



How To Host A Fabulous Hen's Party

article by **Fiona Amarasinghe** of **Easy Breezy Parties**

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www.easybreezyparties.com.au

What sort of party?

- Consider the hen's personality – does she like to hit the town, have quieter time with friends, try new things? The lead-up to the wedding is a stressful time and an activity that makes her relax or laugh will be well appreciated. Here's some themes you might consider:
 - ***Pamper Princess*** – organise a trip to a health retreat, or have service providers come to you. Consider hiring a manicure/pedicurist, masseur, henna artist, yoga instructor.
 - ***Dancing Queen*** – Invite an instructor for an hour's workshop – try Bellydance, Bollywood dance, burlesque, hip hop. Either travel to a studio or have them come to you. Create a whole party theme around the Middle East or Bollywood, with matching decor and food. You could also invite a tarot reader or henna artist.
 - ***Wine And Dine*** – Organise a trip to a winery for a tour, tasting and dinner. Or line up a fabulous restaurant followed by a function room at a glamorous bar.
 - ***Naughty But Nice*** – Visit a pole dancing studio, or have a lesson in burlesque dance. Try some home shopping of the sexy lingerie variety. Enhance the atmosphere with some naughtily named cocktails.
 - ***Try Something New*** – Book a lesson in sailing, golf, cooking or wine tasting, art or craft. Or try a balloon flight, ferry day-trip or regional tour.

Top Tips:

- ❖ Set the date and communicate it early.
- ❖ Sort out the following early on:
 - Basic outline of activities and time frames.
 - Approximate budget, and how money will be collected.
 - Book in venues and service providers.
- ❖ Nominate one person as the chief co-ordinator and point of contact.
- ❖ Before the day:
 - Plan your decorations...and leave twice as much time as you think you'll need!
 - Organise name tags.
 - Do any preparation required for games.
- ❖ At the party:
 - Allow for late arrivals before formal activities begin.
 - Use an 'ice breaker' activity to introduce guests.
 - Have a few games up your sleeve in case there's a lull – but don't overdo it! Allow time for unstructured socialising.
 - Keep the focus on the hen some of the time, but allow her to relax and enjoy herself un-harassed,

Get a few things sorted early

- Set the date well in advance. The week before the wedding (rather than the day before) is often a perfect time to help the bride relax and enjoy.
- Develop a basic outline of activities and time frames. Don't try to do too much – one or two key activities or destinations - and allow ample time for eating and socialising. Also allow extra time for late arrivals and late meal service.
- Work out a basic budget. Nowadays, guests often pay their way at the hen's party. It's easiest to work out a set amount and ask for prepayment in advance or upon arrival. Another option is to have everyone contribute to a kitty at the start of the party, and pay for drinks and activities from this as you go.
- Try to keep the budget affordable for everyone. You might trim the budget by:
 - Hosting the party at home
 - Self-catering, either by a small group or with everyone contributing
 - Sticking to just one big-budget activity, then provide your own games & music
 - DIY decorations, invitations, costumes.
- Book well in advance. Try to book *at least* 4 weeks ahead for instructors, longer for venues, especially if your party will be on a Saturday night. Deposits are usually required to confirm your booking. Check refund policies, in case you change your mind.
- If you're going to be moving from place to place, consider organising group transport, or arrange car pooling.
- It can be fun for everyone to dress according to a theme. Don't forget to include details in the party invites and any associated costs in your budget. Some ideas are dressing all in the hen's favourite colour, wearing something associated with the hen (a tutu for a dancer, a blonde wig, etc), or t-shirts with an iron-on-transfer photo of the hen (her t-shirt could have the groom on it).

Communicating

- Ask everyone to 'save the date' early on. Details can come later.
- Nominate one person as chief co-ordinator and contact point – planning the hen's party is traditionally the job of the maid of honour. Of course, tasks can be delegated. Set up a group/event on Facebook or use an email account and mailing list specifically for the party (eg: 'jenshensparty@hotmail.com').
- Be sure to let everyone know any budget, prepayment requirements and likely additional costs. If taking payments in advance, keep a list of who has paid, and bring the list to the party.



Before the day

- Put some thought into decorations, and allow twice as long as you think you'll need to set them up! Try these ideas:
 - Create a *harem atmosphere* with swathes of hung material, cushions, coloured lightbulbs and an oil burner or incense.
 - For an *exotic pamper environment* added potted palms, ferns or bamboo; bowls filled with water or pebbles and floating candles; bamboo table runners; even a 'sounds of nature' CD.
 - *Just for fun*, cover the front door and entrance-way with 'danger,' 'crime scene' or 'hens party' banners (available at party supply outlets) and fill the room with helium balloons.
- If you're using a function space, ask the venue what special decorations they can provide (such as table settings and candelabras), or arrange a time to come in and set up your own.
- Prepare for any party games you might play.

Running the party

- Provide name-tags for everyone. You can make it fun by giving each person a character, such as 'Princess Holly' or 'Nutty Aunty Jenny,' or letting them choose their own.
- Allow *at least* half an hour for people to arrive and mingle before formal activities begin.
- Consider having an ice-breaker activity, to help everyone relax and get to know each other. A dance lesson or similar activity is great for this, especially if everyone joins in. It will also give guests something to talk about afterwards.
- Have a few games up your sleeve, in case there's a lull. Some ideas include:
 - *Who's That Girl?* - A quiz about the hen that everyone has to answer (this can be done with teams calling out the answers, or with everyone writing down their answers, later tallied up). To make up the quiz, ask everyone to email a memory or little known fact about the hen in advance.
 - *Who's The Man?* - A quiz about the groom, which the hen has to answer. Before the date, ask the groom to name his favourite film, the first thing he said when meeting the hen, what brand of shaver he uses, etc. Then ask the hen the same questions about her groom – if she answers incorrectly, she has to perform some forfeit.
 - *Peg Legs* - At the start of the party, give everyone four clothes pegs, which they can clip onto their clothes. At any time during the party, if a guest sees another guest cross their legs, she can take one of their pegs. At the end of the party, the winner is the guest that has the most pegs.

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Bellydance or Bollywood

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- ❖ A fabulous costume for the hen to wear, plus colourful scarves for all guests wear at the party to add some bling.
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Hints For A Successful Bellydance or Bollywood Dance Workshop

“What space do I need?”

- Ideally, everyone should be able to stand with their arms outstretched. We can work in more restricted spaces, but this may limit what we can do.
- If you're in a restaurant, book a private function room, away from curious onlookers. Guests need to feel comfortable to fully participate.
- Clear away low-hanging decorations, such as balloons, and ensure the floor is free of objects. No slippery carpets, please! Also push back furniture and keep drinks/food well out of the way. We'll be moving a lot, so we don't want any accidents.



- Outdoor spaces can be great in good weather. However, uneven ground, pavers, broken concrete or wide-set wooden slats are not safe surfaces to dance on. You'll need to supply power for the CD player.
- Studio hire can usually be arranged across Melbourne. Allow ~\$80 hire charge, and give as much advance notice as possible. Hired studios usually don't allow food or drink at the venue, so arrange to meet elsewhere for refreshments before or after.

“What time should we book the workshop for?”

- Allow at least an extra half hour after your party start time for latecomers, as our dancers may have subsequent bookings and can't run late.
- It's not ideal to eat a full meal right before the session. Light snacks and a glass of wine are fine. Evening sessions often work well before dinner or slotted in between entrees and main course. Note: if you're relying on restaurant service, allow extra time for them to start serving late. Don't plan on combining your eating and dancing time together.

“What do we do about the music?”

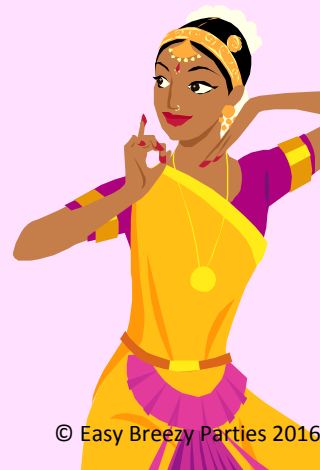
- We'll need a sound system capable of playing CDs or with mp3 connection, at sufficient volume, and within easy arms reach (not behind the bar or in another room). Our dancers will happily bring their own system upon request.
- Expect to make some noise! If you're in a public venue, make sure the management and other patrons are OK about this.

“Can we keep the activity a surprise?”

- Yes! Let us know in advance and our dancer can text or call you upon arrival. You can usher her into a private room, then she can burst out with a surprise performance.

“Can everyone participate? Is it a safe activity?”

- Absolutely. Bellydance and Bollywood dance are suitable for women and girls young and old – even men are welcome to try, too! Pregnant women experiencing a healthy, uncomplicated pregnancy should also be able to do most moves, but should let the dancer know of their condition. There are a few moves that should be modified.
- We highly recommend removing high heeled or slide-on shoes for dancing. We cannot accept liability for any injuries caused if shoes are not removed.



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