



Email works well for casual invitations, such as "Let's get together for lunch on Friday." For a more serious invitation, such as when you're having a dinner party or hosting a celebration, you'll want to weigh some pros and cons. Using email or online invitation services, which organize and customize the invitation process for you, can save time (you don't have to go to the store) and money (they're free), and build some excitement at the same time (there are designs and choices for every occasion). They're also a greener alternative to paper invitations.

On the other hand, e-vitations aren't as personal as a phoned or written invitation, and might not provide enough fanfare for a formal event or be special enough for an intimate gathering. They can end up in a spam folder or undelivered as a result of a computer glitch. Even though they make it easy to RSVP, you still may have to follow up with people who don't respond.

Watch out for the option that allows invitees to see the guest list and who has responded, "Yes," "No," or "Maybe." Let guests respond to your invitation, not because of who is or isn't on the guestlist.

Tips for E-vitation Success

- Make sure that the email addresses you use are correct, and that all of your invited guests check their email regularly.
- Be familiar with all the options. For example, you may want to turn off the feature that lets guests see who else is invited. This is especially important for people who don't know each other well. Doing so hides email addresses and respects their privacy.
- Include all the important info: who's hosting, what kind of party it is, why the party is being thrown (if there's a reason), when and where it is (including links to maps if necessary), and RSVP details.

- Fill in all the details the site asks for and remember to include a personal message.
- Proofread before you hit "Send." Invitations are the first hint of what a party will be like, so make a good impression.
- Be prepared to follow up by phone if you don't receive an RSVP in a timely fashion, just in case your message wasn't delivered or is lingering unopened in an inbox.
- Follow up with a reminder to the group a day or two in advance.