

## The Ultimate Roaring 20's Theme Party

By Joe Dean

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# Introduction

The purpose of this packet is to provide an overwhelmingly large amount of ideas and activities to plan the ultimate Roaring 20's themed party or event. Through my treasure hunt production company, Quest Experiences, I've hosted hundreds of themed parties and events. This packet is the culmination of the ideas used in those productions. I've made every attempt to group the ideas for easier navigation. Most importantly, however, I've taken special time and energy to ensure that you'll find only 'meat' - workable ideas that are original and creative...no fluff or fillers.

This packet is divided into different sections for easier navigation. The last section is where you'll find all of the reproducible pages as referenced in several of the ideas.

I hope you enjoy your reading and that you are inspired to make your next Roaring 20's themed party or event an EXTRAVAGANZA!

> Joe Dean Author

### Decorations and Atmosphere

#### Decorations/Props

Of course, with an unlimited budget, you can always visit your local party prop warehouse and rent all kinds of fun props for your event. However, it has been my experience that these products are often of very poor quality and are very expensive to rent. Garage sales are a lot of help...it just takes quite a few before you find something you can use. The following list is for the rest of us who have to be a little more creative to keep the costs down...

#### Entrance

- 1 Create, what I call, a portal to your event. By this, I mean any special way of decorating the ENTRANCE to your event, something for your guests to actually walk through. You might choose to create a large banner or stock pile a bunch of balloons to walk through. This is especially effective for events where the decorations available are limited or merely dwarfed by the size of the event's location.
- 2 Depending on the overall feel you are going for with your party, you might consider decorating the front entrance like the entrance to a speakeasy (an 'illegal bar' during Prohibition during the 1920's.) Have someone dressed at the entrance who will peek through a hole the door (mail slots can work well with home front doors) and ask them either for the password or who sent them (in which case it would be the perfect time to use the name of the guest of honor.)
- 3 There are also several different ways to provide your guests with the password
  - i. Anonymous phone calls (days before the party)
  - Placing personal ads in the paper in the invitations, refer to an ad that will appear in the local paper in the Personals section (these are very inexpensive and really make it a lot of fun for your guests!)
  - iii. In a separate mailing you send days before the party is to take place

- iv. In the invitations (for fun, you could offer it in code for them to figure out in time for the party.)
- 4 When someone comes in, have them frisked for any possible concealed weapons they might be carrying
- 5 Have a volunteer stationed at the entrance dressed as a local reporter, taking pictures of guests as they arrive (for a more high society feel)
- 6 Give each guest a carnation to wear on their lapel (guys) as fellow Italian mobsters. The women can be handed carnations still on the long stem.

General Decorating

- 7 If you have a lot of invitations left over, these can also be hung up or used as centerpieces on the individual tables.
- 8 Name your location. Invite your guests to your own night club (named after the guest of honor if there is one) or Al Capone's home. By naming it and referring to that name you'll create a definite place and time for your guests. It's amazing the credibility that is given when it is given a name.
- 9 If going for a more Roaring 20's 'vice' feel, for centeripieces, use flasks, bottles and cigarettes
- 10 Get your hands on some old wooden crates (or use blank cardboard boxes) and fill them with straw, raffia or shreaded newspaper. Peeking out the top (cardboard boxes opened) have bottles sticking up with a couple of the boxes and crates. These look great at the entrance to your speak easy or stationed at a photo opportunity location!
- 11 Decorate with lots of fringe. Check for sales in advance at your local craft and fabric stores to take advantage of lower prices!
- 12 For a night club feel, set up several smaller, round tables with white tablecloths. In the center of the tables set votive candles. For best results, ensure minimal lighting.
- 13 If you are going for a more mobster feel, set a small crime scene vignette somewhere at the party (at the entrance, in a corner, etc.) Things to include would be a chalk outline of a body (masking tape would also work, especially if indoors), a police officer writing down details, some broken gin bottles, a weapon or two, etc.

- 14 Ask around to family and friends to see if anyone you know has a barrel or two (older varieties work best if you have a choice.) These look great at the entrance to your party, especially if you are shooting for a more Prohibition/Speakeasy feel.
- 15 For a more mobster feel, borrow someone's black violin case to set as the main centerpiece on the main table! Mobsters used to carry their machine guns in violin-like cases.
- 16 Costume pieces make great decorations just about anywhere (on walls, at the entrance on a table, as centerpieces, etc.)! Some items to consider include long pearl necklaces, boas and hats - for those planning a more mobster feel, include some plastic guns as well.
- 17 Hang movie posters from well know gangster movies or others from that era including old silent movies, The Untouchables, The Great Gatsby, etc. These can be purchased through any number of movie poster companies online. For a more economical approach, nab them from the Internet and print them out on 8  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 11 sheets of paper for 'mini' posters.
- 18 Have some live characters roaming around, mingling with the guests. How about a Federal agent asking questions from your guests about any information they might leak regarding the apprehension of Al Capone, passing out business cards (make some in Reproducibles)? These characters do not need to be present for long periods of time. In fact, it is best if they are not. Let them come...and then go. Your guests will be incredibly impressed.
- 19 Keep colors to a black and white color scheme. Gold and cream are great accents to add as well.
- 20 Visit your local library and check out some classic silent movies from the 20's. These are great to play on different TVs you have stationed around the party area and work excellent as party decorations! (You may choose to borrow a few TV sets to beef up your movie supply for your guests.) Your guest will LOVE watching these old movies, especially the comedies! The great part is that you don't need to turn on the sound, so they won't interfere with the conversations your party guests are already having! Some other possible movie selections include The Untouchables, the Godfather and Bugsy Malone (for the children.)

- 21 DON'T THROW AWAY THE PARTY DECORATIONS! Save money and do something your guests will LOVE! GIVE AWAY your party decorations! Use 20's period posters (see the Resources section at the end of this packet) to hang around your party area. Allow the winners of different games to choose which poster they'll get to walk away with at the conclusion to the party! Combine decorations with party prizes!
- 22 Many, many things can be done with poker cards. As an added touch, use a cigarette to burn a hole into each card (it will look like a bullet went through it.) Cards can be left on tables (for guests to play), used as centerpieces, hung on walls in poker-hand fashions. For centerpieces, you can display them in such a way as to resemble a game that has not been played through. With this, you could set five cards at each place setting -creating a different poker hand for each person. To continue this idea, make sure that each person has a really good hand - flushes, full houses, etc. they'll have fun finding out who has the winning hand. For a final touch, strew around some poker chips.
- 23 If you have access to a closed room (such as a shed, used broom closet, etc.), try this fun trick. Create a continuous tape of bubbling sounds and an old auto (Model T Ford, etc.) see online resources for downloading a variety of sound effects if you can't find what you're looking for at your local library. Have the tape continuously playing behind the door. Make a sign on the door saying "Stay out" It's a great gin mill effect, especially if near the restroom (if inside) where you'll be sure to get a lot of traffic.
- 24 Visit your local thrift store and garage sales to grab up as many decks of cards as you can. Attached to string, these make GREAT party streamers! Another great effect is to attach the cards to strings vertically from the ceiling, having them hang down. If you take the time, you can also ensure that the vertical strands be winning hands (Full Houses, Straight Flushes, etc.)
- 25 Although it can be a bit to clean up afterward (be aware of your facility) you can scatter those small musical note confetti pieces on top of each table. It looks great!
- 26 For a jazz music feel, use black streamers in five parallel stripes across one (or more) walls (like a music staff.) Include the bars for beats, as well. Finally, cut out notes from black construction

paper and place on your staff! This looks great and is a wonderful way to cover a large, blank wall.

- 27 For signs of the times...create political signs to hang around your party location. They can be handmade or downloaded from the Internet and hung up where desired. Such topics would included propaganda for and against Prohibition and Votes for Women.
- 28 For great centerpieces, use copies of publications that were first released in the 1920s such as Reader's Digest (1922), The New Yorker (1925) and Time Magazine (1923)
- 29 Post a fun sign asking for members to the Book of the Month Club that was first formed in 1926.
- 30 Books that were released in the 1920s also make great centerpieces or wall decorations (by downloading book covers and printing them out to make posters.) Books to consider (that were published in the 1920s are The Great Gatsby and books by Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Faulkner or poems by Sinclair Lewis and Edna St. Vincent Millay.
- 31 Theme out your party like Greenwich Village, New York. Places like Greenwich Village was a haven for starving artists and writers to come together and shares their ideas and talents. The spirit of Greenwich Village was similar to that in the Bohemian Paris at the time.
- 32 In 1925 marked the year of the famous Scopes Monkey Trial a case where a 24 year old Tennessee high school teacher taught evolution in the classroom...against the current law. It was the first ever jury trial that was radio broadcast. To commemorate this event, have a stuffed monkey placed somewhere with a sign about it saying The Scopes of Monkey Trial of 1925.
- 33 The 1920s was a haven for the craft of entertainment magic. For added fun, to connect to the spirit of the decade, set up a magic vignette at your party, highlighting the 1920s sensation Harry Houdini (include books and photos - whatever you can get your hands on from your local library.)

#### Sound

34 If possible, ask your local college student for help in preparing the music selections. The inventory that a university has is AMAZING

(and free to students) as well as all the equipment you'll need to create your own CD's!

As a free note: Remember, background music is just that... BACKGROUND music. Unless it is part of an activity (i.e. dancing), background sounds should never be obtrusive to common conversation, no matter how much time you spent on it and how proud you are with it.

#### Costumes

- 35 Have a contest for the women to design and make their own hats and/or flapper headbands! These are GREAT fun to see what each gal comes up with! If you intend to include this activity, be sure to notify your guests in enough time so that they have ample time to work on their creations. For added fun, you can also include categories such as Most Over the Top, Most Intricate and Most Creative. It would also e good to include in your invitations some sample pictures of headband (images from costume shops online are your best resource for quick images.)
- 36 In your invitations, instruct your male guests that they must come in their most formal wear (as possible within the guests' individual budgets.) Although the history books tell us that not everyone was wealthy, the romantic side of the Roaring 20's has every man dressed in a clean pressed tuxedo!
- 37 Interest in aviation got a HUGE boost during the Roaring 20s with Charles Lindbergh's famous, first ever solo airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean. To commemorate this event, have a few model airplanes hanging from the ceiling by thin thread or string!
- 38 The 1920s has often been called the Golden Age of Sports. Commemorate this aspect of the 1920s with an homage to the sports that were popularized during this decade (Red Grange, The Galloping Ghost, in football - Tilden and Moody in tennis - Babe Ruth in baseball - Jack Dempsey in boxing - Bobby Jones in golf -Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame football coach)
- 39 Using butcher paper, create a large Empire State Building to hang from your tallest wall (it's construction was begun in 1929). Skyscrapers in general marked a symbol of the 1920s. For easier

windows, cut small yellow squares from construction paper and glue them to a large sheet of black butcher paper, tapering at the top.

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- When suggesting costume ideas to your guests, keep in mind the numerous 'characters' to choose from:
  - i. Flappers
  - ii. Gangsters
  - iii. Old silent movie stars and directors
  - iv. Formal wear (as though going to a nice jazz club)
  - v. Crooked police officers (paid off by the mob)
  - vi. Normal people (everyday 20's)
  - vii. Cigarette girl
  - viii. Judges
  - ix. Snitches
  - x. Crooked govt. politicians
  - xi. FBI agents

## Invitations

- 1 If you are going for a more mobster feel, invite your guest to a 'meeting of the family' instead of just a party. It will set the mood for the kind of fun you have in mind!
- 2 Invite your guests to a private nightclub, even naming the club after the guest of honor or another name that would have an association with your guests. You could even bill it up in your invitations like it's opening night! For added fun, include a fake newspaper article from the Chicago Times advertising the opening night!
- 3 If you are including a lot of the 'vice' from the Roaring 20's, white not attach your invitations to boxes of cigarettes or empty bottles of booze. If you are extra creative (and handy with computer graphics), you can make your own booze labels for the bottles, with all of the information on them!
- 4 To create a great bullet hole effect for your invitations, use the lit end of a burning cigarette. It really looks great for those invitations to a more mobster feel party!

## Food

#### Drinks

- 1 Due to prohibition, it was illegal in the 20's to order/serve alcohol...so underground nightclubs often had to disguise the names of the drinks for their visitors in the event that there was a raid. Have fun coming up with different names for each of the drinks that you offer. For added fun, DON'T tell your guests what each drink's new name is...have them order it and then serve them whatever they ordered!
- 2 Keep all the cold drinks in your bathtub (filled with ice) or use large metal wash bins.
- 3 Mint Julips (an alcoholic drink) made VERY popular by F. Scott Fitzgerald's very popular novel of the time, *The Great Gatsby*
- 4 Set out martini glasses at all of the tables. These are great to use no matter what drinks you are serving. If you don't plan on using them for serving drinks, they make great holders for place settings!
- 5 Serve all of your drinks (ESPECIALLY the alcoholic ones) in plain coffee mugs to disguise the fact that your guests were ordering 'illegal alcoholic drink.' Your local thrift store would be a great place to start to pick up as many as you need.
- 6 Clean dice and freeze them into your ice cubes for your guests! Not all of the ice cubes need to have a die in it to pull off the effect. Make sure that the dice you use are large and brightly colored and noticed by the guests when they put ice in their drinks! Although it's a VERY fun idea for adults, it isn't advised when children are present for obvious reasons.
- 7 Place five playing cards underneath every plate for dinner. When guests sit to eat, explain to them that a prize will be awarded to the winning hand using only the cards that they find underneath their plate. You can also allow the trading of cards with others at the table.

Misc.

8 For a more Italian mobster feel, provide some Italian food for your guests. If you don't plan on offering a full menu for your guests, decorate a table in a traditional Italian style and over a few bowls of Italian breadsticks for your guests to grab and munch on (you'll be surprised how many of your guests will end up using them as mob boss cigars!)

- 9 If your guests will be coming in gala/formal costumes and attire, match that commitment with providing formal dinner settings with your meal. It will make them glad that they went to all that trouble to dress up!
- 10 Incorporate Chinese food into your menu as Chinese cuisine was very new during the 20's and very popular among those looking for a little adventure in their meals!

### Activities and Games

- 1 Teach everyone some 20s dance steps (ask a musical theater major or dance major to come and teach) - likewise a show can be put on LOOK UP OLD DANCES FROM THE 20's. With a little preparation time, you can also check out a couple of dancing videos to learn the steps yourself, then teach them to your guests! Popular dances of the 1920s included the Foxtrot, Turkey Trot, Jive, Lindy Hop and Black Bottom.
- For those more outgoing guests, provide an opportunity to star in their own silent movie! View some silent movies that you can find in at your local library (video rental stores also have them, however the library is free) and find some SHORT snippits of scenes that your guests could act out. Try to limit the snippits to 20-30 seconds for the sake of preparation. If you have a few prepared, you can have your guests either perform them live (with some appropriate music in the background) or else video tape them and provide a DVD of the performances of your guests with the thank you cards! For extra fun, have some large sheets of posterboard and markers handy for when you want your silent movie actors to speak!
- 3 For a more rambunctious crowd, stage a pie fight in the true silent movies tradition (as one could argue that the cream pie fight was born in the 20's!) Here are some helpful hints:
  - a. Don't make any guest participate that doesn't want to
  - b. Have plastic available to protect anything that could get damaged by the cream (for the sakes of those with bad aim.)
  - c. If you're laying plastic on the floor, keep in mind that it gets VERY slippery once the cream is on it!
  - d. If you are planning one outside, remember that whipped cream from cans melt VERY fast, turning to almost liquid (not much fun) Shaving cream can make ideal pies in this regard (and they don't make for sticky clean up the way that real cream does.)
  - e. Make sure that you have your cameras ready...depending on the number of people participating and the amount of pies

you have available, it can be over with in seconds (it gets crazy!) To help slow it down, have it begin with one person getting hit with a pie, then allowing them to choose someone else to hit, who in turn will choose someone else, until everyone has been hit...then let the frenzy start!

- f. Provide lots of WET towels for your guests to clean themselves up with.
- g. This type of activity is typically best held for the very end (for obvious clean up reasons.)
- h. If you video tape it, copies on DVD are great to put in the thank you cards!

4 Have the number 20 written everywhere (in numbers as well as written out) - guests can have game cards to write down all of the 20's that they find. Taking this a step further, raffle off a prize at the end of the party - guests earn one raffle ticket for each 20 that they find. That way, even those guests who didn't find many will still have a chance to win while those that 'went for it' and found them all will have the greatest chance at winning the prize. This is also a great game for parties because it can go on throughout the entire party - guests casually finding different 20's as they go!

- 5 Set up your own Roaring 20's Scavenger Hunt! The ideas below will provide variations and ideas to make this a great activity! :
  - i. Clearly define the 'playing area'
  - ii. Provide each guest/team with a list of items to find (they can either be written out plainly ('20's headband') or something more vague ("Something a flapper would wear on her head')
  - iii. Don't be afraid to include items where only one exists as well as items that are found in multiples throughout the party area. Just make sure that the rarer the item in existence in the party area, the more points it's worth.
  - iv. Additionally, don't be afraid to fill your list with items that CAN'T be found. This will add a layer of difficulty.
    - 15

- v. Having trouble finding physical objects to hide? No problem...print out images from the Internet and post these about the party area.
- vi. For some REAL fun, have a couple volunteers holding an item from the list who are walking about the party. Figure ahead of time a favor of some sort that the guest/team must first complete BEFORE the volunteer will give them the item!
- 6 Using simple, elastic flapper headbands, create a headband flinging game! There are a few variations but all involve 'shooting' the headband in the same fashion as one would a rubberband (extending the headband over the thumb, pulling back with the opposite hand and then releasing.) Here are some variations:
  - a. Simply go for distance (the further the shot, the better your chance of winning.) With this one, make sure that each contestant uses the same headband as different bands have different elastic snapping qualities!
  - b. Give them a target they must hit. If you've purchased a cardboard cut-out as mentioned in the decorations section, this would be a great time to bring it over for your guests to have someone to shoot at!
  - c. Set up a few different sized bowls for your guests to try and shoot the headband inside one of them. If you allow more than one shot (handing them three headbands at once, for example) you can even set up a point system where the smaller bowls are worth more points than a larger bowl.
  - Set up a headband decorating station for the girls. Provide different colored elastic headbands (purchased at your local, larger craft store) as well as different colored feathers, beads and thin ribbon. Larger craft stores will offer a multi pack of various colored feathers, so one bag should do the trick (assuming you are throwing an average sized party.) Provide glue for attaching the pieces on the headbands. For smaller girls, have an adult handy to help with the gluing as too much glue might keep the headband from drying in time to be used for the party!

7

- 8 We all know of the horrible stock market crash at the end of the 20's decade. Well, why don't you see if your guests have better luck than those investors nearly a century ago. At the beginning of the party, provide every guest with a sheet of stocks you've created (for best results, use guests' names and made up companies) along with a starting value (make the values whole numbers to make the math easier. Each guest is to write down HOW MANY of each share that they want to buy (making sure that everyone has the same dollar amount to spend.) Now, this is where the fun begins...throughout the evening (or you can just wait until the end to announce the closing day's numbers) call out new values for the stocks you have listed. At the end of the evening, whoever is 'worth the most' wins!
- 9 Set up an activity to gather everyone together to watch some old silent movies from the 20's. These can be easily checked out from your local library. If possible, find someone who has a projector TV (or rent one) so that you can show the movies on a wall just like the old theaters! See if the movies have music playing for background to determine whether or not you'll need to cue your own music for this activity. The movies are old, but they are full of entertainment and can amuse ANY age (ESPECIALLY the comedies!) For an added touch, in your invitations invite your guests to a private screening of a new silent movie! Your guests can come decked out in their old Hollywood style costumes and come in on a red carpet. Don't forget the popcorn and goodies for your guests to enjoy while watching the movies!
- 10 Make sure that every guest has a sticker-tag with the name of a fictitious (or real) character from the 1920's (i.e. Susan the Flapper, Charles the Stock Market Financier, etc.) on it. Then, below that name, write a small fact about that fictitious character (i.e. Lost everything in the stock market crash, was once arrested for distilling their own alcohol, etc.) Then, give every guest a pencil and piece of paper. Explain to your guests that they must write down the names of every 'character' present in the room while they are having conversations and meeting others (a great way to initiate mingling.) Be sure to tell them ahead of time how many guests there are so that they

know when they've found them all. Throughout the evening, call out at different times ways to cross names off their list. You see, one of the characters in the room is working for the notorious Al Capone...but which one? At some point you might give a clue "The character doesn't play the stock market" - then everyone would cross those names off their list that relate to the character fact. A half hour later, you might say "The character voted FOR Prohibition" - then they would know to cross off the name who had that detail (they may need to go searching again among the other guests to remind themselves who had that fact on their sticker...) Again, it's a casual game that can keep the party moving, without asking a lot from your quests. Offer a prize for the person who solves the mystery first. If you have several winners, either award each winner with a small gift or have a guick drawing among those that solved it correctly!

11 This is a fun game for any age and gets people moving around. For a large group of guests that are comfortable and familiar with each other, there is a particularly ruthless game called Our Gang. The rules are simple, but it gets interesting VERY quickly. Take the number of guests and divide them by three. Now take that many cards from three suits of a card deck, beginning with the ace. For example, if you have 18 guests (18 divided by 3 = 6), then take the last six cards (ace, king, queen, jack, 10 and 9) of three of the suits (spades, hearts and diamonds) and make a pile out of these 18 cards. If you had 36 guests (36 divided by 3 = 12), then take the last 12 cards from three of the suits. Whether or not you are playing will depend on how evenly you can divide the party guest number by three. It is important that the number of participants is evenly divided by three. Once you have your stack of cards, pull everyone together and explain that the simple rule is that the first complete gang to form wins. A complete gang is a successive series of cards, regardless of suit. For example, everyone gets a card and you yell GO! The first group of guests that has one of every card in their gang, wins. Now, what is so challenging about that? Well, wait till you see how many different gangs start to form...then wait till you see gangs begin trading gang members to try and complete their gangs. It becomes a strategic battle to exchange gang members!

- 12 Put a large number of small glass beads or fake pearls in a small glass jar. Have everyone guess how many are inside. A prize to the one closest without going over. In the odd event that there is a tie, allow the finalists to make a second guess based on their first. A winner can then be determined as the one who guesses closer once more without going over. If they both go over, then the one closest wins. Different variations include: The one closest wins, the one closest without going over wins, having your guess be disqualified if someone else guessed the same amount, allowing more than one guess, allowing more guesses as rewards from other games.
- 13 Print out different gangster mugshot pictures from the Internet and post them throughout the party (some in well hidden areas and some in plain sight.) Before posting, underneath each photo, write a number or phrase (that will be unique to all other mugshot pictures.) Have your guests look for each mugshot photo, writing down the number or phrase corresponding to each (showing that they did indeed find them.) You can award a prize to the first to complete the sheet or the one who finds the most by the end of the party.
- 14 For a more rambunctious crowd, play Police Raid throughout the evening. The rules are simple, assuming that your party is at a 'speakeasy', getting busted by the Feds is something that everyone would want to avoid. At different times, blow a referee whistle (doubles as an old police whistle.) Everyone, no matter where they are have 5 seconds to get under a table. Those who don't make it are 'out.' Blow the whistle at different times, enabling more members to be 'arrested' until you have a single winner.
- 15 This is a fun, quick game for teens and adult guests. Have a two party guests (who have rehearsed ahead of time) come in front of everyone and stage a loud argument in front of everyone. Make sure that the two characters are in appropriate 20's costumes. Once the argument is over and THEY LEAVE OUT OF SIGHT, pass out paper to each guest (along with a pen/pencil.) Proceed to ask observation questions about the

argument (i.e. what each said (names and dates), what each was wearing, etc.) This is a lot of fun to plan...just make sure that you DON'T let any guest know that there is a game planned (or else they will be studying the argument.) Award those who are naturally aware!

- 16 Clothes Exchange Relay. This game has several variations but the general gist is coordinating a standard relay race where each team member runs to a point (where there's a suitcase, duffle bag, anything that could hold clothes), takes out an article of clothing (or several), puts them all on, gets a nod from a referee, then takes the items off and runs back to tag the next runner in their team. For your Roaring 20's event, put different kinds of themed clothing items in a suitcase (flapper headband, gangster jacket, etc.). A popular variation of this is to have each team form a line. The first person is to put all the items on, get a nod from a referee, then remove the items handing them to the team member standing right next to them for he/she in turn to put them on. This next team member can be putting on the items while the first is removing. However, that second team member cannot start passing his items on until he/she is wearing ALL the items that the first team member was wearing. THEN and only then can he/she begin removing the items to hand to the next person.
- 17 Have some table set up to play some poker (especially appropriate if going for a more gangster feel for your party.
- 18 With the discovery of King Tut's tomb at this time, all things foreign and exotic were exciting. The Asian game of Mah-jongg quickly became popular during the 1920's. Provide a Mah-jongg game set for our quests to play as they sit at the party.
- 19 In 1924, crosswords were published first in newspapers and quickly became a favorite pasttime. Simon & Schuster even supplied free pencils that were attached to their crossword books. Provide different crossword books spread throughout the party for your quests to enjoy. For best results, supply a few different kinds of books, with varying degrees of difficulty.
- 20 Create your own dancing marathon! Now, although in the 1920's they would sometimes last for days, even weeks, you can speed

up the process by having the participants wear weights on their hands and shoes....making it difficult to move after a while (symbolizing the loss of strength the participants often felt after several days.)

- 21 In honor of the Book of the Month Club first starting in 1926, ask your guests to read a book popular in the 1920s (such as The Great Gatsby) prior to the party. As a casual activity, block out a 15 minute time slot for your guests to recall their favorite parts of the novel and to discuss the novel in general.
- 22 Warren G. Harding became President of the US in 1920 and truly ushered in the Roaring 20's with his fun loving spirit. The game of golf especially grew as Harding was an avid golfer. The courses in the US alone tripled during the 1920s. To celebrate this sport, set up a putting contest! Ask around to friends who golf to borrow putting practice equipment (a portable hole, putter, balls, etc.) This is a great activity for casual party goers that ANYONE can participate in!
- Similar to golf, the sport of bowling got a new lift during the 1920s. In 1920 there were about 5000 bowling teams in the US alone...but by 1930, there were nearly 40,000! Using sand filled 2-liter soda bottles (only half filled with sand) and a relatively new basketball (that is, one that isn't warped) you can provide lots of fun for your guests as they practice knocking down the 'pins.' Station children to set up the pins between players (if adults will be participating).
- For a party involving a lot of guests (or just a more out-going crowd in general), stage your own Ziegfeld Follies. This was a live stage show involving music, dancing and comedy acts that entertained folks during the 1920s. For best results, prepare your guests ahead of time by notifying them of the activity weeks before the party so that they will have ample time to put a decent act together.

## Miscellaneous

The following are ideas that don't nicely fit into any of the above categories, but ones that I wanted to make sure were kept in.

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

- Find someone with a tripod for their camera to take pictures of your guests. Cut a black, yard square piece of fabric and have the photographer put his/her head underneath it while he/she takes photos of your guests in still shots just the way that they did a century ago!
- 2 If you have ANY themed props, this is the best place to put them to create memorable photos for your guests. Memorable photos are great inserts for your thank you cards after the party is over, as well. If the props that you are using are your ONLY props for your party, station the photo opp location near the entrance to the party so that your guests will see it right when they walk in (to get the biggest bang for your buck!)
- 3 If possible, have some fun costume pieces available for guests to put on for the photos (in the event that you don't anticipate your guests coming in costume on their own.)
- 4 There are several great things that you can do to spruce up your photo opportunity location including appropriate colored balloons and spruce palm plants. A nice Art Deco poster also looks fantastic. For a resource on inexpensive Art Deco posters, see our Resources section below.
- 5 Another great thing to include at your photo opp are character cut-outs. Hollywood/Movie themed memorabilia stores online and in your city have great cardboard stand-ups of different famous people, including the characters from The Untouchables (a Kevin Costner movie about the FBI going after Al Capone.) For an online resource, see our Resources section below.
- 6 If possible, have the film developed in black and white! If you know someone handy with Adobe Photoshop, they can easily transform digital photos of your guests into sepia colors!

#### Other Misc. Ideas

- 7 Have a piano available? Ask around to friends and family to see if anyone knows how to play some ragtime piano. Ragtime piano is a more challenging style of piano to play, however it's amazing listen to it live and it can be even MORE amazing to WATCH!
- 8 Have Al Capone pay a visit to your guests! You can either have a friend come in costume or else hire a professional from a service (check your local Yellow Pages under Entertainers). It will add a new depth of sophistication to your party to have a live character roaming about, greeting your guests. He could even stuff some fake dollar bills into people's pockets telling them that 'he may need to call on their services one day'!
- 9 Have a volunteer to roam the party carrying a box with strap over her shoulder muttering (in a twangy voice) "Cigars...Cigarettes!"
- 10 For a unique twist on the Roaring 20's theme (GREAT for the summertime) plan a Great Gatsby themed 20's party. In the book, they talk about high society lawn parties. In invitations, disguise it like an article from the local paper (the Society section). Play lawn games like croquet and badminton. For food serve lemonade and finger sandwiches.
- 11 An over-the-top conclusion to your party (which works ESPECIALLY great if you've chosen a speakeasy feel to your overall party) have a few guys barge in on the party dressed as federal agents and bust everyone for breaking Prohibition laws! Of course, this would only work if it was the intended ending for the party. However, if done right, it's an amazing ending that your guests will be telling their coworkers all about on Monday morning!
- 12 For an added spin on a normal casino style activity (great for a gangster feel) where there are games being played for coins, etc., have different parts of the night where guests must SWAP their poker chip holdings with other guests. In this way, luck is involved in an additional way. It's not just how lucky you are at the tables, but also as guests swap their holdings!
- 13 If there is a guest of honor, instruct all of the invited guests to bring 20 of an item for the guest of honor (i.e. 20 pennies, 20 lollipops, etc.) everyone bring 20 of something.

14 Check out the site below (Quest Experiences does not endorse the following website, only providing one of many possible resources for find the needed information):

#### http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm

It contains a TON of 20's slang phrases for your guests to use throughout the party! Have some key phrases printed on small cards for your guests to carry around. A fun game to play is to have five select phrases (ones that you think will be used by your particular guests) whose translations are given to your guests. You explain to your guests that throughout the evening they must use the 20's slang versions of the phrases and points will be taken away every time they accidentally slip and use the modern phrase.

- 15 Gather noteworthy events of the 20s (see the worksheets section for a sampling) and announce to your guests throughout the party the events as though they were actually happening. Play it up big, like a newspaper reporter. Events might include Presidential elections, the death of US President Harding, the repeal of Prohibition, votes for women and the stock market crash of 1929.
- 16 In honor of the 1920s sensation Harry Houdini, have an amateur magician come to perform magic tricks for your guests. Ask around, first. There are lots of magic hobbyists out there...some from those whom you least expect!

In 1922, the famous tomb of King Tut was discovered by Howard Carter. The entire world marveled over the discovery and became a symbol for all things exotic and exciting during the 1920s. To signify this event, create your own homage to the King Tut discovery with the following ideas:

 Gold coffin (or gold walls, if needed.) Spray paint the box structure with a standard HIGH GLOSS finish gold spray paint (not matte finish.) Using some art history books as guides, draw cartouche images on the sides using a fine tipped, black permanent marker. Now, the marker will not be dark enough atop the gold spray paint...you'll need to go back over it with some black acrylic paint. Some color was used by the Egyptians, notably white, turquoise and an earthy brick red. Reflect these colors in touch up details on the sides of the coffins.

- 2. Visit your local library and check out some books on ancient Egypt. These look great sitting on tables or as part of a vignette.
- 3. Visit your local library and photocopy old maps (found in their reference section.) Black and white copies can then be taken to your local print shop/copy center to have blown up to any size you want (3' x 4' feet.) When they are blown up that large, they get very 'grainy,' which a great affect for antique maps. These can then be either hung on the walls, or rolled up and placed around the party/event. If you are particularly clever, you can incorporate one or more of these in a treasure hunt (see TREASURE HUNT section.)
- 4. Gather as many shovels and digging tools as you can find. By themselves they aren't necessarily that effective, but next to a small dug hole, with a table full of old looking books (from libraries would work just fine) and journals they really look great (especially if it's a real old shovel and such...)
- Use lots of candles for lighting. If you are short on candlesticks, melt some wax on scrap pieces of wood and adhere small votive candles to it. These look great when lined up in a line about three inches from each other.
- 6. Don't be afraid to use a little dirt for decoration. This looks especially nice sprinkled around the bottom of table centerpieces. Along with the dirt you could add small shovels, lanterns, plastic bugs or snakes, rubber skulls or small figurines painted gold
- 7. Visit your local costume store (or discount store if within a few months of Halloween) and pick up some spider webbing. Placed sparingly, the look is quite effective!
- 8. If signs need to be made, find yourself some old, rotten wood (or wood from broken pallets.) Paint the words on these pieces...looks right out of a dig site.

Have a great event!

## Resources



# A COMPLETE ROARING 20'S THEMED BINGO SET - DOWNLOAD IT NOW!!!

http://www.creativetreasurehunts.com

# Reproducibles

On these final pages you'll find sheets that can be printed and copied for your guests. The final sheet contains the answers to all of the puzzles and worksheets.

## **Worksheet Answers**

#### **Current Events**

**1920 -** November 2: First Radio broadcast; President Warren Harding elected; women get their first vote

**1921** - September 8: First Miss America pageant held in Atlantic City; November 11: Unknown soldier of World War I buried

**1922** - November 26: Archaeologist Howard Carter finds tomb of Tutankhamen near Luxor, Egypt

**1923** - August 2: President Harding dies; August 3: Vice President Calvin Coolidge is sworn into office as president

**1924** - February 3: Former President Woodrow Wilson dies; November 4: Calvin Coolidge is elected President

1925 - October 2: Scottish inventor John Baird invents the first form of a television

**1927** - First talking movie, <u>The Jazz Singer</u> released; May 20: Spirit of St. Louis and pilot Charles Lindbergh land in Paris

**1928** - September 19: First Mickey Mouse talking film, <u>Steamboat Willie</u>, released by Walt Disney; November 6: Herbert Hoover elected President

1929 - October 24: Start of the Stock Market Crash

#### Word Overlap

- 1. Al Capone, Speak Easy Art Deco
- 2. Model T, Charlie Chaplin Eliot Ness
- 3. Chicago, Mabel Normand Flapper
- 4. The Jazz Singer, Stock Market Prohibition
- 5. Harding, Suffrage Charleston

#### **Snitch at the Docks**

Vinny was at Dock 14 at 9:45. Mugsy was at Dock 7 at 10:45. Tony was at Dock 3 at 11:15.



It was the third raid by the Feds this month and Capone knew he had a real problem...someone in his 'family' was ratting out their plans to the authorities.

It was this last hit that was the most devastating. Three separate Canadian shipments were seized at the Chicago docks. With only a few men that escaped (and severaly wounded men at that) to get any real details from, it was hard to piece together the events of the evening. Capone stationed one point man at each of three docks to sign off and inspect the shipments. Although they each had their own 'muscle' with them (other men with some Tommy guns to make sure everything went smoothly) they and only they knew of the specifics for the exchange. Capone knew that he had to know where each of these men were last seen on those docks the night of the raids.

After questioning each man that escaped the raids, Capone could gather the following details:

One of the point men were seen at 9:45 at Dock 14.

Mugsy was definitely seen at Dock 7, but he wasn't sure of what time (except that he knew it wasn't 11:15)

Vinny was nowhere near Dock 3.

Based on the above clues, can you piece together which point man (Vinny, Tony and Mugsy) were at which dock (Dock 14, Dock 3 and Dock 7) and at which time (9:45, 10:45 and 11:15)?





Listed below you'll find 9 groups of events. Each one happened during a different year in the 1920's. Can you write the correct year next to each set of events? No year is repeated and one year isn't used!

- First talking movie, <u>The Jazz Singer</u> released; Spirit of St. Louis and pilot Charles Lindbergh land in Paris
- Scottish inventor John Baird invents the first form of a television
- First Miss America pageant held in Atlantic City; Unknown soldier of World War I buried
  - President Harding dies; Vice President Calvin Coolidge is sworn into office as president
  - First Mickey Mouse talking film, <u>Steamboat Willie</u>, released by Walt Disney; Herbert Hoover elected President
  - First Radio broadcast; President Warren Harding elected; women get their first vote
  - Former President Woodrow Wilson dies; Calvin Coolidge is elected President
  - \_\_\_\_ Start of the Stock Market Crash
    - Archaeologist Howard Carter finds tomb of Tutankhamen near Luxor, Egypt





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Below are five groups of letters. Hidden with each are three different Eighties themed icons. Hints for two are provided below each group. The remaining letters will reveal the third. The letters are NOT scrambled.

Example: Horse and Chicken - H C O H R I C K S E E N

ASALRPTECDAAEPKOCENASEOY

A notorious mobster and a safe place for an illegal drink.

CHEALRIMOLTIEONCDEHESAPLSTLIN

Ford's invention and he was the Tramp.

MAFCHBLELAINPCOPAGERMRANOD

The US city known for the mob and a silent movie actress.

\_\_\_\_\_

TPSRTHOOHCEIKBIJMTAZAIZRSIKONENGTER

Famous Warner talkie and this had a crash.

CHSHAURAFRFRLDAEGSITEONNG

A president and women's rights.

