

Winning Hands

Dark chocolate is rich and delicious in dessert and on nails. "It's unexpectedly sexy, which gives it sophistication," says New York City manicurist Deborah Lippmann, creator of the Lippmann Collection nail-care line. "Plus, it's softer and more universally flattering than black." There's a chocolate for every taste: OPI Suzi Says Da! (top) has a hint of plum, Essie Lady Godiva (center) mixes in garnet, and Lippmann's own Maneater polish (bottom) is a glossy deep brown. Nails must be short, oval-shaped, and fastidiously groomed to pull off the hue, Lippmann says. Gold jewelry complements the color best; those wanting to bump up the festivity factor can add "a layer of sheer gold shimmer," she says. (Try Tracy Reese for Sally Hansen Salon Nail Lacquer in Tassel.) Just don't be tempted to nibble. —DAISY SHAW

PARTY DIET

We are hardwired to like tiny things—babies, puppies, cell phones—but too many little bites at parties can make your diet go haywire.

How to consume more and gain less.

DON'T GO TO A PARTY ON AN EMPTY STOMACH. "I eat a protein snack before I go, like string cheese or yogurt," says Lisa R. Young, author of *The Portion Teller Plan* (Broadway Books). Experts say protein staves off hunger.

"WEAR SOMETHING SNUG," says Jana Klauer, author of *The Park Avenue Nutritionist's Plan* (St. Martin's Press). "Studies show that women who wear loose-fitting clothes eat more."

AFTER A QUICK SCAN OF THE FOOD, set a few rules for yourself. Decide that you'll eat only vegetable hors d'oeuvres or only one thing from the buffet to impose a little discipline. "Look for

crab, shrimp, chicken on skewers, and other lean proteins," says Susan Bowerman, lecturer in the nutrition department at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. "Various types of vegetables, raw or grilled, are also good because they keep your mouth busy. Plus, the bulkiness makes you feel full. I always urge people to avoid creamy dips and sauces—the calories add up quickly."

BE WARY OF BOOZE. "Alcohol can enhance your appetite," Klauer says. "Alternate it with a nonalcoholic and noncaloric drink," Bowerman says.

PLAN TO SKIP DESSERT—and start mingling or saying good-bye when the mini cupcakes appear. "If you are going to eat dessert, choose carefully—just have a couple of bites of something that is really special," Bowerman says. "Fill up at least half the plate with fruit," Young says.

—JESSICA PRINCE



THE BEAUTY EXPERT

pay attention to what's in between.

EXFOLIATE: "Sloughing off dead skin is critical," says Linda Hay, makeup artist for Victoria's Secret. An oil-based scrub will leave legs with a sheen.

MOISTURIZE: Amy Tagliamonti, head makeup artist for *Gossip Girl*, applies Mustela Hydra Béb  Body Lotion on Leighton Meester. "It makes skin glow."

WARM UP: Don't fear leg makeup. Tagliamonti treats Blake Lively with Sally Hansen Airbrush Leg Makeup. "It dries quickly, looks natural, and won't rub off on clothes," Tagliamonti says.

HIGHLIGHT: "Draw a line down the center of legs, front and back, thigh to toes, with shimmer powder," Hay says. She uses Victoria's Secret Sexy Little Things Shimmering Powder. —DAISY SHAW

is spiking the air (along with the eggnog).

STRIKE A MATCH. "Always burn new candles before a party starts," says Victoria Hagan, an interior designer and owner of Victoria Hagan Interiors. A melted candle has a casual, slouchy shape that makes a room feel more relaxed and comfortable.

DON'T OVERDO IT. "A candle creates instant atmosphere," says James Huniford, an interior designer and owner of James Huniford Design Studio. "But less is more, especially during a party where there's a lot of activity going on." His rule of thumb: no more than two scented candles per room. "A subtle glow is warm and inviting," he explains. "Too much fragrance is obtrusive and might overwhelm your guests."

THINK UNI-SCENTS. "Go for seasonal scents like pine, cinnamon, and cedar—

can be a little too sweet.

are spicier and more unisex create an atmosphere that makes all of your guests feel comfortable," Hagan says.

BE SHADY. For reed scent diffusers, Huniford prefers opaque decanters to clear ones. "They're more formal and party-appropriate, because they don't reveal the color or level of the oil inside."

STAY LOW. Keep diffusers on low surfaces, such as windowsills, to prevent the eye from traveling too far upward. "A room's focus should never be the ceiling," Huniford says. You can even place a lighted candle in a tall vase (you'll see flickering at the top) and put it on the floor in a corner. It creates an unexpected glow and "keeps the decor interesting," Monn says. —LIANA SCHAFFNER

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