

The logo for King's Venues, featuring the words "KING'S" and "VENUES" in a bold, white, sans-serif font stacked vertically inside a solid red square.

# KING'S VENUES

## **Last-minute summer party ideas**

You've got your venue booked and your save the dates have gone out, but you're a little nervous about your event. As a seasoned event organiser you know you can deliver a summer party where everything will run smoothly, but this year you're after something a little bit special.

Every year guests expect more and more from events, especially parties where the onus is on having an 'experience'. But with budgets getting tighter it's tough to make your function stand out from the crowd without breaking the bank. Hopefully our last-minute ideas will give you some inspiration to make your summer party an event your guests will remember for years to come.

### **Food and drink**

Keep your food and drink menus seasonal and fresh at your summer party. In the UK we spend most of the year eating comfort food to compensate for the weather and drinking beer and wine as it's the done thing. Berries, artichokes, crab, mackerel, watercress... serve your guests dishes with ingredients that reflect the season. If they've been sourced locally, make a point of letting everyone know. It's also important not to underestimate the power of a barbecue. Your guests will appreciate the freshness of the food and there's no better smell on a warm summer's eve.

Cocktails are a great way to unleash your creativity without having to spend lots of money. Fresh fruit, flavoured crushed ice, alcoholic ice creams and lollies, edible flowers, fresh herbs set in ice, 'jam jar' glasses, watermelon punch bowls, individually designed cocktails for each of your guests based on the meaning of their name – the world is your oyster! However outlandish your ideas get, just remember to keep taste at the forefront of your mind.

This summer, make sure you keep your eyes peeled for King's Venues' new pop up bar on our River Terrace. It'll be the perfect place for your guests to enjoy their Sundowners while they take in the spectacular views of the Thames.

### **Games**

The sun will (hopefully) be shining and spirits will be high, so make sure you harness your guests' energy and get some games going to keep the mood buoyant. For a more sophisticated event, you can keep your games low key while still injecting some light-hearted fun. How about a flower arranging table where guests can create their own centrepieces for the dinner tables? If you're outdoors, you could set up a boules pitch or croquet match. For less formal parties consider Giant Jenga or Connect Four, or even some funfair-themed games like a coconut shy and a hook the duck stall. So long as the interactive element of your party remains optional, games can help your party guests mingle, have fun and most importantly, make the event memorable.

## **Entertainment**

Overbearing entertainment can ruin an event. If you're not hosting a magic show or a comedy night, don't hire entertainers who would be best placed at one. Unobtrusive entertainment can be spectacular, for example magicians, aerial silk artists or contortionists, and make it possible for your guests to continue their conversations while they watch.

## **Music**

You can't beat live music at an outdoor event. Whether a string quartet or a steel band would suit your party best, check out the local up and coming talent before you book. Student bands and singers could offer you everything you're looking for, for a fraction of the price. Just make sure you go and listen to all the acts on your shortlist so you know what you're getting. Contact local universities and colleges as a starting point.

King's College boasts its very own a cappella group, All The King's Men. The award-winning, all-male vocal group has been performing for five years and was crowned University Champions of the Voice Festival UK and is available for private bookings. Have a listen to them in action. <http://www.all-the-kings-men.com/gallery/videos/>

## **Extra little touches**

We all hope our summer parties are going to be held in glorious sunshine, but even if this is the case when the sun goes down, the temperature will drop and you need to think about keeping your guests warm. So how about an open fire of some sort? (Health and safety permitting, of course.) You could combine this with a marshmallow-toasting session – a sure fire crowd-pleaser.

Lighting is a more complex issue if you're hosting an outdoor summer event. Fairy lights are a great choice as they will go unnoticed in the sunshine, but will come into their own when they are switched on as dusk falls.

How you decorate your outside space for a summer event greatly depends on your venue. A venue with a view can save you a fortune, but if you need to embellish your surroundings a little, ribbons and lanterns in trees create a colourful atmosphere as do candles and lanterns on tables. If your space is lacking in foliage, hiring colourful plants and trees will help invoke The Great Outdoors.

## **Get in touch**

King's Venues has lots of outdoor and indoor spaces perfect for summer parties and events, like our River Terrace with its views stretching down The Thames and the Memorial Gardens on our Guys/London Bridge campus. Give our Events Team a call to discuss your dates and requirements on +44 (0) 20 7848 1700.

## **Summer offers**

This summer we've got 2 fabulous offers for you. Book a day delegate package for a June event and you and your guests will enjoy fresh strawberries and cream or strawberry tarts on us! If you're looking at a July or August event in our Great Hall on the Strand Campus, we'll treat your delegates to a Mackies luxury dairy ice cream tub each. Just quote 'strawberries' or 'ice cream' respectively when booking.