



INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Children love dinosaurs. Some kids know the difference between a Triceratops and an Apatosaurus before they know the names of all the colors! If you have a birthday child who is a junior paleontologist, a dinosaur-themed party is a sure hit.

Buy pre-made dinosaur invitations, or help your child make homemade invitations. Take a picture of your child wrestling with a favorite dinosaur toy and print as many copies as needed for all the partygoers. Glue the picture to a piece of construction paper that is folded like an invitation, and invite all dinosaur wrestlers to your child's birthday bash.

Alternatively, cut out two identical egg-shaped pieces from heavy cardstock. Take one piece and cut it in half in a zigzag pattern. (You've created the top and bottom halves of a broken egg.) Glue the bottom half to the uncut oval and write your party details on the top half of the oval. Take the other half of the egg and use a brass fastener to connect it to the top half of the oval, hiding your party details. The fastener allows this to open upwards as if the egg is breaking. Have your birthday child decorate the cracked egg with pictures of dinosaurs and other colorful decorations.

For smaller kids, downplay wrestling and bill the party as a dinosaur hunt. Use dinosaur-print wrapping paper to cover a piece of construction paper and write the invitation information in the center.

Make sure to use thematic language on your dino party invitation:

BREAKING NEWS! Dinosaurs discovered in (your hometown)!! Come and join in on the new discovery at our cave (address) at (time). Please don't be extinct!! RSVP to prehistoric parents (phone #).

Dinosaurs are coming alive 'cause _____ is turning _____. We'll be digging for dinos in the sand.



DECORATIONS

Use appliance boxes to cut out several different types of large dinosaurs for the party room, including a T-Rex, Triceratops, Stegosaurus, etc. Alternatively, have the cardboard boxes available in the party area along with craft supplies for the party guests to decorate when they arrive.

Make a “Dino Crossing” sign as a welcome for the party guests.

Cut dinosaur footprints from brown paper and place them all over the house or yard. You can also have them lead up to your doorstep, or even use colored chalk to draw monster-size footprints. Get the whole family to smudge their hand and footprints on paper and hang it up all over the house.

Inflate green, orange, and brown balloons and twist streamers together for added dino décor.

Most party stores will have dino-themed party supplies for your table, but you could also mix it up with solid colors that you decide upon. Another option: buy a plain white tablecloth and stencil dinos on it. Provide crayons at the party table and have the kids add to the scene as well.

Cover your party table with dino confetti, small dino bones, and dino gummy candies. Create a jungle effect by bunching large household plants together and/or hanging green streamers together.

Play a Dino Rock CD for atmosphere.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Hire a face painter or have an adult paint small dino footprints on the kids’ faces when they first arrive at your party.

After they have their faces painted, let them free play in the dino boxes room (if you have made them already) or give them craft supplies to create their own dinos with the boxes.

The Big Fossil Dig

What you'll need:

- Construction paper
- Pens
- Dinosaur-print wrapping paper, or a camera
- Sandbox or kiddie pool with dirt or sand



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Three kitchen strainers
 About 200 1" plastic dinosaurs
 Plastic Easter eggs
 Light and dark brown water-based latex paint
 Dinosaur stickers
 Dinosaur-shaped candy
 Wood and access to woodworking equipment (optional)

Turn partygoers into junior paleontologists. Bury plastic dinosaurs throughout a backyard sandbox. Have two or three children digging at a time. Give each child a kitchen strainer. Let them find as many "fossils" as they can, but only let them keep two or three. Bury the rest for the next set of kids to find. (For an indoor party, fill a kiddie pool with a few inches of sand or dirt.)

The Dinosaur Egg Hunt. Take standard plastic Easter eggs and paint them in earth tones to simulate dinosaur eggs. Fill the eggs with plastic dinosaurs, dinosaur-shaped candy, or dinosaur stickers. Hide them throughout your yard (or inside for an indoor party) and let the kids go wild hunting for dinosaur eggs. Make sure to pick hiding places that are easy to reach, but still challenging to see.

Which Dino Am I? This activity takes some woodworking skills. Find pictures of dinosaur footprints in a children's encyclopedia or on the Internet. Create a footprint template and cut woodblock sections to match the footprints. Make five different dinosaur footprints large enough to fit a child's foot inside. In your yard, soak ten specific areas with water so that they're spongy enough to hold a footprint. Take each woodcut and make two footprints throughout the yard for each type of dinosaur. Give each guest a piece of paper with one of the dinosaur footprints on it, and have them find their footprint.

Dino Walk. Have the kids walk on numbered dino footprints while music is playing. Once the music stops, call out a number and the kid on the lucky spot wins a prize!

Dino Beanbag Toss. Make a T-Rex with a large open mouth and have the kids try to toss the bags into the mouth.

Play Dino Charades.

Play **Stick the Horn on the Triceratops.** Using poster board, draw a big Triceratops with a missing horn.

PARTY MENU

Dino-saurus Sandwiches. Any type of filled sandwich cut into the shape of dinosaurs using dinosaur cookie cutters.



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Dino Eggs. Hard-boil some eggs. After they cool, gently crack the shell all over, but don't remove it. Place the cracked eggs in a small bowl containing three cups of cool water and Kool-Aid® mix. Cover the bowl and place in the refrigerator overnight. In the morning, remove the eggshells and each egg will look like it has cracks all over it.

- Dinosaur-shaped chicken nuggets
- Dinosaur Bones — pretzel sticks
- Pasta-Raptor Salad — pasta salad
- Dino chicken wings for the meat eaters and a vegetable tray for the plant eaters
- Bronto Bites — meatballs
- Brontosaurus Burgers — hamburgers
- Dino Dogs — hot dogs
- Fossil Fries — french fries or potato chips
- Hot Lava and Rocks — chili and cornbread
- Lava Juice — red punch

The Dinosaur Egg Cake

- One 9" round cake
- One 9" square cake
- Light and dark brown frosting

Making a cake in the shape of a dinosaur is daunting. Instead, try making a dinosaur egg. Bake two white cakes, one 9" round and one 9" square. First, cut the round cake in half. Attach the halves to the square cake to make a large oval. Frost using earth tones: light and dark brown are the colors of these prehistoric eggs. Finally, use the dark frosting to create a wide jagged line through the center of the oval to simulate an egg cracking.

PARTY FAVORS

Kids can take home the contents of the eggs from the dinosaur egg hunt and the "fossils" they collect from the fossil dig. Simple!

Alternatively, hand-stencil dinosaurs onto plain brown bags using brown, orange, and green paint (or whatever colors you decide upon), and place little dino sponges, gummies, notepads, pencils, erasers, stickers, little dino figurines, Pop Rock® candies, dino Pez®, etc.

A third idea is to make small paper maché dino eggs and fill them with the little goodies as a take-home surprise.

During the fossil dig, make sure to take pictures of the kids digging with the birthday child. Send these pictures to your party guests with your thank you notes.



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