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Halloween Party Shopping List

How much to actually make, for 8, 12 or 20 people · 1 page

Quantities are for a four-hour grazing party where the board is the meal — that is 6 oz of dip, 3 oz of bread and 3 oz of fruit per person. Serving a main course as well? Halve everything except bread, ice and dessert.

MAKE — FIVE THINGS, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE LIST

Three dips, one warm anchor, one drink

Item	8	12	20	Notes
Dark dip — black tahini hummus	**2 cups**	**3 cups**	**5 cups**	3 days ahead
Red dip — muhammara	**2 cups**	**3 cups**	**5 cups**	3 days ahead — it improves
Earthy dip — baba ganoush or beet	**2 cups**	**3 cups**	**5 cups**	3 days ahead
Warm anchor — feta wrapped in phyllo	**1 block**	**2 blocks**	**3 blocks**	Wrapped the day before, baked on the night
Batched drink base	**64**	**96**	**160**	Glasses — two per person per hour. Soft drinks are not paced

BUY — EVERYTHING ELSE

Being ruthless about this split is what keeps a party enjoyable to host

Item	8	12	20	Notes
Bread, crackers and dippers	**1½ lb**	**2¼ lb**	**3¾ lb**	Buy over. Flatbread freezes, crackers keep
Large flatbreads / crackers	**4 / 2 bx**	**6 / 2 bx**	**9 / 3 bx**	One thing that shatters, one that resists
Fennel bulbs / endive	**1 / 2**	**1 / 2**	**2 / 3**	
Anchors — cheese, pastries, protein	**1½ lb**	**2¼ lb**	**3¾ lb**	Far less cheese than a cheese board
Fresh and dried fruit	**1½ lb**	**2¼ lb**	**3¾ lb**	Grapes on the stem, figs, dates
Pomegranate, for scattering	**1**	**2**	**3**	
Olives and pickles	**12 oz**	**1 lb 2 oz**	**1 lb 14 oz**	
Nuts	**8 oz**	**12 oz**	**1¼ lb**	Toast them. Four minutes
Raw vegetables	**1 lb**	**1½ lb**	**2½ lb**	They fill gaps cheaply
Dessert	**16**	**24**	**40**	Pieces, across two options only
Ice	**8 lb**	**12 lb**	**20 lb**	Under-bought, right after bread
Glasses	**16–24**	**24–36**	**40–60**	Two each if you wash up, three if not
Sparkling water, to top each glass	**—**	**—**	**—**	Budget two glasses per person per hour

THE SPECIALIST SHOP — DO THIS THREE WEEKS OUT

One trip, and the last week is a supermarket run

- [ ] **Black tahini** — unsweetened
- [ ] **Tahini, white**
- [ ] **Pomegranate molasses** — juice concentrate, not glucose syrup
- [ ] **Aleppo pepper and sumac**
- [ ] **Phyllo pastry, feta in blocks**
- [ ] **Roasted red peppers in jars, walnuts, chickpeas**
- [ ] **Squid ink, if you are making the pasta**
- [ ] **Good olive oil, for finishing**

SIX RULES THAT SAVE MONEY AND IMPROVE THE PARTY

Three dips, not six.
Six bowls gets a polite half-spoon of each. Three makes people commit to one and come back to it.

Buy 10% over on anything you trim.
A pound of grapes on the stem is not a pound of grapes on the board.

Cater for attendance, not invitations.
Plan slightly under your confirmed numbers and keep one reserve bowl of dip back.

Two hours out is a safety limit.
One hour above 90°F. Swap the bowl rather than topping it up — topping up resets nothing.

Ask about allergies with the invitation.
Sesame, tree nuts, dairy, and molluscs if there is squid ink anywhere.

Build the board full.
A sparse board looks like a mistake and stops people eating from it at all. Keep a reserve tray.