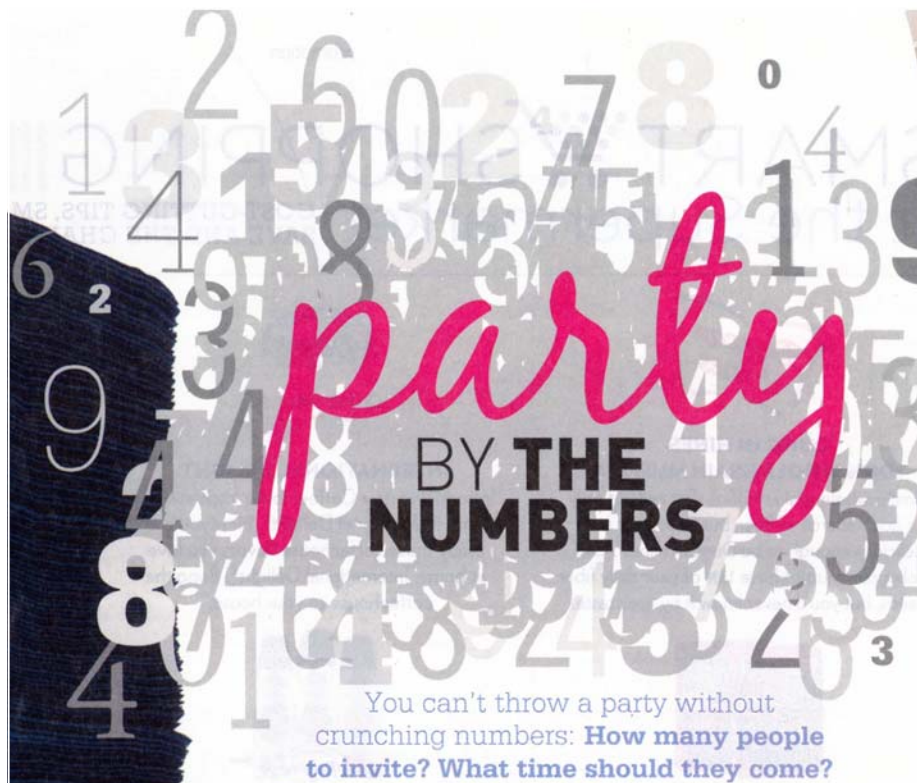


EVERY DAY

with RACHAEL RAY



You can't throw a party without crunching numbers: **How many people to invite? What time should they come? How much cash to spend?** We've got answers to all that and more. Keep these digits handy, and your bash will come together in a fraction of the time—and cost.

BY ELIZABETH JENKINS | RECIPES BY WENDY KALEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PLAMEN PETKOV

a numbers game

Our experts solve a slew of party dilemmas.

How to plan a menu when **4** of the guests are vegetarian and you want to serve meat

"I love meat and just can't seem to give it up," says Rafanelli. "However, if I am having eight people for dinner and four are vegetarian, that's a significant number. The meat should complement a vegetarian meal that you've prepared so they don't feel left out."

How to handle a guest who brings **8** photo albums from her latest travels

"Just because they brought eight doesn't mean you have to look at all eight," says Rafanelli. "Be gracious. Look at the first one—and then hide the others!"

How to incorporate your **12-year-old** nieces into the "grown-up" conversation

"I talk to them like they're adults," says Rafanelli, who has coordinated his share of bar and bat mitzvahs. "I don't baby-talk them. I do, however, try to search for a funny story or say something silly. Act a little clownish. I think a comparison story, like 'When I went to camp...', is always good."