'd like to re-create the experience at home.



Last year's Dîner en Blanc in New York.

Photo: Joe Cavallini

Food “Focus first on the menu. Any dinner party is an opportunity to do something special for your guests and to wow them with creative, delicious food. With today’s farm-to-table movement, the possibilities of infusing fresh flavors are endless. When we think of white, we think [crisp and summer](#). A seasonal, light menu that parts from easy weeknight meals sets the tone for a dinner party. We love putting a printed menu on guests’ place settings so they can visualize the courses set before them throughout the evening. Your all-white dinner party can use descriptive language and play on words to draw on the all-white theme, like *en blanc* sauce, crème fraîche, and white chocolate–dipped deliciousness.”

Fashion “Our all-white dinner parties have a strict dress code that still allows guests to be incredibly creative. No off-white, ivory, or pops of color. Our guests accessorize with white jewelry mixed with natural and metallic elements. White hair pieces like fresh flower crowns, feathers, fascinators, and hats top off your *en*

blanc look. Our fashion-forward guests know no limits when it comes to dressing themselves for this special evening. Whether you choose a beautiful linen suit, a sheer lace dress, or even your wedding gown, we encourage thinking outside the box when it comes to fashion.”

Floral Arrangements “Choosing white flowers can be so fun. When planning an *en blanc* party, source the flower mart for texture, fragrance, and a selection of varying sizes of buds. The beauty in a monochromatic centerpiece or a series of simple miniature bud vases paired with an abundance of glass votive candles running the length of your table creates an ethereal atmosphere that will complement your menu.”

Festive Decor “The decor of an all-white dinner party is perhaps the most fun! We do it up with beautiful, textured white linen; embellished dinnerware; unique, one-of-a-kind serving pieces; and an abundance of glass, either antique or contemporary. We suggest adding silver or gold utensils and napkin holders for accent color, and perhaps using mercury glass votive holders of all shapes and sizes. Soft lighting brings white to life.”

Fun “A themed party brings a sense of anticipation and fun to an evening, but an all-white dinner party adds elegance to that. White cocktails that greet your guests, white passed hors d’oeuvres served on glass platters, a spot of dry ice dropped into your Champagne glass before pouring are just some of the unexpected elements that can be added to the evening. Dress your sideboard with white confetti poppers, tie white balloons to the entrance of your home, place white masks at each guest’s dinner seat, or hand out white paper fans if you’re in the garden. Any of these are fun and unexpected treats for your guests.”