

Pirate Costume and Party Ideas

Pirate Parties and costumes can both be easily pulled together, and affordable, too! All you need are a few simple supplies, often found around the home, and a little imagination. An activity such as this would be great with a group of teens, or with teens and their younger reading buddies. Everyone enjoys dressing up and talking like a pirate, an optimal day for such festivities is International Talk Like A Pirate Day, which is also talked about in this issue.

To make a pirate costume is quite simple, all you need are some old clothes, or some good Salvation Army finds. First grab a pair of old jogging pants that are no longer worn, and then cut the bottom of the pants in a jagged line somewhere between the ankle, and the knee. This will give them a "castaway" feel. Next take an old white shirt, and using fabric paint, or pens, draw lines across the shirt and fill them in. Feel free to cut the bottom edge and sleeves of the shirt in a jagged style as well if you wish. If you wish to be the captain, and not just your average pirate try finding an old blouse, frilly neck and wrist details really make this costume fun. While most people think black, white, and maybe red when they think of pirate colours, many famous pirates were rather flamboyant in their dressing. One pirate famous for wearing bright colours, and fancy clothes was Black Beard himself (Edward Teach). So try adding some colour to your pirate wardrobe.

Handkerchiefs are good accessories, and teens almost always have at least one of these items already in their closet. Gold hoop earrings are always popular, but any costume jewellery will do. Often little sisters will have some great pieces at their disposal, which teens should attempt to borrow to add to their collection. Again, the Salvation Army will often have inexpensive pieces of jewellery to add to the costume, and dollar stores are also great for this.

Eye patches can be made quickly and easily either prior to arrival, or as an activity once they have arrived. All that is required is some black construction paper, a hole-puncher, string or elastic (elastic does work best for this), white paper and glue, or chalk.

As the final touch on the costume, have some make-up available. Eyeliner in browns and blacks, as well as eye-shadow in the same colours will really give them a good, grimy pirate look. Caution them not to use the make-up around their eyes, or recommend that if they wish to use their own at home before coming to the party. Because of hygiene issues you should make sure that the make-up is used around the cheek area instead. Both eyeliner and eye-shadow are great for smudging to give a dirty effect.

As for the party aspect, what would a party be without cake? There are two ways this can be accomplished, either make the cake before hand, or bake the cake, but leave the decorating to the group. There are many different styles of cake you can easily make which are pirate themed. One of the most simple, yet great looking designs is to bake cake layers in two round pans. Cut both layers in half, then using icing "glue" all four layers together, and flatten out the bottom so that it will stay in place. Leave the icing to set for about half an hour, and then tilt the "boat" onto its base. If you want to have a mast for your ship while still in the "gluing" process stick two of the cake halves together, and then place a wooden spoon on top before adding the final two halves. Ice the entire cake using brown icing to get a nice wood colour. Finally decorate with candy including liquorice ropes, gold coins, and a chocolate bar for the plank (you may need a toothpick or two pushed into the chocolate bar, and then pushed into the cake to anchor it). Sour patch kids make a great pirate crew, and gumballs, or chocolate malt balls are great as cannonballs. Another cake idea is to ice a cake using blue icing, and then buy an inexpensive pirate ship toy, and place it on the top.

Now that you have costumes, and food, it's time for some activities. The Pirates of the Caribbean movies are always a good choice. They are both appropriate, and popular with young adults on both ends of the spectrum. Younger children also enjoy these movies, so it could be an excellent reading buddy activity.

If your library has a teen reading club, why not pick a pirate or sea themed book, or allow the teens to each pick out a different novel or non-fiction work, and discuss them. For a list of great reads check out our top ten pirate books!

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