

# MANTEL *and* TABLE

HOSTING NOTES

July 2025

*Stars & Stripes*



Complete Plan & Inspiration  
for Hosting in July

# Welcome to the Table

## STARS & STRIPES FOR JULY!

Welcome to the July 2025 issue of Monthly Hosting Notes!

This month is all about the summer patriotic holidays - lots of red, white, and blue to inspire us! This palette would work beautifully for Independence Day and Labor Day in the US - even next Memorial Day.

The UK, France, The Netherlands, and lots of other countries use these colors too, so this works all over the world!

This month, not only do we have a lovely and playfully elegant dinner party table, we have a super easy DIY for a perfect salad plate that you won't even have to store!

And don't forget the playlist - our very own mix - for an elegant start, a lively dinner vibe, and some late-night firework energy!

Thanks so much for joining me this month! Here's to Happy Hosting!



*Barbara*

SET THE TABLE. SET THE TONE. SET THE STANDARD

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A vibrant, festive, and elegant table for the grownups at your holiday celebration including gorgeous printables and a fun & easy DIY!

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Under a canopy of summer green, this elegantly patriotic table sets the tone for a fun and relaxed evening. It's a fresh take on tradition - at the same time gracious and relaxed.





Who says patriotic can't be posh? (At least the grownup table!) This 4th of July, we're trading checkered tablecloths for tailored linens, plastic flags for crystal glassware, and ketchup bottles for candlesticks. Welcome to Stars & Stripes: The Elegant Edition - a celebration of summer's most iconic holiday, reimagined with timeless flair and a host's eye for detail.



Let's talk about the table!

Our first layer is a beautifully subdued red and white linen tablecloth - perfect for a subtle and breezy take on our beloved stripes.



We have several different reds, which creates a deep layered feel, and gives a more relaxed vibe to our elegant tablescape.

You likely won't have exactly the same color variations we have here, but you can still use the concept of layering different shades of the same color to add depth and sophistication to your table.



The plate stack is the blue and white portion of our red, white, and blue scheme. And with the red napkin on top, it brings in our three-color idea.

The star plate is actually a ridiculously easy DIY project that makes a huge impact. (More on that later.) If you can use silver-colored flatware, you'll help tie the whole place setting together.

Once again, we continue that more relaxed feel with the unstructured drape of the napkin, both around the menu, and off the edge of the table.




Beautiful flatware and glassware are always a good idea. And of course, the formality of the silver and crystal is what helps make this table elegant.

The fun thing about it is that there's such a great mix of the formal and the casual. Your guests might laugh at the fact that they're going to be eating hamburgers and steak fries at this beautiful table! (They're the elegant versions of hamburgers and fries, but still!)



Guests always feel special, and love to find their seats by looking for their names on a place card! These cards were designed specially for our Stars & Stripes table, using the colors of the tablecloth and plates. You can see in the background that the back of the cards are decorated too, so your guests won't have to be looking at a blank piece of paper across from their otherwise lovely setting.

Look for the printable and editable versions of these - and the menus and invitations - coming up.



# MENU

## From the Grill

BAYON BLUE BURGER  
ON BRIOCHE

## On the Side

STEAK FRIES  
WITH AIOLI

## Salads

FIELD GREENS WITH  
RAWBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES  
& FETA

## Sweets

WHITE CHOCOLATE  
MOUSSE

## Beverages

BLUEBERRY LEMONADE  
COCKTAIL





**MENU**

**From the Grill**  
FOR THE BUNGER  
FOR THE BUNGER

**On the Side**  
FOR THE BUNGER  
FOR THE BUNGER

**Salads**  
FOR THE BUNGER  
FOR THE BUNGER

**Vegetables**  
FOR THE BUNGER  
FOR THE BUNGER



And finally, the decor. Again, there's that mix of formal and casual. Silver bowls with garden flowers in no particular arrangement.

The silver isn't necessarily polished, either. Unless it's really hideous, unpolished silver can be lovely. A slightly tarnished piece can add an extra patina to the table.



**MENU**  
From the Grill  
On the Side  
Salads  
Sweets  
Desserts

**MENU**  
From the Grill  
On the Side  
Salads  
Sweets

**MENU**  
From the Grill  
On the Side  
Salads  
Sweets

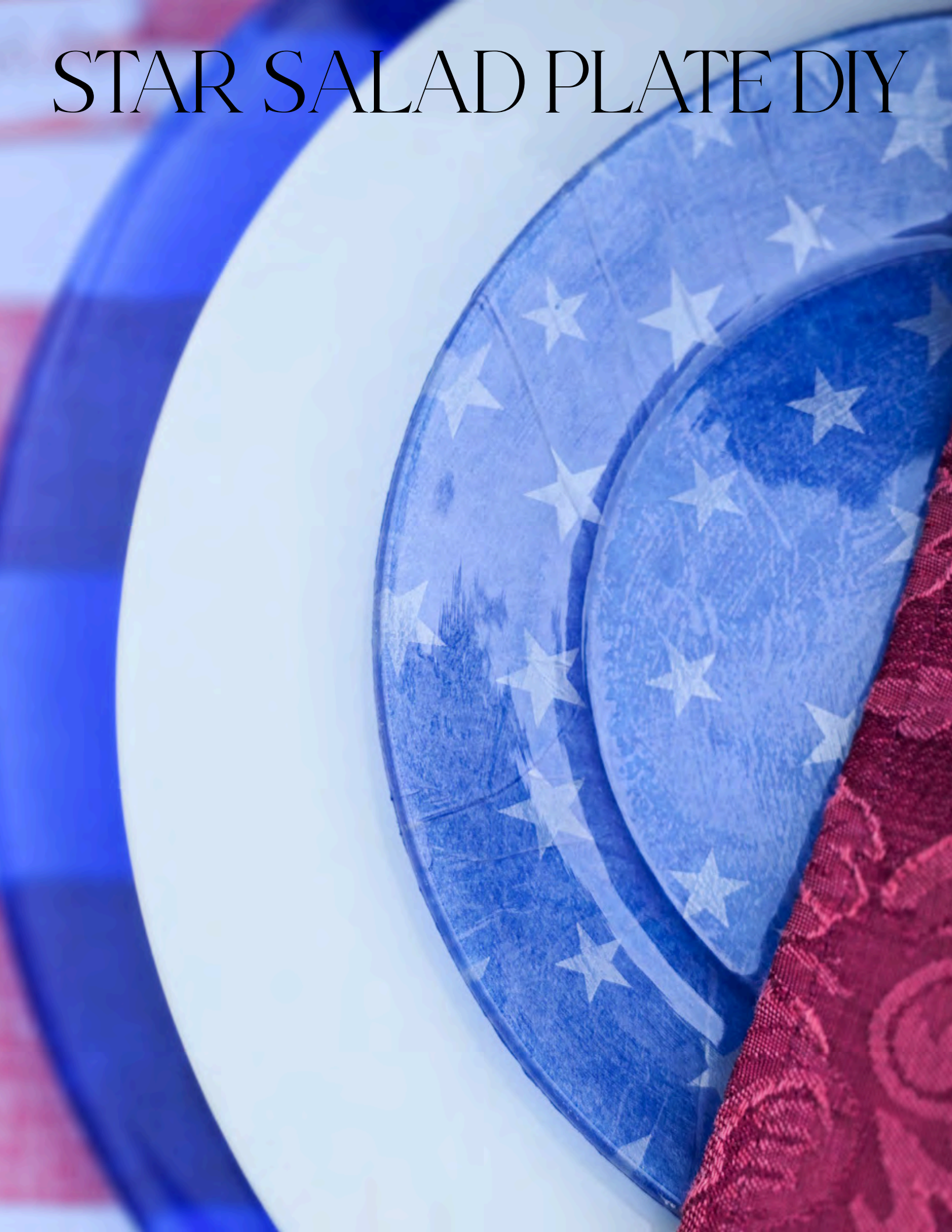
ALAN



Candles! They add just the right elegant final touch to any table. The candles on our Stars & Stripes table are a bright red compared to the brick, maroon, and rose reds of the other pieces. With all the muted elegance of the other shades, it's fun to have some "official" red.

If there's any breeze outside, you might want to use some hurricane chimneys around your candles - just to be safe - and to save your linens!

# STAR SALAD PLATE DIY



# STAR SALAD PLATE DIY

## TEMPORARY

These plates are pretty and fun and perfectly appropriate for a festive holiday! But the most wonderful thing about them is that they're temporary!

Because of a special adhesive, you can have a plate that stands up to use at dinner, and then the design washes right off!

You don't have to store a whole other set of dishes - you can have one set of clear glass that you can dress up any way you want, and use over and over!

## ALEENE'S TACK-IT OVER & OVER

The key to the temporary plate is this amazing substance called Aleene's Tack-it Over & Over. It's a special kind of glue that holds strong when it dries, and soaks right off afterwards!

I think of it as the plate equivalent of a Post-It note!

Aleene's has changed my plate stack life! An endless supply of different plate designs, and only one set to store.

And it literally takes less than 15 minutes to create an entire dinner table's worth of plates!

## TISSUE PAPER

The other magic element is tissue paper. It's inexpensive, and the pattern selection is practically unlimited! You can use paper napkins too.



# EASY INSTRUCTIONS



01 - Gather supplies



02 - Cut out paper



03 - Spread Tack-It



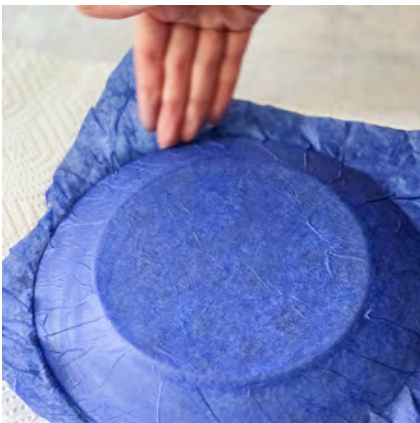
04 - Lay paper over plate



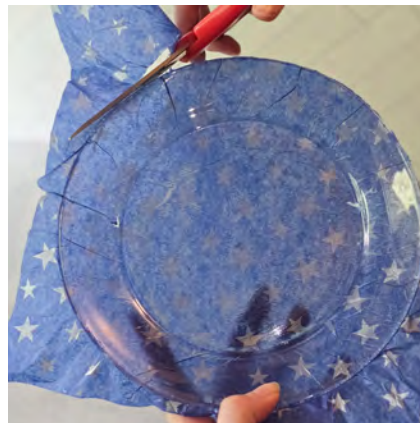
05 - Press paper down



06 - Smooth out wrinkles



07 - Sharpen edge



08 - Cut off excess paper



09 - Enjoy your plates!

# DIY PLATE TIPS

## CUT YOUR PAPER

I like to roughly measure the size of paper I'll need for each plate, then cut them all out at once. It saves some time and makes your process even faster.

## THIN COAT OF GLUE

One thing to keep in mind is that the thinner the paper, the thinner your coat of Aleene's should be. The paper's more likely to rip if there's a lot of glue - you don't need very much.

## SMOOTHING THE PAPER

You probably won't be able to get all the wrinkles out of the tissue paper when you're spreading it over the plate, but that's ok. By the time the glue dries, the wrinkles and brush marks are barely visible. I've never had a guest notice either one.

## SHARPEN THE EDGE

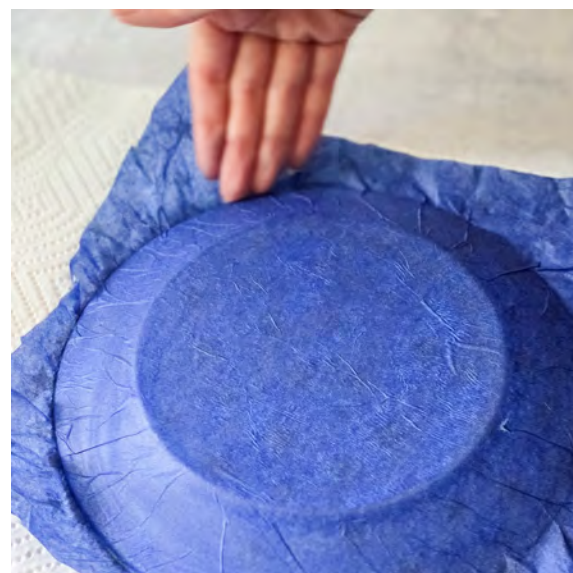
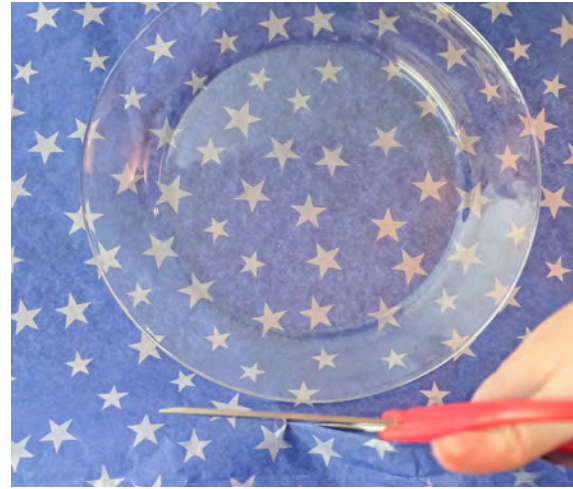
After the paper is all smoothed down, I like to run my fingernails around the edge, just to get a nice crisp finish and make sure the paper is tight.

## WASH IT OFF!

When dinner's done, all you have to do is soak your plates for just a minute or two, then wipe the paper right off. The glue will come off with it, and you're left with a lovely clean plate!

## DIY VIDEO

If you want to see a little video I made of this process, visit [Do you want a fabulous solution to two classic table setting problems?](#)



# STARS & STRIPES PRINTABLES



# STARS & STRIPES PRINTABLES

## SOMETHING SPECIAL

One of the most memorable elements of a nice dinner party is the special touches - like custom place cards, a printed menu, and of course, a private invitation!

And we have the very thing right here! These have been created in the Mantel and Table Stars & Stripes design, and will blend perfectly with the tablescape we have here, or with your own red, white, and blue design.

The stars on the blue background is the exact same pattern as the one on the DIY salad plates - a perfect match!

## SENDING YOUR INVITATIONS

Once you've printed your invitations, you can prepare them for mailing or delivering by hand.

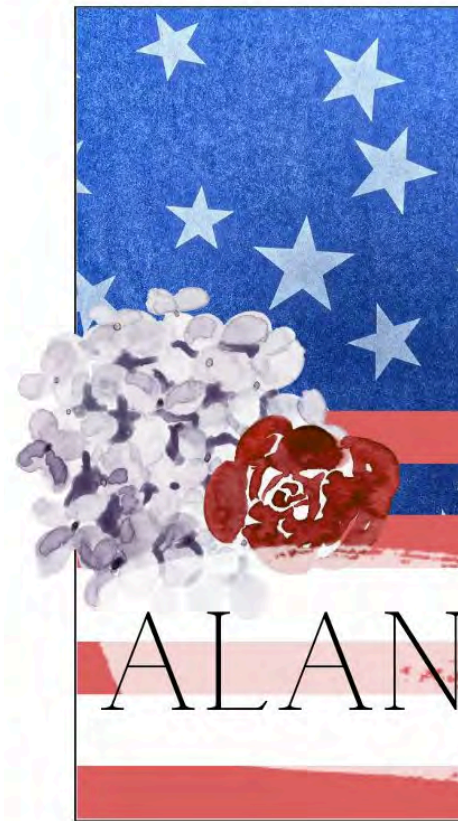
Just fold them in half with the white side out, and seal them with a sticker at the top. I've included a couple nice choices in the sourcing notes.

You can write the names and addresses on the outsides, and if you have a sharp fold at the bottom and your sticker at the top - and you don't add any other weight - they should only need one standard Forever stamp!

## PRINTING OPTIONS

We have two print options. You can see the invite, menu, and place cards on the following pages, then the links to download a printable pdf packet, or a link to edit them yourself in Canva.

If you go the Canva route, you'll need to have an account with them first. You can get a free one by visiting <https://canva.com>





COME ON OVER

FOR

4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebrating!

ON

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July - 3:00pm - 11:00pm

AT

THE LEONE HOUSE

123 Our Street, Our City

---

Games in the Afternoon

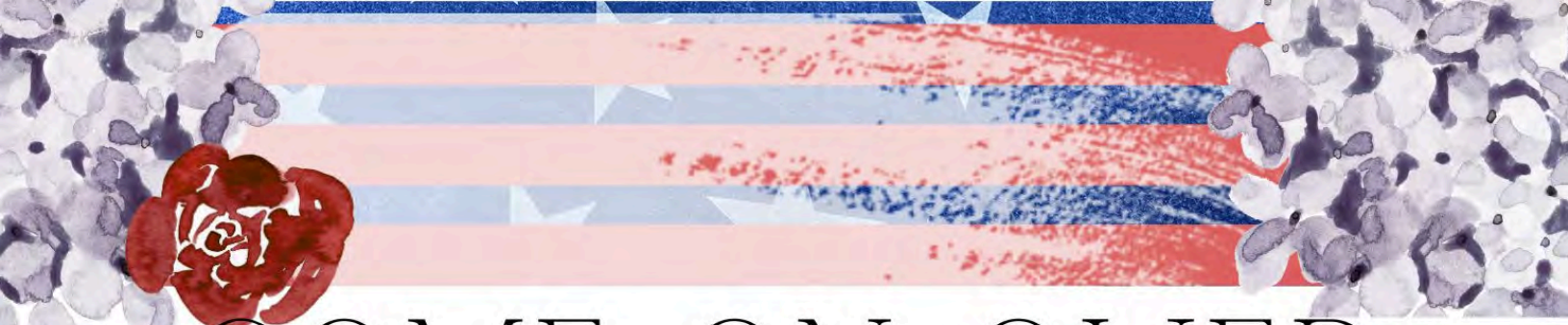
Dinner at 6:30

Fireworks at Sundown

Friendly Guests & Pets Welcome

[barbara@mantelandtable.com](mailto:barbara@mantelandtable.com) - 555-555-5555





COME ON OVER

FOR

ON

AT





# MENU

## From the Grill

BACON BLUE BURGER  
ON BRIOCHE

## On the Side

STEAK FRIES  
WITH AIOLI

## Salads

FIELD GREENS WITH  
STRAWBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES  
& FETA

## Sweets

WHITE CHOCOLATE  
MOUSSE

## Beverages

BLUEBERRY LEMONADE  
COCKTAIL

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MENU

From the Grill

On the Side

Salads

Sweets

Beverages

MENU

From the Grill

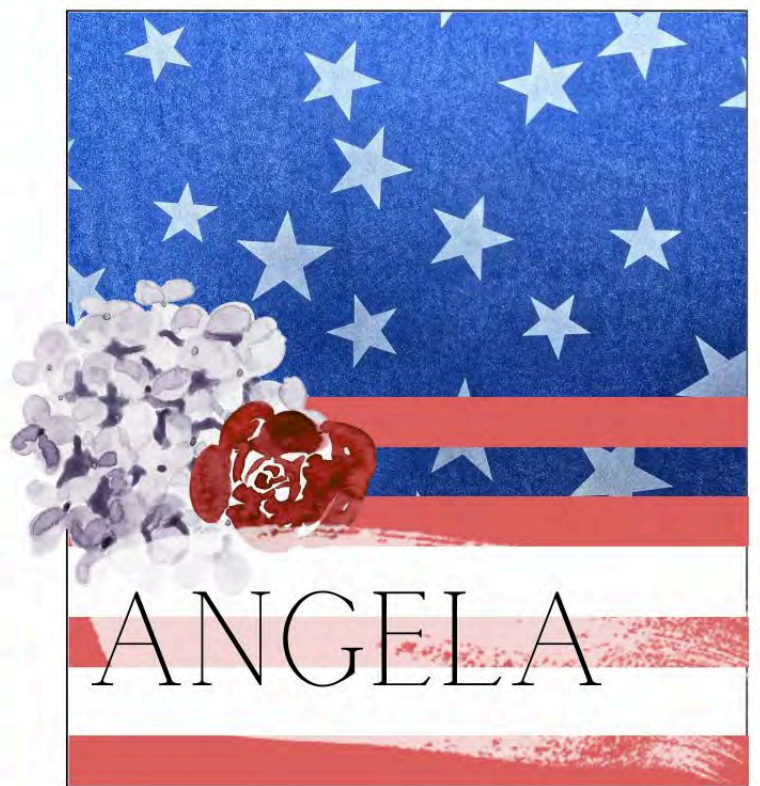
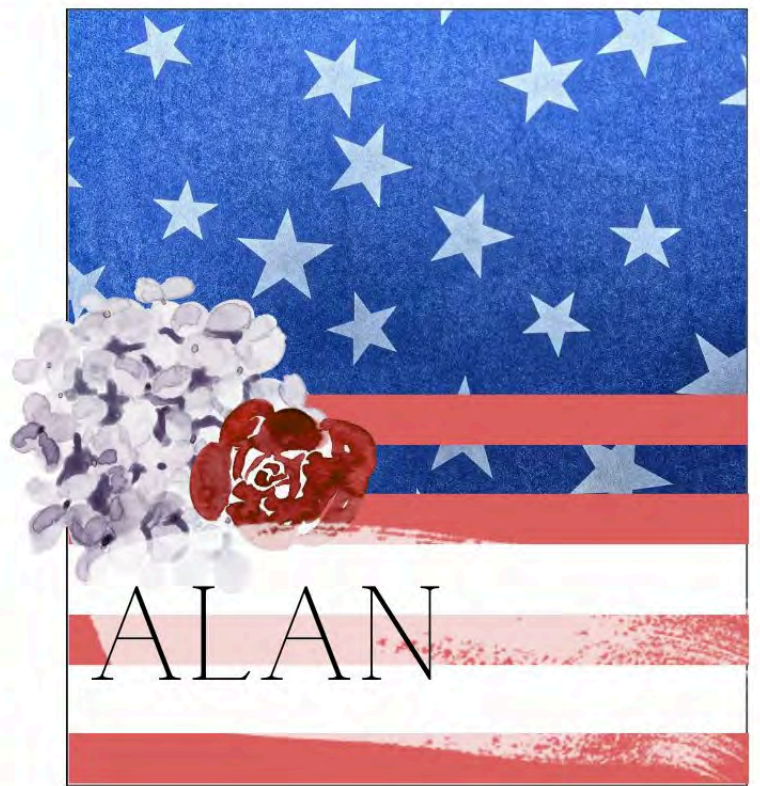
On the Side

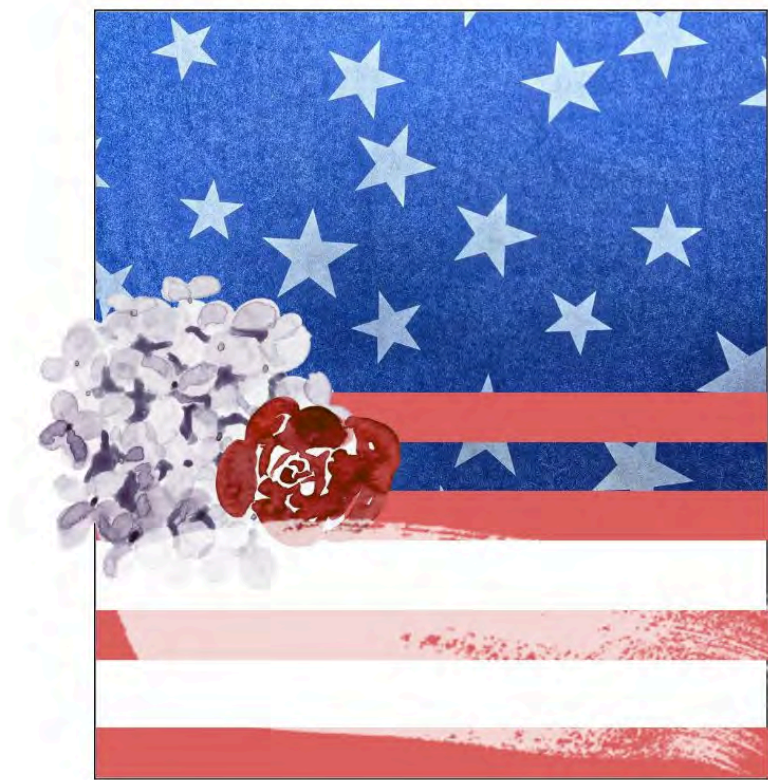
Salads

Sweets

Beverages







## PRINTABLE PDF

If you have a printer and want to write out your invitations, place cards, and menu yourself, this is the packet for you!

I did throw in the complete menu in case you want to serve it all as-is. And you can look at the invitation above for ideas about what to include on yours.

You can either print the pages above, or visit [this link](#) to download the pdf packet. [STARS & STRIPES](#)



Printable PDF

## EDIT IN CANVA

If you want to use the same fonts I've used, and are conversant in Canva, here are your templates. Just replace my details with your own!

Just visit [CANVA TEMPLATE](#)

## STURDY PAPER

Whichever method you use, be sure to print onto heavy paper or light card stock so your printables will have some heft. You want them to be able to stand on their own - especially the place cards.

Your guests will feel extra special!



Canva Editable



# MENU

## From the Grill

BACON BLUE BURGER  
ON BRIOCHE

## On the Side

STEAK FRIES  
WITH AIOLI

## Salads

FIELD GREENS WITH  
STRAWBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES  
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MOUSSE

## Beverage

BLUEBERRY LEMONADE  
COCKTAIL



# MENU NOTES

## THE HEART OF THE PARTY

The menu is arguably the heart of the party! (I might make a case for the tablescape, but most people would agree it's the food!)

On the following pages, we have the menu for the sit-down portion of the evening, and the recipes and notes that accompany them. It's definitely a Stars & Stripes-worthy meal - fun to make and fun to eat!

## APPETIZERS

I didn't include appetizers on the menu because by the time your guests see the menu, they've likely already eaten the appetizers!

But see the picture on the next page - an easy and fun idea for some light fresh appetizers - red, white, and blue fruit skewers - to usher in your patriotic party.

If you have kids present, they may enjoy making these. Instructions included in the Prep Timeline.

## ADDITIONAL BEVERAGES

I have a delightful blueberry cocktail and lemonade on the menu, but you might want some other beverages as well - red wine, white wine, beer, coffee, etc.

Be sure to add any of those to your shopping list and offer them to your guests at the appropriate time during the party.

And now - on with the menu!







# BACON BLUE BURGER ON BRIOCHE (STARS & STRIPES)

## Ingredients - makes 4 burgers

- 1 lb quality ground beef (80/20% tastes best)
- Salt to taste
- 1 large onion (white, yellow, or red - whatever you prefer)
- Blue cheese
- 4 slices bacon
- 1 or 2 slices havarti cheese
- Tomato, lettuce, etc - whatever burger toppings you like
- 4 Brioche buns (buttered if desired.)

## Directions

- Cook the bacon. Drain & set aside.
- Cut out havarti stars and set aside.
- Cut blue cheese into thick slices if possible. If not, prepare the individual servings and set aside.
- Prepare whatever additional fixings you'll want. Set aside.
- Form burger into ¼ lb patties, and salt liberally to taste. Set aside.
- Slice onion into rings and grill until a little blackened.
- All the above can be done ahead and refrigerated until burger time.
- Put the burgers on the grill and cook until desired doneness, flipping once.
- Grill the brioche if desired.
- Add the blue cheese to the top right at the end, and heat till just barely melted.
- Remove to platters, add the bacon “stripes” and the havarti stars. Serve hot!



# BURGER TIPS

## BACON STRIPES

When you cook the bacon, be sure to drain it flat, so the stripes will be as straight as possible. 1 piece of bacon cut in half is just about right for 2 stripes on a ¼ lb burger.

If you want them extra hot, you can add them with the cheese to the burger while it's on the grill

## HAVARTI STARS

This is a totally fun touch that would be great to delegate to the kids! They'd have a blast using the tiny star cutters to make their own stars - or everyone's stars!

I got 4 of the bigger stars and 5 of the smaller ones out of one slice.

These might dry out quickly, so if you're making them even an hour ahead, you might want to cover them with plastic wrap and refrigerate until burger time.

## BLUE CHEESE

Blue cheese by its nature, is crumbly. But some varieties are less crumbly than others. If you want to cut one thick slice for each burger, try to find a less-crumbly variety.

If it does crumble though, it's no problem. Just separate out your portions and put the pile of crumbles in the middle of the burger. When they start to melt, it'll be easier to spread the cheese out a bit.

You want to get it spread out enough to be the white between the stripes!



# BURGER TIPS

## GRILLED ONION

It's easiest to grill the onions in whole slices, and the fewer times you flip them, the better. Use a nice strong flipper to minimize the chance of the layers coming apart and/or fall down into the grill!

If you do this ahead, you can refrigerate them until you put the burgers on the grill, then wrap them in foil and put on the upper rack to warm back up.

Otherwise, they go on the grill a few minutes before the burgers. Watch closely and remove or move to the top rack when they're just a little blackened.

## BRIOCHE BUNS

If you like your buns toasted, I've found the best way to do it is to slather them with butter, then grill them for a few minutes with the burgers.

Watch them like a hawk though, and be sure to remove them or put them on the top grill shelf when they get to your preferred stages of brown.

## GET READY BEFOREHAND

Burgers are best right off the grill, so have everything else prepared before you put them on, and be sure to give everyone a head's up that dinner will be ready as soon as they're done!





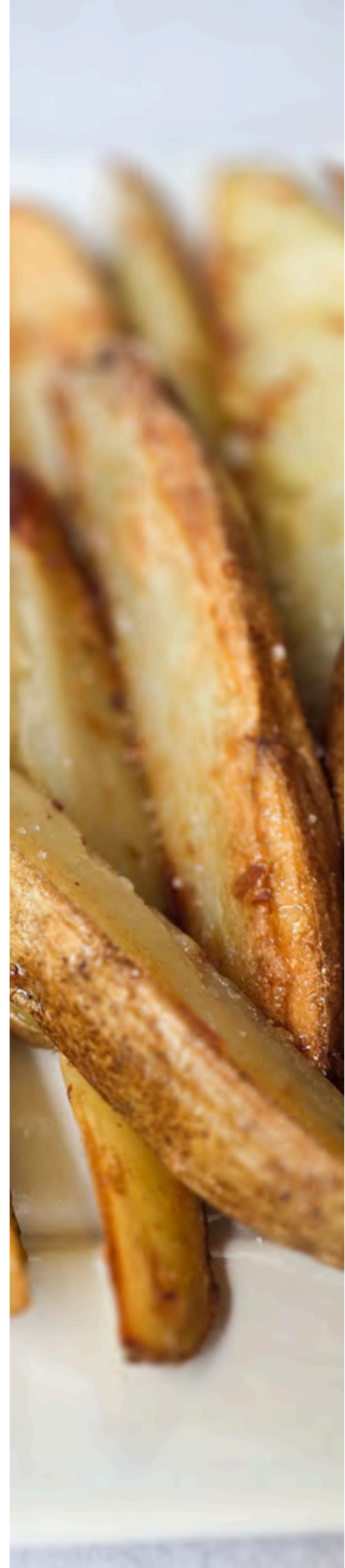
# STEAK FRIES

## Ingredients - makes 24 fries

- 3 large russet potatoes
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- More salt to taste for finishing

## Directions

- Cut potatoes into 8 wedges each
- Put in a large bowl
- Pour in olive oil
- Press garlic into bowl
- Add 1 teaspoon salt to bowl
- Mix all together and lay out on baking pan
- Bake at 425 degrees for about 20 minutes
- Flip if the bottoms are brown
- Bake about another 15-20 minutes till edges are crispy



# STEAK FRY TIPS

## CUTTING THE POTATOES

Making these fries is really pretty simple, but I'll just share a few tips to make it even easier if you've maybe never done it before.

I don't know why it took me so long to figure this out, but I always had trouble keeping the potatoes from rolling around while I was cutting them. Until I learned this!

Just cut them in half and turn them flat side down for the remaining cuts. Just cut each half in half, then diagonally into each side for the other two fries. That makes it a lot easier!

## A SINGLE LAYER

Lay out your fries in a single layer on your pan. This is really important to help them be as crispy as possible.

And when you flip them, use a very thin, stiff spatula to keep as much as possible from sticking to the pan.

You could also line your pan with parchment paper if you want, but I've found mine don't brown up as much with that technique.





# AIOLI

## Ingredients - makes about a cup and a half

- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 med garlic clove, pressed
- ½ to 1 lemon, juiced
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

## Directions

- Put all ingredients except oil into food processor and pulse until combined and frothy.
- Turn the processor to medium and very slowly, drip a few drops of oil in.
- When those drops are mixed in, drop a few more and let those combine.
- Then start a tiny little stream of oil, watching carefully.
- When you see that it's mixing just fine, keep the tiny stream going until it's all mixed in.
- Season to taste with more salt or lemon juice if needed.
- Let the aioli rest for an hour or so or overnight for the flavors to merge.



# AIOLI TIPS

## POURING SLOWLY

Aioli is really SO easy to make! The only thing to remember is to add the oil SLOWLY! That's basically the only key. The stream should be as tiny as you can manage.

## ROASTED GARLIC

Back in the day, I loved nothing better than raw garlic. But lately, it hasn't been agreeing with me so well. If you're sensitive to raw garlic, you can roast your garlic before you make the aioli.

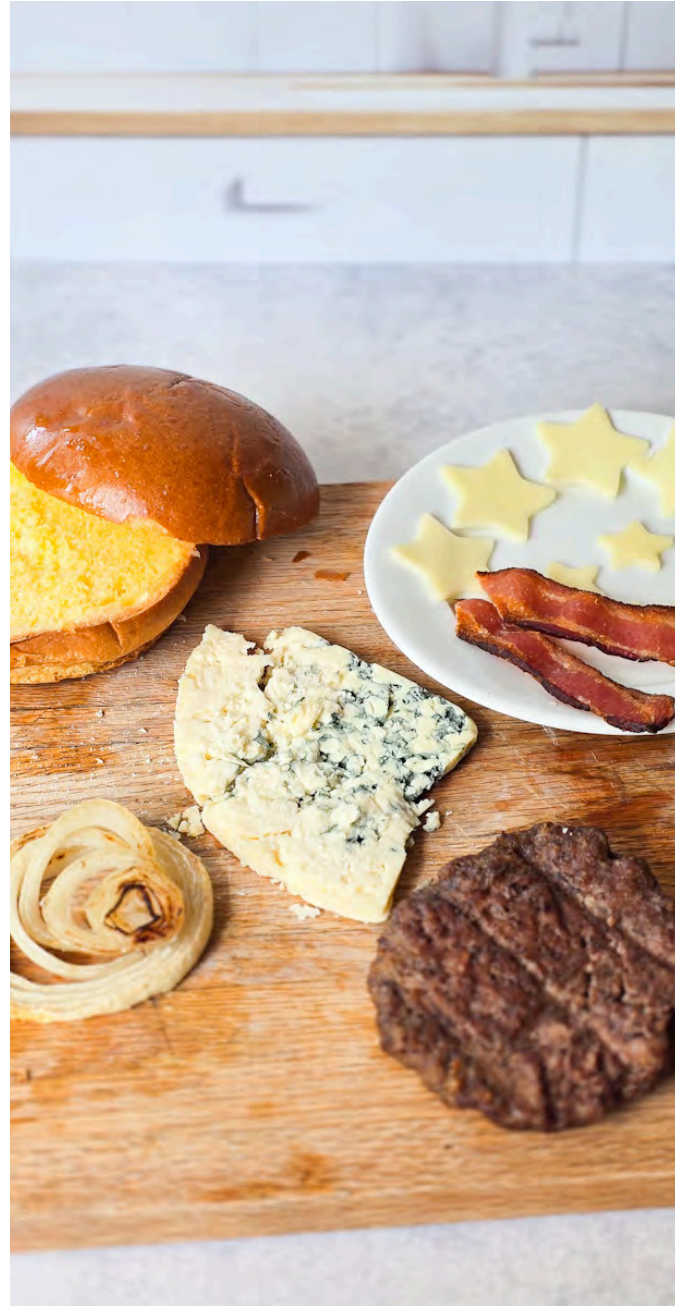
You can roast individual cloves, but I think it's easier to do the whole head. Just slice off the very top and set right side up in a terra cotta garlic roaster, or small foil-lined pan.

Drizzle some olive oil over the top, cover, and roast at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes or until the garlic is all golden and soft.

Then it's easy to scoop out a clove's worth and include it in your recipe. It give a lovely mellow taste with all the garlic flavor and none of the bite!

## GRAPESEED OIL

If you want a less olive-y taste, you can use a mixture of olive and grapeseed oils instead. This is a pretty standard substitution and gives you a milder oil flavor.





# RED WHITE & BLUE GREEN SALAD

## Ingredients - makes 4 salads

- 4 cups field greens salad mix (very lightly packed)
- ~ 8 medium strawberries
- ~ 1 cup blueberries
- ~ 3/4 - 1 cup crumbled feta cheese

## Directions

- Wash the fruit and pat gently dry
  - Cut the caps off the strawberries, and slice
  - Put greens on salad plates or in a large serving bowl
  - Sprinkle some feta over the greens
  - Add strawberries and blueberries
- 
- Dress with Roasted Strawberry Vinaigrette, recipe included on next pages.





# ROASTED STRAWBERRY VINAIGRETTE

## Ingredients - makes about 1 cup

- 1 cup strawberries
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

## Directions

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees
- Rinse strawberries and cut off caps
- Put berries into a small baking pan
- Put in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until caramelized
- Remove from oven and let cool slightly
- Transfer roasted berries to blender, including any juices
- Add remaining ingredients to blender
- Puree until smooth and consistent
- Refrigerate and serve cold



# STRAWBERRY VINAIGRETTE TIPS

## INSPIRATION

This recipe came from PaleoLeap.com, and only has five healthy ingredients (plus salt & pepper!)

## ROASTING

This is so easy and delicious! Roasting the strawberries creates deep and complex flavors that really elevate our fresh berry salad, and lend a bit of surprising sophistication to an essentially simple dish.

## USING THE JUICES

I roasted the strawberries in a little 5"x7" Pyrex storage container (without the lid, of course) that worked perfectly as a small baking dish.

The juicier the strawberries, the more juice is going to collect in the dish. Be sure to use a spatula to get those juices into the blender.

If some of the juices are a little stuck to the dish (but not burned,) go ahead and add a tiny bit of the balsamic to loosen it up a bit. All strawberry juice is good juice!





# WHITE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

## Ingredients - makes 10 tiny mousses

- 12 ounces white baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream, divided
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ~ 1 cup raspberries
- ~ ½ cup blueberries

## Directions

- In a small heavy saucepan, combine chocolate and  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup cream
- Stir over medium-low heat until smooth
- Transfer to a large bowl
- Cool to room temperature
- In a small bowl, beat remaining cream until begins to thicken
- Add powdered sugar and vanilla
- Beat until soft peaks form
- Fold  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup whipped cream into chocolate mixture
- Fold in remaining whipped cream
- Spoon into dessert dishes
- Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours until set
- Garnish with berries



# WHITE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE TIPS

## INSPIRATION

This recipe came from Taste of Home.com, and I used it here wholesale except for a bit more vanilla, which is a Mantel and Table standard.

## VANILLA

I think everything tastes better with more vanilla. But if you don't agree, you can back off the vanilla to only 1 teaspoon

## THE TINY-NESS

We all love dessert, but so often after a dinner party, we've already had such great food that we're pretty full, and it doesn't sound as good as it should.

That's why I love to make tiny little desserts. Not only are they pretty, but they're not scary for your guests.

Just a few bites of something this fabulous will make them feel pampered and not over full.

And if someone does want more, there are usually some extras because the recipe is for larger portions. Or you could make a couple larger ones like I did here.





# BLUEBERRY LEMONADE COCKTAIL

## Ingredients - makes 1 cocktail

- 1/4 cup fresh whole blueberries
- 1 ½ ounces blueberry vodka
- 1/2 ounce St Germain
- 6 ounces lemonade
- 1 lemon wedge
- 1 sprig fresh mint
- Ice

## Directions

- Muddle blueberries in a cocktail shaker
- Fill with ice
- Add vodka, St Germain, and lemonade
- Shake!
- Strain into tall glass filled with fresh ice
- Garnish with lemon wedge and mint

If you want to makes 4 cocktails at once, use the amounts below. Mix vigorously in a large pitcher and strain into prepared glasses

- 1 cup fresh whole blueberries
- 6 ounces blueberry vodka
- 1 ounce St Germain elderflower liqueur
- 24 oz lemonade
- 4 lemon wedges
- 4 sprigs fresh mint



# BLUEBERRY COCKTAIL TIPS

## INGREDIENTS ON HAND

Since we had blueberries already on hand for our salad and dessert, I thought a blueberry cocktail would be perfect, and not waste any delicious ingredients!

And even though the cocktail is really more pink than blue, the garnish keeps the theme!

## INSPIRATION

I first saw this blueberry cocktail recipe at [ridleysradar.com](http://ridleysradar.com). I have made a few changes to the original, but credit where it's due!

## HOMEMADE LEMONADE

If you're deep into the scratch-made vibe at this point, you could make your own lemonade too! It's actually way easier than you might think!

Especially if you're having a party that includes kids, you'll want something for them to drink that doesn't include the cocktail element.

A delicious lemonade recipe from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com) is on the next page!



# HOMEMADE LEMONADE

## Ingredients - makes about 8 cups

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups white sugar
- 9 medium lemons, or more if needed
- 7 cups ice-cold water
- Ice as needed

## Directions

- Combine sugar and 1 cup water in a small saucepan
- Stir to dissolve sugar while mixture comes to a boil
- Set aside to cool slightly
- Roll lemons on the counter to soften
- Cut in half crosswise
- Juice lemons until you get 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups
- Strain seeds
- Pour the 7 cups of water into a pitcher
- Stir in lemon juice and pulp
- Add sugar & water mixture (simple syrup) to taste
- Add ice

## To make blueberry lemonade

- Add 2 cups of blueberries to the sugar and water when you make the simple syrup
- When it comes to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until blueberries have broken down, about 3-4 minutes
- Strain through cheesecloth or a sieve
- Proceed with the recipe above





Brick

Bright Red

Maroon

Soft Rose

Cobalt

Stars

Hydrangea

Silver

White



# STARS & STRIPES SHOPPING LIST

## MEAT & SEAFOOD

- 1 lb quality ground beef (80/20%)
- 4 slices bacon

## DELI & CHEESE

- Blue cheese (slicing-friendly, about 4 oz)
- Havarti cheese (1-2 slices)
- Feta cheese, crumbled (3/4 - 1 cup)

## PRODUCE

- 1 large onion (white, yellow, or red)
- 1-2 large tomatoes
- Lettuce (your choice)
- 3 large russet potatoes
- 3 cloves garlic
- 4 cups field greens salad mix
- ~2 1/2 cups medium strawberries
- ~1 cup raspberries
- ~2 cups blueberries (+2 cups for lemonade)
- 2 bananas
- 3 medium lemons (+ 9 for lemonade)
- Fresh mint sprigs

## SPICES & SEASONINGS

- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- Dijon mustard

## FROZEN FOOD

- Ice (if you don't have enough on hand)

## OILS & VINEGARS

- Extra virgin olive oil (~1 cup)
- Balsamic vinegar (1/4 cup)

## DAIRY & EGGS

- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream

## BAKERY

- 4 brioche buns

## BEVERAGES & ALCOHOL

- Blueberry vodka
- St-Germain elderflower liqueur
- Lemonade (store-bought or see "Produce" & "Pantry" for homemade ingredients)

## PANTRY

- White granulated sugar (1 3/4 cups)
- Powdered sugar
- Vanilla extract
- Butter
- Powdered alum (for flowers)

## BAKING & SWEETS

- 12 oz white baking chocolate

## FLOWERS

- Blue hydrangeas
- Red roses

# STARS & STRIPES PREP NOTES

## DINNER AT 6:30

On the pages that follow, you'll find a timeline for easily prepping all the food, and doing the setup for your dinner party! It's designed for sitting down to the table at 6:30, but feel free to adjust those times based on whenever you want to eat.

## MAKE AHEAD

This timeline is set up to be done all in one day, but you could do the whole morning's worth of prep the day before if you'd rather. Everything from 8:00am - 1:00pm could easily be done the previous day or two, as well as the 4:00 tasks of setting the table and the buffet.

## BUFFET SERVICE

I'm thinking the best way to serve this meal is buffet, because even though the table is formal, the vibe is casual. When you set it up, you'll want to put out the serving dishes that you'll need for plating the food after it's cooked, like the burgers, fries, buns, etc.

For the foods you're preparing ahead of time, store them in their serving dishes to save time. And remember to save room for them on the buffet.

If you have a helper, or want to remind yourself, you could use post its to mark the locations for the various dishes. Be sure to set out serving utensils as well.

## DELEGATE SO EVERYONE HAS FUN!

Remember to delegate - especially if there will be guests around during the earlier hours. Adults usually love to help if asked, and kids will have fun helping too, especially with jobs like cutting out cheese stars and stringing fruit kabobs! You may want to have some extras to accommodate all the tasting during the task!

Decide in advance what you can assign, and have a concrete, finite task to hand over if someone asks.

# STARS & STRIPES

## PREP TIMELINE

### 8:00 AM - Arrange Centerpieces

- Strip leaves, trim and dip hydrangea stems in powdered alum then put immediately into bowl of cool water
- Trim and add red roses
- Spray with Crowning Glory and let dry

### 9:00 AM - Prep & Start Make-Ahead Items

- Wash all produce: greens, berries, potatoes, lemons, etc.
- Chill glasses & lemonade pitchers
- Set out butter if using for brioche buns
- Slice strawberries for salad, set aside in airtight container
- Crumble feta, prep salad greens, refrigerate
- Cut onions into rings and store
- Cut tomatoes, wash lettuce, store in fridge for burger toppings

### 10:00 AM - Make the Lemonade & Cocktail Prep

- Make homemade lemonade and chill
- Muddle and prep fruit for cocktails (blueberries, mint), store in airtight container in fridge
- Slice lemon wedges for garnish, store in water in fridge

### 11:00 AM - Make the Aioli & Vinaigrette

- Roast strawberries
- While strawberries are roasting, mix the aioli and refrigerate to let the flavors develop
- Blend roasted strawberries with other vinaigrette ingredients and refrigerate

### 12:00 PM - Start Dessert

- Melt white chocolate and cream for mousse base
- Let cool to room temp (very important!)
- Whip the remaining cream with sugar and vanilla
- Fold together and spoon into dessert dishes
- Chill mousse until serving (cover with plastic wrap)

### 1:00 PM - Break / Lunch / Light Cleanup

- Reset your kitchen space for the afternoon session

# STARS & STRIPES

## PREP TIMELINE

### 2:00 PM – Prep Potatoes & Bacon; Make Appetizers

- Cut potatoes into wedges and store in water in fridge
- Cook bacon, drain, and refrigerate on paper towels
- Cut bananas into ~3/4 inch slices and toss lightly in lemon juice to retain whiteness
- Cut caps off strawberries, and thread the skewers, alternating red, white, & blue fruits
- Cover and refrigerate

### 3:00 PM – Burger & Cheese Artistry

- Form burger patties, salt them, and refrigerate
- Cut Havarti cheese stars, refrigerate
- Slice or portion blue cheese
- Assemble a burger toppings tray (lettuce, tomato, onion, etc.) store in fridge

### 4:00 PM – Set the Mood

- Set tablescape
- Set up buffet area and prep remaining serving pieces
- Arrange salad (without dressing yet), store in fridge

### 5:00 PM – Final Kitchen Stretch

- Preheat oven for steak fries (425°F)
- Drain, pat dry, and toss fries with oil, garlic, salt
- Bake fries for 20 min, flip, then bake another 15-20 (turn oven off and let fries stay warm)

### 6:00 PM – Grill Time!

- Grill onions until slightly charred
- Grill brioche buns, keep warm on top grill rack if necessary
- Grill burgers to desired doneness
- Add blue cheese just before removing burgers
- Assemble burgers with bacon “stripes” and Havarti stars

### 6:30 PM – Set Out Buffet

- Dress salad with vinaigrette
- Garnish mousse with berries and serve later with coffee or a toast
- Pour cocktails, lemonade, or other beverages
- Plate burgers, buns, and fries. Leave burgers open-faced so your guests can admire them!
- Call everyone to the table!

# STARS & STRIPES DINNER PARTY SOURCES

## EASY SOURCING

The following pages are the collection of tableware, kitchenware, DIY supplies, and barware that I've used in our Hosting Notes this month.

The collection will save you so much time searching for something that will match what I used here!

## CLICK OR TAP

I've grouped everything by category, so you can find them more easily.

Just click the picture, and you'll jump to the page on MANTELandTABLE.com where you can go directly to each item.

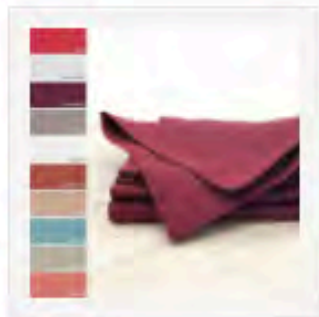
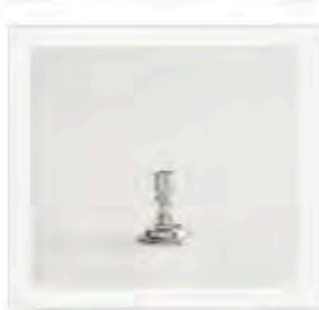
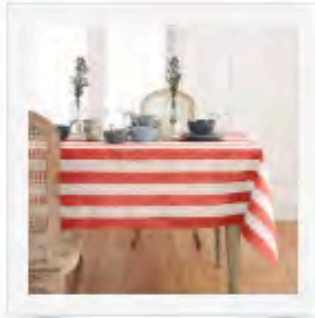
## HAVE FUN!

I hope you find things that you love, that will add to the joy of not only your Stars & Stripes dinner party, but many many dinner parties to come!



# STARS & STRIPES TABLESCAPE SOURCES

CLICK OR TAP THE PHOTO BELOW



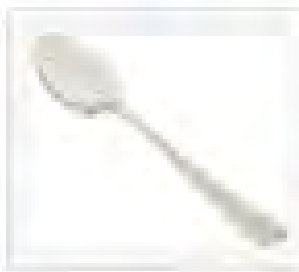
# STARS & STRIPES DIY PLATE SOURCES

CLICK OR TAP THE PHOTO BELOW



# STARS & STRIPES KITCHEN SOURCES

CLICK OR TAP THE PHOTO BELOW



# STARS & STRIPES BAR SOURCES

CLICK OR TAP THE PHOTO BELOW



# STARS & STRIPES MIX PLAYLIST

## SOTIFY PLAYLIST LINK

Parties need music! So here's a curated playlist to make your hosting even easier - and more fun! With just over two and a half hours, this will take you through all the stages of your dinner party!

Click the link below

## [Stars & Stripes Mix - Dinner Party Playlist](#)

### HAPPY HOUR - About 30 Minutes of Classic Tunes

- Dean Martin - Ain't That a Kick in the Head
- Madeleine Peyroux - Dance Me to the End of Love
- Sway - Michael Bublé
- Norah Jones - Come Away With Me
- Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong - Cheek to Cheek
- Diana Krall - Let's Fall in Love
- Frank Sinatra - Fly Me to the Moon
- Ray Charles - America the Beautiful
- Plus more

### DINNER PARTY GROOVE - About 90 Minutes

- Bill Withers - Lovely Day
- Hall & Oates - You Make My Dreams
- Stevie Wonder - Signed, Sealed, Delivered
- Aretha Franklin - I Say a Little Prayer
- Redbone - Come and Get Your Love
- Al Green - Let's Stay Together
- Earth, Wind & Fire - September
- Bruce Springsteen - Glory Days
- And more!

### LATE NIGHT ENERGY - Another Hour-ish of Upbeat Party Fun!

- KC & The Sunshine Band - Boogie Shoes
- Earth, Wind & Fire - Let's Groove
- Billy Joel - Uptown Girl
- The Pointer Sisters - I'm So Excited
- Stevie Wonder - Go Home
- Huey Lewis & News - The Power of Love
- Tom Petty - American Girl
- The Bangles - Walk Like an Egyptian
- Miami Sound Machine - Conga
- Phil Collins - You Can't Hurry Love
- Prince - Raspberry Beret
- And even more!

# THANK YOU!

I'm so glad you joined me for this Stars & Stripes dinner party! It's been wonderful sharing all the inspiration with you!

## QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

If you have any comments or questions about anything in these notes, feel free to get in touch with me any time at [barbara@mantelandtable.com](mailto:barbara@mantelandtable.com).

I'd love to hear from you!

## VISIT MANTEL and TABLE

Be sure to stop over to [MANTELandTABLE.com](http://MANTELandTABLE.com) to continue getting tips and inspiration for all things Hosting!

I can't wait to see you there!

# HAPPY HOSTING!

