

Hawaiian Luau Party Ideas

If you're looking for an easy party idea that involves delicious and nutritious foods, a fun costume element, and can transport kids to another culture, a luau might be just the ticket. A luau is a traditional Hawaiian feast, started in 1819 to commemorate King Kamehameha II's abolishment of the religious practices which barred women from eating with men. Today, the word luau is synonymous with a party (for both genders!), and it often features traditional dress and tropical foods.

So fire up the grill, break out the raffia and get crafty with flowers--it's time to learn how to throw your own luau!

DRESS

Grass Skirts

This is a fun way to dress up your party. While you can buy the plastic kind in most costume stores, it's more fun to make your own.

What You Need:

- Thin rope
- Raffia (found at your local craft store)

What You Do:

Lay your rope out on the floor. Take a strand of raffia and fold it in half. Place the looped end of the raffia on top of the rope, then take the two loose strands of raffia and thread them through the loop so it makes a tight knot around the rope. Repeat this process until your skirt has full coverage. Wear over bike shorts or bathing suit bottoms.

Leis

Nothing says a luau like a lei, the flower necklaces worn all over the islands. Here's how to make your own.

What You Need:

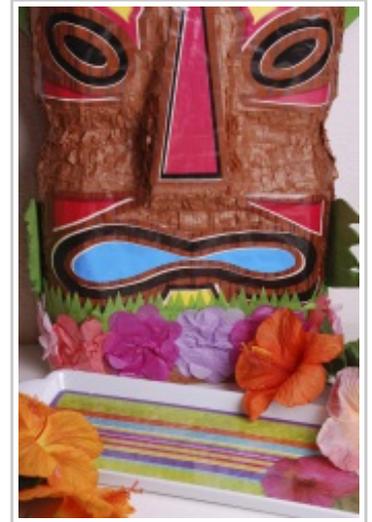
- Waxed dental floss
- Flowers: Commonly used are plumeria, orchids, hibiscus, gardenia, and carnations--probably the cheapest option.
- Carpet needle
- Scissors

What You Do:

Cut your dental floss to size, keeping in mind that about 5 inches should be kept free at either end for tying.

Take the stems off each flower.

Thread the needle through the center of each flower (lengthwise or up from the stem). Carefully thread to about five inches before the end of the floss. Repeat this process until reaching about five inches before



the other end of the floss.

FOOD

Hawaiian Barbecue Chicken

What You Need:

- 2 red bell peppers
- 2 green bell peppers
- 2 yellow bell peppers
- 6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 2 T soy sauce
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 3/4 cup pineapple juice
- Black pepper to taste

What You Do:

Cut chicken into cubes and marinate overnight in the refrigerator.

Alternate chicken and bell peppers on a shish kebab.

Grill, turning every few minutes and basting with the leftover sauce until done.

Coconutty Sweet Potatoes

What You Need:

- 6 sweet potatoes
- 3/4 cup butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup shredded coconut

What You Do:

Boil sweet potatoes until tender. While waiting for sweet potatoes to cool, put butter, sugar, coconut and water in a large saucepan. Heat on medium for about five minutes, stirring occasionally. Peel sweet potatoes, add to saucepan and mash.

Pineapple Coconut Fritters

What You Need:

- Fresh pineapple, cut into thin slices
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 eggs beaten
- 3 cups bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup sugar
- oil for frying
- paper towels

What You Do:

Drain the moisture from the pineapple onto the paper towels.

Put flour on a plate. In a separate bowl combine bread crumbs, coconut and sugar. Then dip the pineapple first in the flour, then in the eggs, and finally coat with the bread crumb mixture.

Fry the slices in the hot oil until golden. Dry on the paper towels.

Invent Your Own Tropical Drink

There are a million ways to make tropical fruit punch. Let your child experiment! Gather together a smorgasborg of tropical fruit juices such as pineapple, banana, orange, grapefruit, lime, and also bring out ginger ale to balance the fruit and provide some bubbly. Take out some measuring cups and have your child start mixing small amounts, taking note as to how much of each ingredient she used. When she finds a concoction she likes, then she can triple or quadruple the amounts--depending on the size of your party. This is great math and science practice.

ACTIVITIES

Teach your kids the hula! Hula is a form of dance that tells a *story* that goes along with the music. Can your child think of a story, either true or made-up, that would be fun to dance to? Teach your child the basic hula step--two short steps to the right and two short steps the the left, repeat. Then, allow your child to improvise arm movements to go along with those steps. How can arm gestures help to tell the story?

Get crafty with flowers. Crafts can put an artsy spin on any party, and make for great party decor. You can sculpt beautiful tropical flowers with modeling clay and simple tools, such as a knitting needle or toothpick. Make this a lesson in botany but printing out pictures of common varieties found in Hawaii, such as Plumeria, Hibiscus and Birds of Paradise, and using them as models.

Go Coconutty. All you need for this one is some tempura paint in various colors, paint brushes, and a few coconuts, and you've got yourself some silly fun to liven up the party. Start by cleaning off the surface of your coconut. Then pick out a face to paint--could it be a man, a cat, a scary monster? Let the paint dry for about two hours, then put on display!

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