

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue suit, a white shirt, a blue bow tie, and bright green sunglasses, is smiling and posing with his hands on his hips. He is standing in front of a dark wooden door with a brass handle. The background is a mix of dark wood and a light-colored wall. The overall color palette is dominated by blue, green, and white.

TWIN CITY <sup>2023</sup>  
*Mitzvah Guide*

The #1  
Mitzvah  
**PLANNING  
RESOURCE**

**VENUES + CATERERS + PHOTOGRAPHERS  
ENTERTAINMENT & MORE**

Photo by Ethan Roberts Photography

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As you move into Bar and Bat Mitzvah planning, we are thrilled to be able to bring you the annual Twin City Mitzvah Guide. In addition to our comprehensive website, our robust social media platform and our live Mitzvah Magic event, our 2023 guide encompasses all things Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

We welcome you to meet the people who have revolutionized parties and events in the Twin Cities. They are excited to work with you throughout the process and celebrate with you and your family.

We recognize how time consuming and stressful it is to plan a life cycle event of this magnitude. Our wish is that you find exactly what you are looking for and that this guide will make your event planning life just a little easier. As always, feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have.

In this issue, we have found the places, the talent, the photographers, the food and the fun. We invite you to flip the pages, click inside and plan your event. Don't forget that since our guide is digital, we will be adding info throughout the year, so check back often.

I was always told not to wish the time away, because these moments go quickly, so take a deep breath, start planning and know that Twin City Mitzvahs is about to introduce you to the **Everything to see in 2023!**

Mazel Tov to you and your family and we look forward to seeing you on **Wednesday, September 20th at Mitzvah Magic!**

Cover Photographed By: Ethan Roberts Photography

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## WHAT TO ASK YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER

-  Tell me about your event experience and how you approach photographing mitzvahs.
-  What is your photographic and shooting style?
-  What type of equipment do you bring to an event?
-  What is your backup plan?
-  How many hours are included in your package and/or can we customize the hours of your coverage?
-  Are you available for a creative session and how much will that be?
-  Do you include a print release?
-  Are digital files included?
-  Roughly how many digital photos will I receive?
-  Will these be available for download
-  Do you offer an online gallery? Can that be shared with family and friends?
-  Do you offer printed and touched up photo options?
-  How quickly will we receive the final deliverables?
-  How many people does your team include?

*Here are a few points of discussion and questions to ask your photographer when determining if they are the best fit for your upcoming mitzvah event:*

Contributed by Atlanta Party Connection



## THE PRE-MITZVAH PHOTOSHOOT SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SHOTS:

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child in several locations throughout the synagogue
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child with their siblings, parents, grandparents, in any combination
- A generations family photo
- Portraits of each child by themselves
- Portrait of parents of the Mitzvah child
- Parents kissing Mitzvah Child
- Portrait of grandparents
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child in front of the ark
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child holding the Torah
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child posed reading Torah
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child reading Torah surrounded by parents, siblings, grandparents in any combination
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah child walking in/out of the sanctuary
- Family walking in/out of the sanctuary
- Parents placing the tallit on Bar/Bat Mitzvah child

## PARTY SHOT IDEAS

- Child Entrance
- Family Entrance
- Family dancing
- Sign-in board
- Candle Lighting
- Table shots with and without guests
- DANCING
- Any entertainment
- The Hora – in the chair, child, parents, and siblings
- Group shot of all the kids
- Guests having a great time
- An end-of-the-evening party shot
- Décor
- Centerpieces/balloons
- Favor table
- Food
- **Emotion Emotion Emotion (capture it)**


# MITZVAH PHOTO *must haves*

A photograph is the pause button of life and believe me, you are going to want to hit pause on this lifecycle event. This important time in your child's life is over in the blink of an eye and you will want to remember the laughter and joy for years to come.

Hiring a photographer is not a set-it-and-forget-it type of task. Once you find a photographer that matches your photography style and budget, make sure to prepare for the weekend by creating a must-have photo list with names and descriptions to share

with your photographer (It will make your life easier).

To save you some time, we've created a suggested pic list... But remember candid shots are always great too!



As if figuring out what to wear on a normal day isn't hard enough, now you have to decode what "festive" versus "dressy casual" is. Navigating dress codes can be a bit tricky. Hosts are getting creative with dress codes, but it's leaving guests confused. What does a suggested dress code mean anyway? You receive an invitation and it requests a dress code that you are not familiar with...well, here are some dress code ideas for invitations and how your host wants you to dress. Keep in mind: You've got to do you. The info ahead is merely a guide.

# *decoding*

## THE DRESS CODE





## Black Tie:

Black tie is all about formal wear. You should dress to impress. For men, it's a tuxedo. For women, if the party starts at 6 p.m. (with a cocktail hour), wear a more formal cocktail dress. If it's after 8 p.m., a long dress is preferred.

## Black Tie Optional/Black Tie Preferred/Black Tie Invited/Formal Attire:

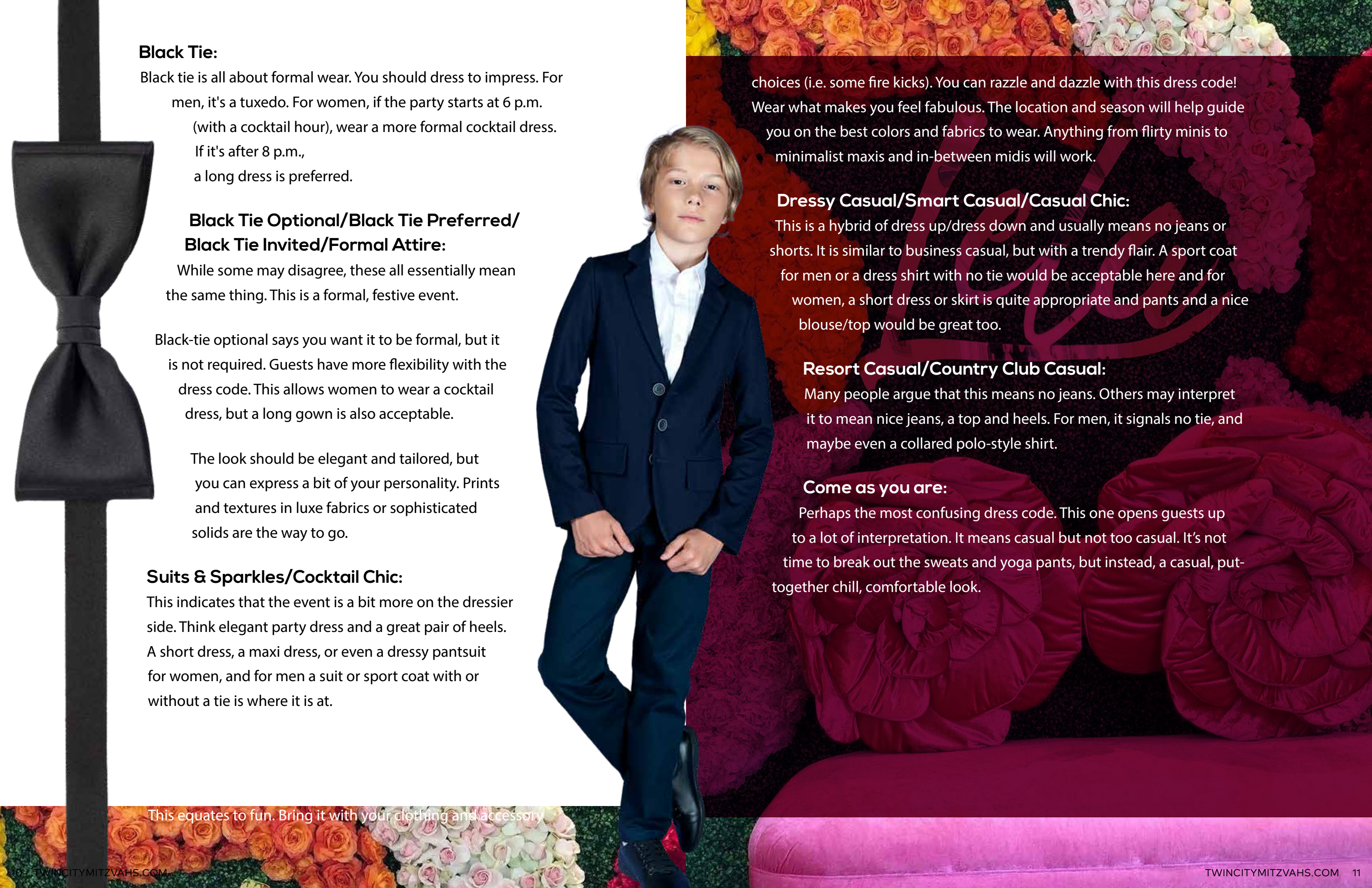
While some may disagree, these all essentially mean the same thing. This is a formal, festive event.

Black-tie optional says you want it to be formal, but it is not required. Guests have more flexibility with the dress code. This allows women to wear a cocktail dress, but a long gown is also acceptable.

The look should be elegant and tailored, but you can express a bit of your personality. Prints and textures in luxe fabrics or sophisticated solids are the way to go.

## Suits & Sparkles/Cocktail Chic:

This indicates that the event is a bit more on the dressier side. Think elegant party dress and a great pair of heels. A short dress, a maxi dress, or even a dressy pantsuit for women, and for men a suit or sport coat with or without a tie is where it is at.



choices (i.e. some fire kicks). You can razzle and dazzle with this dress code! Wear what makes you feel fabulous. The location and season will help guide you on the best colors and fabrics to wear. Anything from flirty minis to minimalist maxis and in-between midis will work.

## Dressy Casual/Smart Casual/Casual Chic:

This is a hybrid of dress up/dress down and usually means no jeans or shorts. It is similar to business casual, but with a trendy flair. A sport coat for men or a dress shirt with no tie would be acceptable here and for women, a short dress or skirt is quite appropriate and pants and a nice blouse/top would be great too.

## Resort Casual/Country Club Casual:

Many people argue that this means no jeans. Others may interpret it to mean nice jeans, a top and heels. For men, it signals no tie, and maybe even a collared polo-style shirt.

## Come as you are:

Perhaps the most confusing dress code. This one opens guests up to a lot of interpretation. It means casual but not too casual. It's not time to break out the sweats and yoga pants, but instead, a casual, put-together chill, comfortable look.

This equates to fun. Bring it with your clothing and accessory

# SOME LESS COMMON BUT CREATIVE DRESS CODES ARE:

## Denim Diamonds



This is exactly what it says it is, dressy on the top and denim on the bottom.

### Jerseys, Jeans, and Jewels:

Your favorite jersey, some jeans, and something to glam it up.

### Nightclub Attire/ Club Chic:

This could be jeans or a trendy fun skirt or dress for the women and a trendy casual look for the men.

### No Tie:

Again, this is what it says it is...Casual.

### No Shirt, No shoes, No Mitzvah Service:

This is a playful way to say dress appropriately, but this is not a dressy event. Shorts, pants, jeans...anything goes!



Hope this gives you some insight into a variety of dress codes and wording. It is best to be clear of your expectations when setting up your own event and when attending, make sure to double-check what is communicated to you. Most importantly, have fun in what you choose.



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# PRINT VS DIGITAL



Your invitations are the first glimpse that your guests receive to give them a preview about your celebration.

There is a lot of debate on this topic, especially with tradition and etiquette coming into play. Learn the advantages of traditional printed paper invitations vs digital invites.

by Jennifer Gibson, The UPS Store



# PHYSICAL INVITATIONS PROS

## STAND OUT:

Wow your guests and grab their attention with a paper invitation. With different paper stocks, individual pieces for each event, and colored envelope options, you can give your guests a unique experience just by opening the mailbox.

## RELIABLE DELIVERY:

A printed invitation will get to your guest's mailbox or will come back to you as undeliverable. You then have an opportunity to follow up. With digital invitations you never receive confirmation that they were delivered to your guest. Did it go to spam, get lost in the other hundreds of emails received each day, or just plain forgotten?

## PHYSICAL REMINDER:

Printed invitations can be hung up on the fridge, message board, or left out on the counter leaving a physical reminder to be followed up on. Many guests will also bring the invite with them to the event to have all the important information in their pocket.

## RSVP CARD:

A separate response card is a call-to-action item. A good compromise, and to save on return postage, is to have your guests respond digitally. Don't forget about your guests that are less tech literate. Give them an alternative option to respond, either through a mail back card or a phone number to call.

## TRADITIONAL:

Your family and friends will appreciate your traditional invitation for such an important event. This gives you the opportunity to write out exactly who is invited on the envelope, not leaving room for wondering.

# INVITATIONS CONS

## MORE EXPENSIVE:

You will spend more money designing and sending printed invitations. You will need to pay for custom design or buy a template, printing, addressing, and postage for the invites and response cards. Sending through email, text, or creating a Facebook event is free.

## NO UPDATES:

Last minute changes? Once your paper invitation is printed there is no going back. With a digital invitation it is easy to send out an update or additional details. Slower Delivery: With physical invitations you will stuff and stamp envelopes and drop them in the outgoing mail. They can take a week or two for them to be delivered to your guests, or even longer sending internationally. A digital invite is nearly instant once you hit send.

## NOT SO ECO-FRIENDLY:

Paper invitations create waste. Multiple pieces of paper and envelopes. Not many of your guests will keep the invitations once the event passes, they will end up in the trash. Digital invitations are an eco-friendlier option.

Use this guide to help you make an informed decision to what type of invitation is best for your Mitzvah!

## Custom Designed

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- Thank You
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- Place Cards
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# MITZVAH Timeline

## 2-3 YEARS

- ★ Set the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date
- ★ Determine a budget for event
  - ★ Think about the type of celebration and theme you would like the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to have
- ★ Begin to research venues for the Friday night dinner, kiddush luncheon, party and brunch

## 16-18 MONTHS

- ★ Meet with the Rabbi or Cantor to understand the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process and answer any questions you may have
- ★ Begin to work on a guest list. Separate the list into 'Must-Haves' and 'Nice-to-Haves'
- ★ Determine what other events your family will host (Shabbat Dinner, Shabbat Kiddush, Sunday Brunch)
- ★ Begin thinking about potential Mitzvah Projects
  - ★ Reserve a venue, caterer, photographer & entertainment

## 12-24 MONTHS

- ★ Discuss the Bat/Bar Mitzvah requirements with the Rabbi
- ★ Reserve a block of rooms at a hotel for out of town guests central to the service and party
  - ★ Consult with a decorator/florist or brainstorm décor ideas on your own

## 10-12 MONTHS

- ★ Send/Email out a Save-the-Date (helpful for out of town guests to think ahead for dates and times)
- ★ Select a Mitzvah Project
- ★ Begin sorting photos for video montage
- ★ Begin thinking about the type of invitation you would like

## 6-8 MONTHS

- ★ Begin Mitzvah Project
- ★ Finalize the guest list and enter the addresses and/or emails into a spreadsheet (verify all information is current)
- ★ Decide what enclosures need to be included with each guest invitation (maps, party card, response cards)
- ★ Order invitations and thank you cards or begin designing digital invites
- ★ Order any items that require customization, including kippot and party swag
- ★ Purchase Tallit and Tefillin, if necessary

## 4-6 MONTHS

- ★ Go to the post office to have the complete invitation weighed and purchase the appropriate stamps (make sure to place a stamp on the return envelope or postcard)
  - ★ Plan the menu for the reception
- ★ Arrange for the rental of party supplies not supplied by venue (chairs, dishes, linen, etc.)

## 3 MONTHS

- ★ Have envelopes addressed
- ★ Finalize photos for the video montage and complete the video
- ★ Shop for clothes and shoes (don't do any tailoring yet)

## 2 MONTHS

- ★ Mail or email invitations. It's Official (8 weeks is standard)
- ★ Select aliyot/honors and make sure to collect your honoree's full Hebrew names
- ★ Work on parents' speech or blessing
- ★ Finalize all remaining entertainment for the party i.e. photo booth, caricatures etc.
  - ★ Make a draft of the seating chart
  - ★ Work on the service program
- ★ Begin ordering supplies and compiling local information for welcome bags/baskets for out-of-town guests
  - ★ Compose candle-lighting introductions or poems (where applicable)
  - ★ Arrange for transportation of family and/or guests, if necessary (where applicable)
  - ★ Ask close friends and relatives to bake for Kiddush



## 1 MONTH

- ★ Meet with the DJ and entertainers to pick songs and games and go over party preferences
- ★ Arrange for a rehearsal in the synagogue sanctuary
- ★ Confirm party timeline and schedule with all vendors, including photographer, videographer, music/entertainment and caterer
- ★ Purchase any items not provided by the caterer (liquor, challah, cake, gift cards and other giveaways, etc.)
- ★ Finalize aliyot list and provide a copy to the synagogue
- ★ Make sure to schedule all hair/nail/makeup appointments
- ★ Schedule family photos at synagogue and assign times for family to arrive

## 3 WEEKS

- ★ Visit the tailor
- ★ Assemble toiletry baskets for the bathrooms
- ★ Finalize ceremony programs, print and assemble
- ★ Create Mitzvah Day itinerary
- ★ Compile list of must-have shots for the photographer

## 2 WEEKS

- ★ Confirm final headcounts
- ★ Finalize seating chart and write place cards (wait to fill in the table numbers until closer to the event if possible)

## 1 WEEK

- ★ Drop off welcome baskets/bags at hotel
  - ★ Have a rehearsal at the synagogue
- ★ Make sure Kiddush bakers know location and drop-off times
- ★ Contact all event vendors with last minute details or questions
- ★ Confirm all details are in place (food, decorations) for other events being hosted (Shabbat Dinner, Kiddush, etc.)
- ★ Prepare payments and tips

## DAY OF EVENT

- ★ Relax and enjoy the day!

## POST EVENT

- ★ Write and mail thank you cards
- ★ BREATHE and RELAX!

And tell us all about your event at [TwinCityMitzvahs.com/send-us-your-photos!](http://TwinCityMitzvahs.com/send-us-your-photos!)



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### WHAT TO BRING TO THE PORTRAIT SESSION AT TEMPLE:

- Everyone's synagogue attire
- Mitzvah kid's tallit, steamed or ironed to avoid wrinkles in photos
- Kippot for men in family portraits

### WHAT TO BRING TO SERVICES:

- Kippot and Tallit (don't forget dad's too!)
- Mitzvah kid's service materials and speech
- Parent's remarks
- Programs for guests (if you are handling)
- Tissues ;-)

### WHAT TO BRING TO PARTY:

- Contact info for all your vendors
- Checks for vendors still requiring payment
- Cash for tips (bartender/servers, valet, DJ)
- List of photos for photographer to take
- List of requested/banned songs and any special announcements for DJ/band
- Place cards (if you are handling)
- Copy of seating arrangement for event manager
- Favors and/or dance floor socks (if you are bringing)

- Extra copy of montage DVD
- Parent and/or Mitzvah kid remarks
- Challah (if not provided by caterer)
- Pens for sign-in book/board
- Safety pins, makeup for touch ups, and pain reliever (for the unexpected)
- Your dancing shoes!

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Is finding that perfect gift adding stress to your life? It can be challenging, but don't let it stress you out. Nowadays, there are so many options to choose from (thank you TikTok and Influencers everywhere!), but don't overthink it. Browse our suggestions and see if anything fits the bill 😊.



# perfect

## Ca\$h

The easiest, most simplified, and most appreciated gift is cash. What's nice about cash is that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child can use it in any way they choose; they can buy something now, put it toward a bigger purchase, or save it! The other nice thing is you can give it in many forms; cash, check, Venmo, Paypal, Zelle (the list goes on).

Money is many times given in \$18 increments, symbolizing the Hebrew letters for the word life (chai), which is numerically equivalent to 18.

The most difficult part about gifting money is deciding on how much to gift. Any monetary gift you are comfortable with works and many times depends on your relationship to the Mitzvah child and/or the family.

## Gift Cards

Like cash, gift cards are another easy option. This is more targeted and personal, as you can give a gift card to their favorite store, restaurant, or spot to meet friends. What are the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child's interests? Is there a gift card you can purchase that reflects that?

Some ideas include (Apple, Amazon, Best Buy, Lululemon, Coach, Nordstrom, Target, H&M, Anthropologie, Nike, Etsy, Free People, Athleta, Urban Outfitters, Caribou, Starbucks, and more).

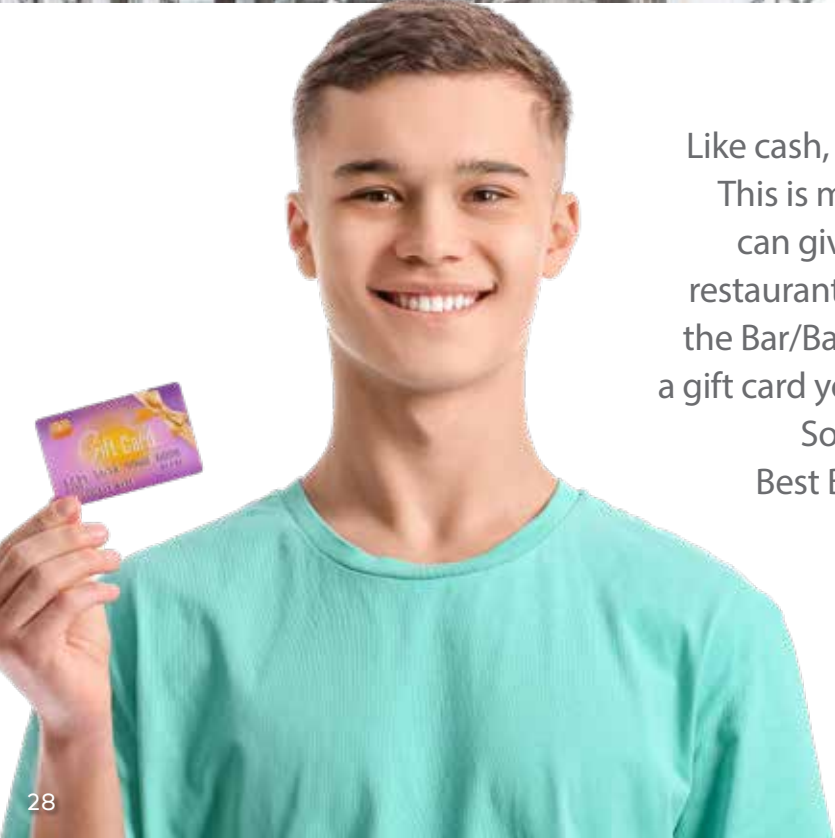
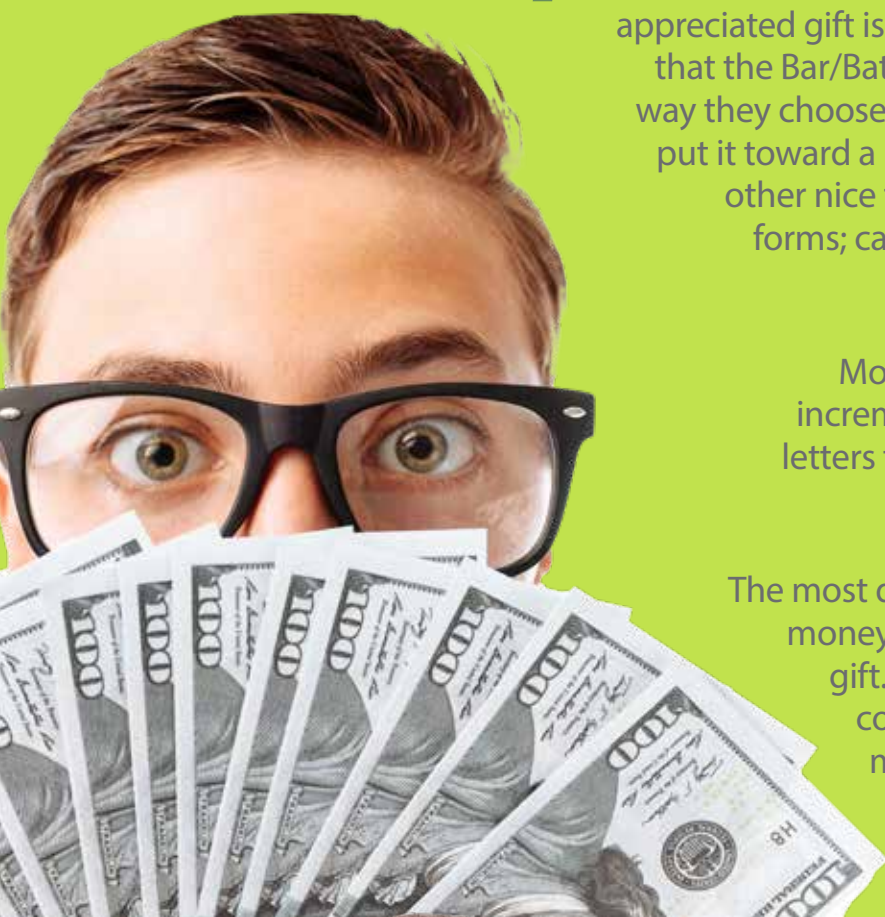
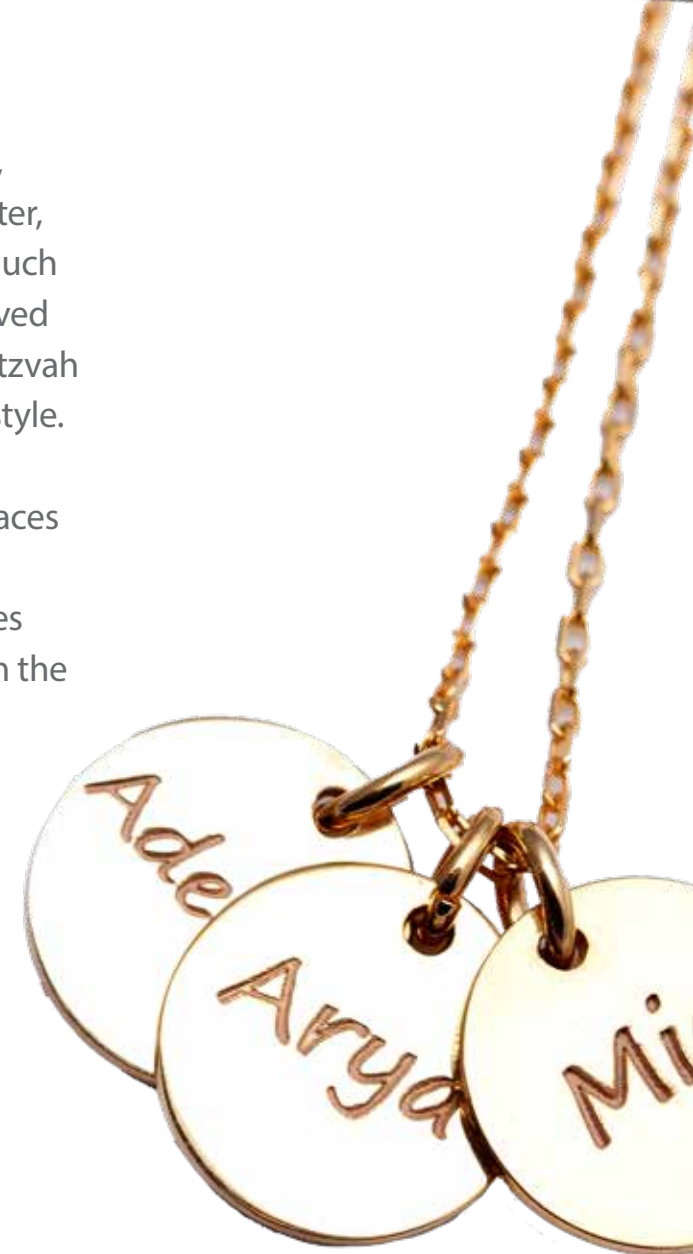
# BAR/BAT mitzvah

## Personalized Gifts

Kids appreciate personalized gifts because it shows that you took the time to consider what makes them special and unique. Kids always love a gift that includes their name (English or Hebrew)! You could also consider including the celebration date, and/or an inspirational message for them to look back on through the years. Personalized gifts tend to be a keepsake for many years to come.

## Jewelry

Jewelry is a fun, timeless gift. Trendy bracelets, hamsa or jewish star necklaces, funky rings, great earrings, it doesn't matter, they're everyday luxuries that mean so much more when thoughtfully selected by a loved one. Make sure you know the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child well enough to know their jewelry style. Are they traditional, sentimental, trendy, simple, or edgy? Do they like rings, necklaces or bracelets? Do they like color or mixed metals? Personalized nameplate necklaces and dainty chains that they can layer with the rest of their pendants are as popular as ever right now. A statement ring that proudly declares their zodiac sign is never a bad idea. Whatever you decide, their mitzvah is bound to be brighter, sparklier, and shinier than ever with a special piece of jewelry.



## Games & Technology

If you are looking for a fan favorite, then look no further than a tech-related gift. Tech gifts can run the gamut in price. Some suggestions are an Oculus, Switch, 3D printer, 3D printing pen, AirPods, computer, drone, sought-after video game, an AirTag, portable charger, an AirPod case, smart glasses, laptop case, smart wallets, Polaroid camera, blue tooth speaker, mini projector, ring light, and charging station. Tech doesn't always have to be the newest technology though, some of the hottest tech items right now are actually a bit nostalgic. Kids are into old-school digital cameras, digital watches, and vinyl record players. Tech-related gifts is really where it is at!

## Subscriptions

Want a gift that keeps giving? Look no further than a gift that delivers something new, fun, and different every month! There are hundreds and hundreds of subscription options to choose from. Is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child a foody? A bookworm? Into fitness? Cooking or baking? Beauty?

Movies? Make sure to hop on Google and search for the subscription that fits the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child perfectly. Here are a few ideas to get you started: Masterclass, Audible, Baketivity, Ice Cream Subscription, Champ-Chest, Birchbox, FabFitFun, Casely Club, Rowan, Disney+, ComiXology Unlimited.



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## Experiences

If you really want to celebrate the day with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child, then a gift of an experience is the way to go. There are so many options in this category with endless options to give a memorable gift. Experiences can be a behind the scenes tour of their favorite show or a cooking class at their

favorite restaurant or take them to a sporting event or see a play or concert. How about a trip, a hot air balloon ride, a one-on-one sports lesson, a day of go-karting, or a museum pass for a place they are interested in. The smiles and memories will be well worth it!





Meet Morgan and Brian Hallermann, A-List's new owners! A-List Entertainment & Events has provided A Plus entertainment for mitzvah families since 2007 and will continue to do so under the competent, friendly leadership of this married dynamic duo!

Brian has been working on the A-List team for a decade. He has been the Audio-Visual expert, working behind-the-scenes and sometimes behind the camera and DJ decks. Brian has DJ'd dozens of bar/bat mitzvah parties for A-List, he ran his own DJ company before we snatched him up, and he holds a master's degree in music technology.

Morgan trained under previous A-List owner, Becky Salita, for the past 6 months, and brings team management experience, organizational, sales, personal, and creative skills to the company. Under Morgan's leadership, A-List will continue to offer full-service event planning services and will continue to work with vendors you already love, as well as new, unexplored vendors to make your event unique and special.

## THE FUTURE OF A-LIST

*by Becky Salita, A-List Entertainment*



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# A-LIST

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# WHO'S ON THE GUEST LIST - OR HOW TO CUT IT?

Contributed by Atlanta Party Connection

Creating your child's bar/bat mitzvah guest list is a challenge. Here's a simple guide to determining who gets an invitation:

## Friends

If your teen considers someone a friend, they should make the list. It is his/her party after all! Draw the line at acquaintances, those who your child likes but doesn't socialize with outside of a school/club, etc. But, if your teen wants to invite members of a sports team, camp cabin or performing troupe, the entire group should receive an invitation.

When it comes to your adult and family friends, invite the people who are important to you right now. Forget the guilt factor, otherwise, you'll be inviting everyone you've ever met! If you're on the fence about a guest, you may decide to "test the guest" and only invite ones who know the bar mitzvah child. If your

teen has no clue who it is and a quick reminder doesn't help, perhaps the guest should be cut. Remember, you DO NOT have to invite an entire family when all you want to do is invite the parents (or the one child that is friends with your child). It is perfectly acceptable to address an invitation to only the family members who you want to have in attendance.

Your parents (the grandparents) may want to invite several friends to share in the Simcha. While having too many grandparent friends changes the celebration atmosphere, a good compromise would be to offer them one table for their closest peers.

Final word on the friends front: Just because you like someone doesn't mean they should receive an invitation. You can't invite everyone!

## Clergy & Tutors

Hopefully, you

have a relationship with your rabbi and cantor, in which case an invitation is a gesture of appreciation for their spiritual guidance. Most clergy don't attend the celebration, however, because if they come to one, they would need to attend them all. Tutors who help prepare your Mitzvah child for Torah reading often form

strong bonds with their pupils. If your child feels a connection, send an invitation to the service even though they may also be members of your synagogue.

## VIP Adults

Tennis instructors, piano teachers, sports coaches, nannies... they all have connections to your teen. But they shouldn't all be on the list.

Open a dialogue with your child to confirm who they truly consider important. And then take it step further: do they want to see Coach Ken on the dance floor next to Aunt Deborah? If the answer is "yes," and your budget and venue space allow, invite him.

## Work Colleagues

You may feel obligated to entertain co-workers at your big event, but do they belong there? Consider whether you socialize with these people outside of the office and, if so, do they know your

child well enough to be part of this special day. If the answer to these questions is "no," they shouldn't be on the list.

Listen to your teen and your gut when making final decisions on guest list inclusion. And remember, just because you like me doesn't mean you should invite me! I'll understand, and so will friends and acquaintances.



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Veeeaah!

In the age of instant gratification, social media and technology have made a huge impact on Mitzvah celebrations. Whether it's used for decor, interactive games or favors, more and more teens are incorporating high-tech elements into their parties. It is an easy way to engage with your guests and even those guests who aren't in attendance.

# Take Your

Twitter and Instagram feeds have become a highlight at Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. You and your guests can post images with event-specific hashtags and you can create pages for guests to leave comments and upload their personal photos. It's a way to keep your event relevant, view the special occasion and to see how much fun your guests were having at that moment in time.

Social Media Walls, in addition to the traditional photo booths, display real-time photos and videos posted by guests. This allows everyone to share in all the fun and enjoy memories from the event and view them all in one place.

# MITZVAH SOCIAL

Many families choose to live stream their Bar or Bat Mitzvah service and party on social platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. This allows friends and family to attend the event in a virtual space.

Interactive entertainment options like augmented reality, photo booths and virtual reality experiences are extremely popular for Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations. These experiences enhance social media content and encourage your guests to post about their experience at your event.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah projects are another way Mitzvah families can use social media. It is a simple way for them to give back to their community and create a presence

on social media platforms in relation to their specific Mitzvah project. The Mitzvah child will have a greater reach to spread the word about their specific mission. For example, it can help with gathering volunteers for a cause, creating a buzz for a food drive and so much more. With the viral capability of social media, your reach is that much greater.

With that being said, technology plays a huge role in entertainment, education, and their socialization. Teens today communicate on these platforms and have never known a world without internet access. So, have fun and get creative with all the different ways you can utilize social media to enhance your Mitzvah experience.



# ACCEPT HELP FROM FRIENDS! *here's how.*

As your family's simcha nears, friends may ask how planning is going and whether you need any help. Get ready to say a word we don't often say when offered assistance: Yes. Yes! YES!

Contributed by Atlanta Party Connection



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Parents often decline help because they don't want to impose on their guests or they're not sure how a friend or relative can share the load. If you're not using a caterer for your Oneg Shabbat, you may be having friends bake, but there are plenty of other ways to plug in your pals. Friends can:

- Bake or buy food for the hospitality suite in your guest's hotel (sweet and salty snacks, plasticware, paper plates.)
- Stuff hospitality bags with your area maps, calendar of events, and treats
- Set up, take down, or even make decorations for your "sandwich events" around the big day, like Friday night dinner or Sunday brunch
- Wrap, bundle or organize party

favors for guests or silverware rolls for Kiddush luncheon

- Drop off items ahead of time at the party venue or hotel
- Pick up guests at the airport or drive guests to services
- Serve as chaperone for kids being transported by bus to another venue to ensure no one gets left behind and everyone rides safely
- Help give out kippot in synagogue entry
- Run errands for out of town guests with last minute needs (toiletries, special dietary items, etc.)
- And don't forget, if friends didn't want to help, they wouldn't offer! Just say YES!





**First things first... What kind of party do you want to have? Make a list of your family's party priorities i.e...entertainment, photography, decor, venue, food, etc. Then take your budget or what you plan to allocate to your event and begin to plan.**

Sadly, most people start planning their event without a clear sense of costs. Event costs add up quickly, so it's important to itemize your priorities. No matter what kind of celebration you plan, there are many costs involved and hidden costs as well. Planning ahead and keeping track of your expenses will help you develop a realistic picture of the total costs and help you stay focused on your spending goals.

**Let's do an overview of spending...**

**Venue, Catering & Rentals:** Kiddush luncheon, party or both? The venue and rental costs, along with the catering is estimated to be around 40% of your overall cost. The space, food, beverage and service typically account for the biggest chunk of your budget. If you host both a Kiddush luncheon and party, make sure to include this into your budget number. Make sure you are clear with each of your vendors what your comfortable spend is. They will be able to give you creative options that will fall within your financial parameters.

**Entertainment:** If you're wanting an epic party, you hire a DJ, live music, photo booth, party entertainment or a combination of some or all of these. This will also use up a large portion of your funds, typically around 25% of your budget.

**Photography/Videography:** You'll want to capture this milestone with pictures and videos and document every moment of the mitzvah celebration from the temple/synagogue family pics right through to the last minutes of your party. Since photos and videos last a lifetime, this is an important cost. Your photographer and videographer will take approximately 15% of your overall budget.

**Flowers & Decorations:** Around 10-15% of your budget will go towards creating the perfect party décor and centerpieces for your Mitzvah event. This is just an approximation if you are solely doing fresh flowers and elaborate decor, expect to see that percentage creep up.

**Attire & Accessories:** You'll want your family to look and feel their best at the ceremony and party portions of the day. You should plan on this costing 5% of your overall budget.

**Invitations:** The invitations are essential and then there are fun extras like menus, place cards and thank you cards. Stationery will take up around 10% of your overall budget. If you plan on digitizing this experience, you will see this percentage dip down.

**Additional costs:** You should reserve some money for last-minute expenses, because there will always be some. A few other things you may want to add in... **Party favors** give back to your guests and are a great, creative way to mark the occasion. You may want to purchase a gift for your child to commemorate this important day. You should also reserve some money for **tips and unexpected fees** that may pop up just to be safe. Also, if you want to reserve **transportation** for your family to and from your mitzvah venues and possibly transport some of your guests, you will want to add that to your overall spending. Finally, if you don't plan on handling your **hair and makeup** yourself, plan to put money towards the mitzvah for a hair stylist and makeup artist.

**There is no one Bar/Bat Mitzvah that is alike, so have fun catering this occasion to your child's personality and the needs of your family and guests. Everyone has their own spending comfort level and the most important thing is that your child enjoys the experience you have provided for them.**

# 2023 Mitzvah spend checklist

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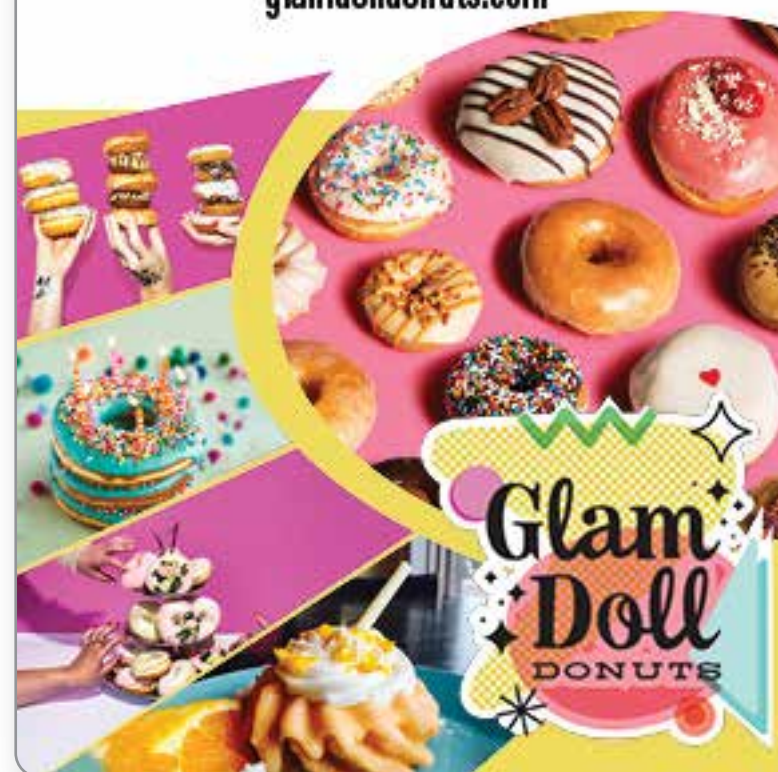
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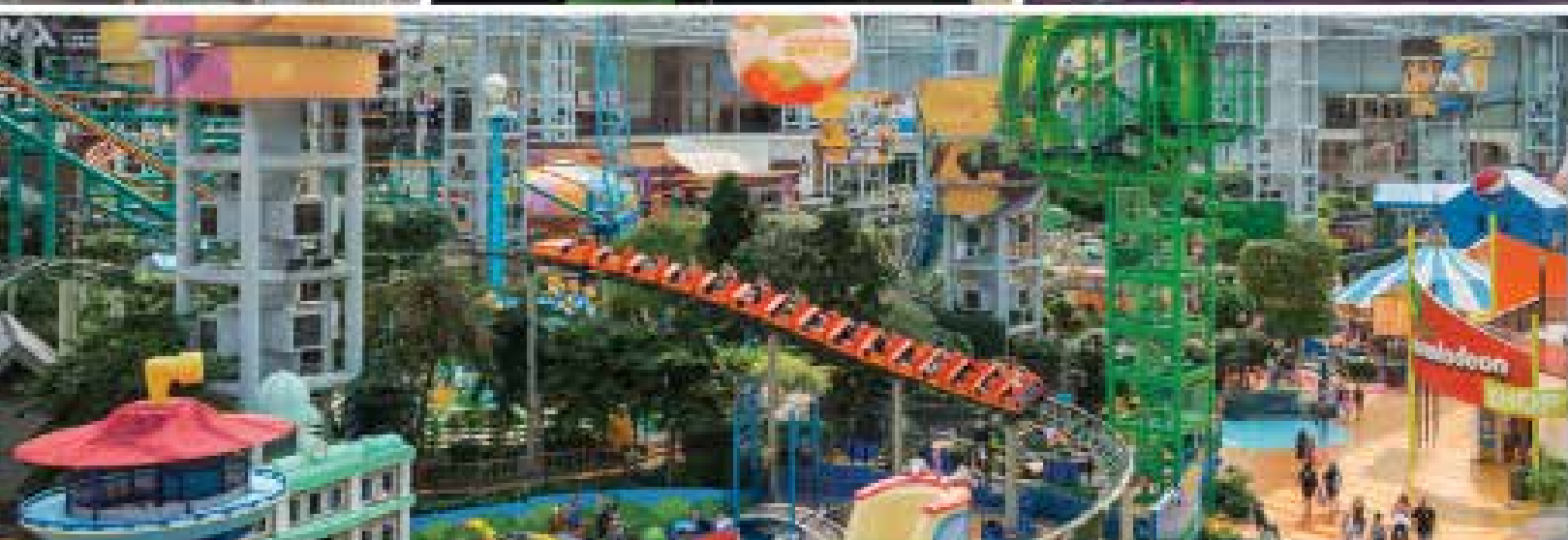
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With a Genesis Mitzvah Fund, loved ones can give money directly to a fund that allows your teen to make a difference. Their fund will earn interest and grow (tax-free). Then, they can choose where to gift their charity dollars!

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[mnjcf.org/teens](http://mnjcf.org/teens)  
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# 2023 trends

## *kippot that match your décor*

While we are all about the party, the Mitzvah ceremony is the heart of this lifecycle event. Decorate the outside (or inside) of your kippot with your party theme and/or color to create the bridge between ritual and ceremony.

## *#socialmedia*

Make sure your memories live on forever by creating a Social Media Booth. Start with a personalized mitzvahashtag and encourage your guests to upload memories using that hashtag. Create a special, decorated area at the party where kids can record TikToks, or take insta photos. Kids want to share their memories with their peers. Let them broadcast their good time and share their party for all to see.

## *if life gives you avocados...*

Avocados are everywhere...still. This is the must-have menu item in 2023! Ask your caterer to include avocados on your menu in a creative and immersive way. Think grilled, stuffed, seasoned, or mashed. Who doesn't love an avocado?

**THE FUN THING ABOUT PLANNING AN EVENT, IS MAKING IT YOUR OWN.**

**get creative!**

## *we're in it for the long Hora*

Gone are the days of long montages and long speeches, but a long hora? That's a trend we can get behind! The hora brings so much excitement and energy to the dance floor. The trick is to keep that going after the hora ends.

# vibe check

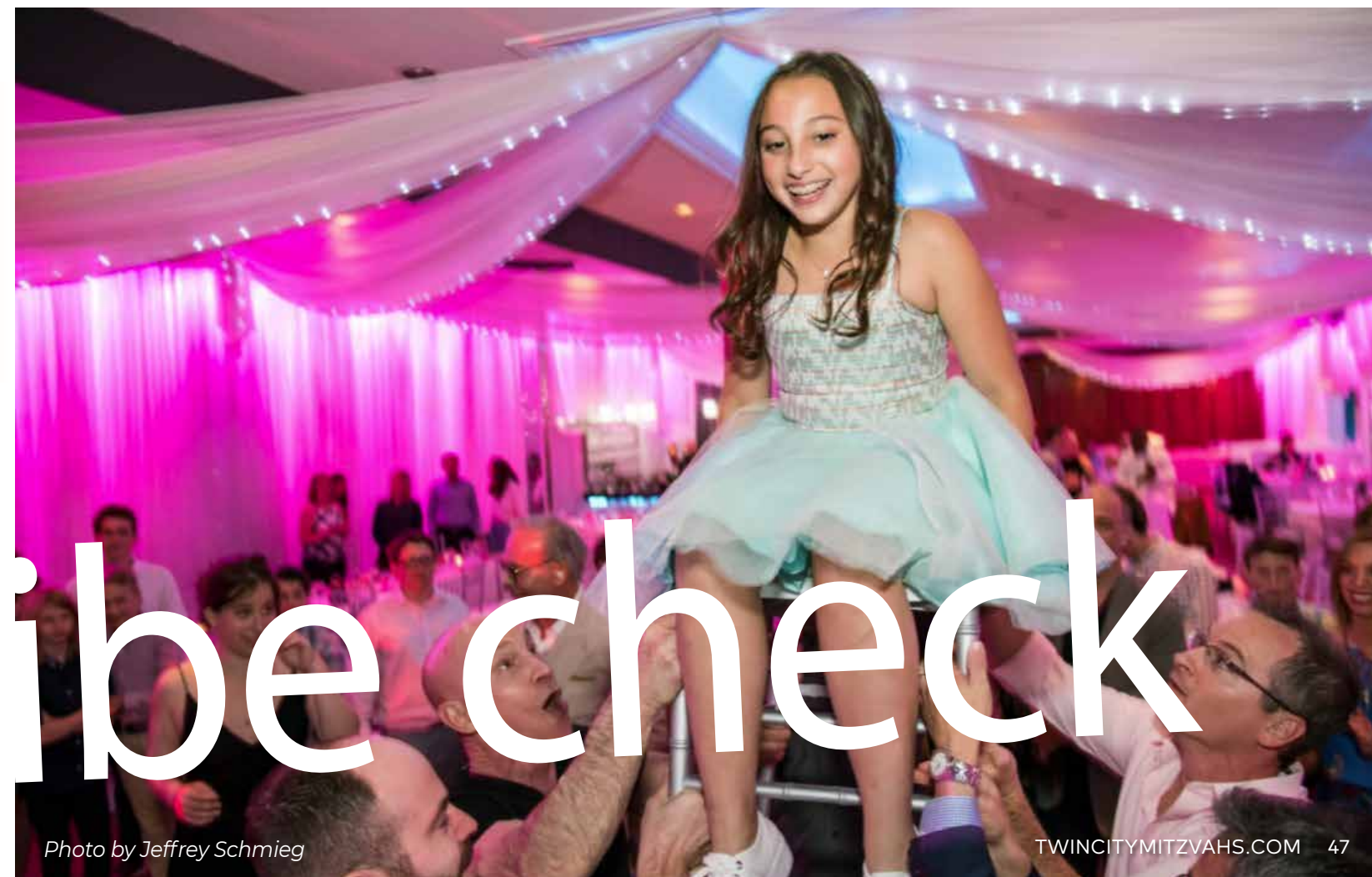


Photo by Jeffrey Schmieg



### *going, going, gone*

Booking early is a trend that is gaining steam fast. With several mitzvahs planned for the same time frame, it is best to secure a venue, planner, photographer, and any other supplier you have your heart set on to ensure your child's Mitzvah is everything you dreamed it to be.

### *marg my words*

Mocktails and non-alcoholic drinks are going to have their moment this year. Demand for these types of beverages is ticking up. Let your mind run wild with ideas for signature drinks that people of all ages can partake in. You can name them, theme them, mix them, but whatever you do...enjoy them! Marg my words, you won't be sorry!

# bussin

### *off the hook fashion & decor*

The 90's called and they want to take over your Mitzvah attire and decor! "As if" airbrush sneakers and sweatshirts, neon signs, graffiti and hip hop was ever not cool! The 90's was full of classic girly elements gaining popularity for people of all genders. Dainty designs, flowy fabrics, lace, ruffles, fun colors, patterns, and textures will all be high on people's lists. More than anything, the fashion trends of 2023 will emphasize dressing in a unique and unabashed way rather than focusing on just one style or design.

### *bold celebrations*

Maximalism is the word of the 2023 party scene! Luxurious, vivid, splashy colors with expansive dance floors, high-energy lighting, explosive colors, and over-the-top decor are all coming out to celebrate Mitzvahs this year. It is time to bring the wow factor. Chair decals, mirror clings, unique installations, entry decor, ceiling decor, and live entertainment will make it a truly memorable and indulgent experience! MORE, MORE, MORE!

# extra

### *extravagant entertainment*

In 2023, it's not as simple as checking off the entertainment box by simply hiring a DJ. If you want your Mitzvah party to be an overwhelming success, then you need to go further. You'll want to keep everyone entertained, so consider the ages and interests of your guests. Think magicians and mentalists, craft, beauty, cooking stations, clowns and circus performers, celebrity guests, comedians, henna, face painting and tattoos, street artists, and performers.

# boujee





### glam bot videos

Be the first to have this at your Mitzvah celebration! This is new and oh so HOT! We've seen these on the red carpet and now they are making it to Mitzvah parties! For those of you going, "wait I want one!" but don't know what it is, it's a high-speed camera that fixes onto a robotic arm that captures slow-motion reels of your guests living their best lives. Glam it up!

### food carts

Create a fun, unique vibe as well as yummy food for your celebration by jumping on the food cart trend. Hire several different food carts to border your party space, or hire just one to roll up for a late-night treat. These carts will allow your guests to stay fueled as they graze throughout the evening.

# drip

### nostalgia with a twist

Childhood classics have stolen the spotlight this year. Did someone say Pop-Tarts? Elevate childhood classics with fun and clever presentations. Nostalgic foods evoke happy feelings and can quickly bring you back to your happy place. Just the sight of a waffle bar brings you right back to Saturday mornings in the kitchen. Who knew the power of the waffle?

# epic



# MITZVAH MAGIC

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## WHO TO TIP

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**Who do you tip? How much should you give? Mitzvah parents wonder about this. A lot. So we went straight to the vendors to ask for their expectations and guidelines when it comes to gratuities.**

First things first: you won't tip every vendor. Photographers, photo entertainment providers, and decorators do not expect gratuity. And you wouldn't tip the owner of a company. (If you do, they'll most likely distribute it to working staff members.)

### CATERERS AND VENUES

In general, catering teams warrant gratuity if the service was great.

The service charge, which you'll see included in contracts and on your final catering bill, is NOT the tip. That covers the hourly wages of servers.

## HOW MUCH TO GIVE

For excellent service, some caterers report that servers get a \$20 tip, and bartenders \$40. A banquet captain or buffet manager may get \$50.

Other caterers report a flat 20% gratuity given on the final food and beverage fees for the owner to distribute to staff at their discretion.

When catering is provided through a hotel or event venue, the server and bartender tipping guide still applies, but you may also include a tip for your event manager if the experience exceeded expectations.

If you're unsure about your caterer's tipping policy, ask about it in a planning meeting. Make sure tipping is not already included in your contract and confirm how many servers/bartenders you will have at your event.

Also don't forget to think about ALL your caterers – Shabbat dinner, Kiddish luncheon, etc.

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TIPS ON TIPPING



# WHAT'S POPPIN' AT YOUR MITZVAH?



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# ESSENTIAL BAR MITZVAH

Contributed by Atlanta Party Connection

It's really fun to receive gifts, but not so fun to write thank you notes. Jumpstart the process with these mini-guides that'll help every Bar/Bat Mitzvah kid write a thank you for each type of guest and gift. Remember, adding a personal line here and there make recipients feel special.

### FAMILY

It was wonderful to share my Bar/Bat Mitzvah with you. What a great family we have! I really appreciate your generous/thoughtful/beautiful gift, too. Insert a sentence about the gift. Thank you for helping make such special memories. I can't wait until we get together again to celebrate a happy occasion! Choose Your Closing, Your Name Here

### FRIENDS

It was wonderful to share my Bar/Bat Mitzvah with you. You being there made it so special. I really appreciate your generous/ thoughtful/ beautiful gift, too. Insert a sentence about the gift. I'm glad to have a friend/friends like you! I hope we can get together soon and thank you again for being part of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah! Choose Your Closing, Your Name Here

### OUT OF TOWNERS

Thank you for coming to my Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It means a lot that you would travel so far to celebrate with us. I really appreciate the generous/ thoughtful/ beautiful gift you shared with me, too! Insert a sentence about the gift. It was wonderful to see you and thank you again

for being part of such a special weekend. Choose Your Closing, Your Name Here

### VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

Thank you for Zooming in for my Bar/Bat Mitzvah. I was so glad we were able to be together virtually! I really appreciate your participation and your generous/ thoughtful/beautiful gift, too. Thank you again for being part of such a special moment in my life. I hope we can see each other "live" very soon. Choose Your Closing, Your Name Here

### DIDN'T ATTEND BUT SENT GIFT

Thank you so much for thinking of me on my special day and for your thoughtful and generous gift. Insert a sentence about the gift. You were missed, but it was wonderful knowing you were thinking of me as I became a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Choose Your Closing, Your Name Here



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THANK YOU NOTE GUIDE

TIPS ON tipping (court)

### DJS/MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

The DJ/MC/Dancer crew typically gets tipped for managing the party flow and creating the right atmosphere for guests.

- MC \$40-\$100 per person
- DJ and Dancers \$20-\$40 per person
- Production crew \$10-20 per person

### SYNAGOGUE STAFF

You might offer a \$20-\$40 tip to the support services staff of your synagogue, depending on the size and scope of your on-site Bar Mitzvah arrangements.



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### CLERGY

While this isn't a "tip," it's a nice touch to make a donation to your synagogue (through a discretionary fund, religious school fund, or whichever category is meaningful to your family) in appreciation of the rabbi and cantor following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend.

*Remember, it's totally OK to have conversations with your vendors beforehand about their tipping policies and how you can acknowledge outstanding service. And that's an important TIP!*

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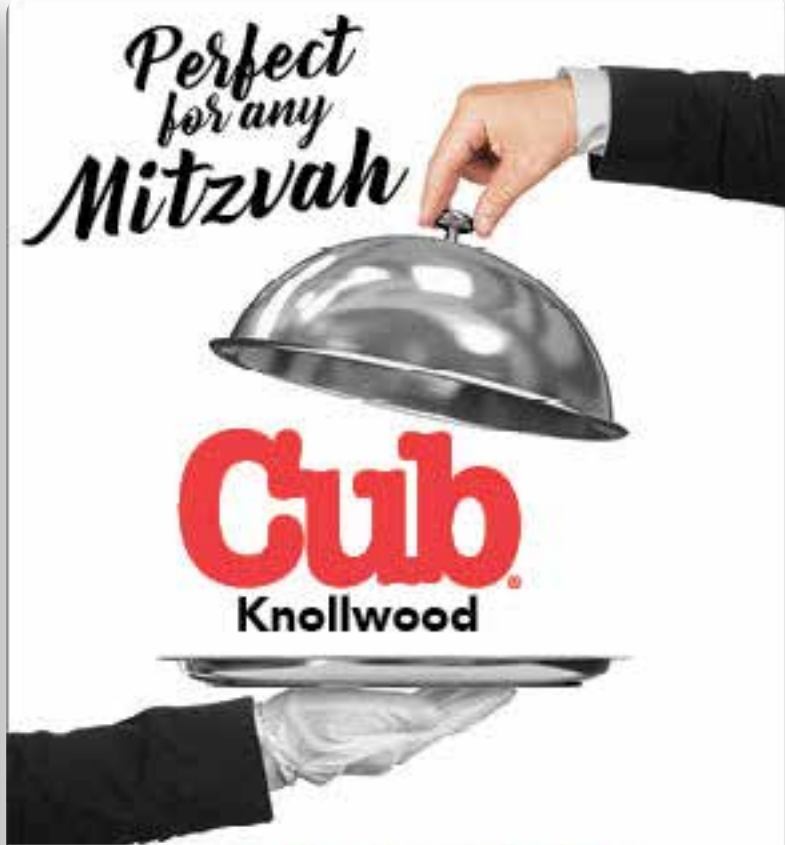
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# USE OUR “WHAT TO ASK” GUIDE BELOW WHEN CHECKING OUT A NEW VENUE.

Contributed by Alanta Mitzvah Connection

MITZVAHBOUZZ

## Top Questions to Ask a Venue Representative:

- Is my date available? (It's not worth checking it out if you haven't answered that question!)
- Are there different rates for different days/times? (Saturday afternoon vs evening, Sundays)
- What is included in my rental fee? (linens/uplighting/centerpieces)
- What other costs are involved – service charges, gratuity, parking, cleaning fees, overtime charges?
- What's the cancellation policy? What is the required deposit?
- What is the maximum number of guests we can host with a dance floor in place?
- Are the bathrooms easy to find? Are they handicap-accessible?
- Am I required to use your vendors? Can I bring in my own alcohol? If not, can you share price lists?
- When can my vendors arrive for setup?
- Who will be the point person on the day of our event?



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