

Quinceanera at the Hukilau

Create Your Very Own Tropical Paradise with a Quinceanera Luau!

You've waited for this night for 15 years, and now you don't want to do the same old, same old as all your damas and friends. The traditional rule book is out the window! After all the details for the ceremony are taken care of, turn your thoughts to planning the tropical party of your dreams. Wear your ball gown to the church, change into your heels; and then kick them off for an enchanting night in paradise. This theme is perfect if you've chosen an outdoor location or if you want to leave a big impression with a limited budget.

Start planning your luau-themed Quineanera by choosing a slogan to use throughout your party. Print it on invitations, banners and favors for your guests. Try one of the following or brainstorm with your damas to come up with the perfect saying for your 15th birthday celebration:

- It's Tiki Time! Join Us for Some Island Magic as We Celebrate Dayanira's 15th Birthday!
- Maui Magic for Kamile's Quinceanera!
- Surf's Up at Arabela's Quince Paradise Party!
- Aloha! Jessica's Island Luau!

Luau Quineanera Invitations: Choose an invitation (www.shindigz.com/) that will give your family and friends a sneak preview of your theme. For your luau theme, message in a bottle invitations are the ultimate!

Use your invitation to its full advantage to save time later. Let your guests know what the dress code is (dressy tropical, all white, casual attire, or theme-related tropical wear: grass skirts, Hawaiian shirts, sarongs, muumuus, coconut bras, flip flops).

To set the tone of the party, try the following invitation idea. Attach a computer generated or hand-lettered tag containing all the details of the party to a Hawaiian lei (<http://www.shindigz.com/>) using curling ribbon. The invitation could say, "Lei Down Your Cares! It's Tiki Time for Gabriella's Quinceanera!"

Entrance: Greet your guests with a warm "Mahalo and two or three Hawaiian leis to finish off their tropical attire. Palm trees or a personalized banner (<http://www.shindigz.com/>) are both excellent choices.

Music: Make sure that you have plenty of tropical music playing throughout the party. If you aren't hiring a band, just crank up the stereo with Beach Boys, Reggae, Jimmy Buffet, Iz (Israel Kamakawiwo'ole Hawaii's own) and Don Ho tunes!

Location: Create a lush tropical atmosphere for your party with a focal-point decoration (<http://www.shindigz.com/>) that is sized appropriately for your reception location and you'll have the perfect spot for the presentation with your damita. You'll almost feel the warm ocean breeze when you gather around a cabana, luau bar or island waterfall. If you are hosting your party outside, place bamboo & seashell torches around the perimeter of your party site or on a walkway leading to where you'll entertain guests. They'll create a warm tropical glow and will keep the bugs away. For decorating

accents, try surfboards, sea shells, thatched weave room setters, fish netting, ukeleles or giant pineapples. A luau must-have is a grouping of palm trees since they are the ultimate Hawaiian mood setter. Twinkle lights aren't just for Christmas anymore! A few strands of lights hung in a dimly lit area will create a soft tropical glow equal to candlelight. Balloons, streamers and gossamer are always great choices for economical decorating. Find fantastic ideas for working with balloons, gossamer and streamers along with an extensive variety of luau themed kits online at www.ShindigZ.com.

Dance Floor: For the court "waltz, create the look of a sandy beach by cutting tan colored flat paper (<http://www.shindigz.com/>) to the size of your dance floor. Secure the flat paper with clear packing tape. Next, place Polynesian torches or tropical palms at each corner. Finally, outline the outside edge of the dance floor with lampac matting. Choose your favorite tropical song for your first dance as a woman with your father. Elvis singing "Blue Hawaii anyone? Tables: Order lavender or green napkins and have them imprinted with your Quince slogan. Select a metallic or foil imprint and the napkins will serve several purposes...great decorating in disguise and a treasured memento for a scrapbook. While fresh flowers are fragrant and lovely, they are very costly. You can create spectacular tables using a little creativity:

- Sprinkle real seashells on your tabletops just as you would use confetti.
- Make the atmosphere authentically beach-y by placing a small pile of sand (or brown sugar) in the center of the table to nestle a centerpiece. Add a few shells to the sand.
- Add a straight line of coconut votive holders down the center of each table. The candlelight will give off a wonderful glow. As an alternative, place one votive at each place setting and let guests know that they can take them home as favors.
- Place a pair of sunglasses (<http://www.shindigz.com/>) at each place setting and tuck a napkin and cutlery in the fold of the glasses instant napkin ring!
- Place one pineapple, tropical coconut, or real coconut cup at each place setting. Label each one with a name (with permanent marker on the bottom) and guests can use the cup for their beverages throughout the party and take them home as party favors.

Luau Quineanera Favors:

The latest trend for Quineaneras is to share favor keepsakes that are personalized. You can have favors imprinted with a special thank you message along with your name and the date or with your Quineanera slogan.

Have glassware imprinted with a special message or your theme slogan. Guests can drink from a special glass at the party, then take it home and think of you each time they see it.

Frames are always a hit. To make your tables stand out, display your menu or individual place cards at each place setting in frames. Use a fun font on your computer to generate the menus or tags.

Mini mint tins, key tags and clocks are also very popular as party favors right now. All of the favors listed can be displayed on the tables where guests will sit during the reception, as they will make the tables look more festive.

Hawaiian leis, tropical cups, sunglasses and coconut votive holders are perfect luau party favors, but favors are no longer the parting gifts they were in the parties of yesterday. Use all of these items in your decorating and then encourage your guests to take them home and enjoy the warm memories they'll invoke.

Pictures taken at parties make terrific party favors. Whether they are ready to be shared when the party ends or need to be mailed or e-mailed at a later date, they'll be treasured.

Luau Quineanera Food:

For the adventurous, nothing could be more authentic than a real hog roast or some Kalua pig.

Fill clamshell bowls with a variety of tropical fruits, Hawaiian trail mix or even beverages on ice!

Use fresh pineapples and slice a thin piece off the bottom so that they stand level on a platter. Skewer various pieces of bite-sized fruit (watermelon chunks or balls, grapes, pineapple pieces, strawberries, etc.) on wooden shish-ka-bob sticks or long toothpicks. Stick evenly spaced skewers into the pineapple.

What would an island celebration be without macadamia nuts?

Fill real seashells in varying sizes and real coconut cups with these tasty island nuts, fish-shaped crackers, and other small snack foods.

Serve tropical favorites such as guava, mango, kiwi and star fruits.

Luau Quineanera Memory Making:

Prepare a "Quince Spotlight" area for guests to view during the party. Display scrapbooks, photo albums of family and friends, artwork, sports trophies and awards on a festive table. This "chronicle of your life" will be enjoyed by all.

Create a Quineanera Time Capsule to be opened in 10, 20 or 30 years. Ask guests to bring something small to the party that reflects the year in some way or is a reminder of you. Years from now you'll have a sweet trip down memory lane of the incredible year you turned 15!

Hula dancing captures the essence and spirit of Hawaii. Initially it was treated as a sacred ritual, but it slowly became a form of entertainment.

Hire someone to teach guests "how to hula." Or, if you are feeling adventurous, you can search the Internet for instructions and ask your chambelones to teach the group the six basic step variations (Koholo, Ka'o, Kawelu, Kahela, 'Ami and Lele). This will be a blast!

Everyone will enjoy the classic beach game of limbo. A limbo kit makes a great decorative prop and an engaging activity at every party.

Most importantly, have the time of your life with a touch of island magic. Feliz Cumpleaños Quince girl!

Editor's Note: All invitations, decorations, and favors referenced in this article, along with Quineanera ceremonial supplies including tiaras, scepters, kneeling pillows and aisle runners, can be purchased by visiting www.ShindigZ.com.