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The Ultimate Girls' Night In

Jacqui Ripley

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CHAPTER 1

Preparing your ultimate girls' night in



Throwing a girlie night in doesn't have to have a theme, but a little bit of forward planning never goes amiss and can really help to set the mood. It doesn't matter how many girls you invite round, if the atmosphere isn't there from the beginning the evening can

wind up feeling flatter than day-old champagne. Now, it's your night in and you set the rules, but if you're up for throwing a themed night then this chapter has plenty of suggestions. In fact, use this chapter to get you in the Ultimate Girls' Night In (UGNI) mood – even if you don't fancy running with any of the suggested themed ideas, they may well inspire you to come up with your own unique idea suited to your very own night-in style.

Deciding on your night in

OK, where to start? If you're up for setting a themed night in you could start off by being really self indulgent, like throwing a night in because you've bought your most expensive shoes ever and you need to show them off so that your girlfriends can worship them too. Or how about the not-getting-married-yet party? Why should the I'm-so-in-love smug girlfriends have all the fuss and fanfare? If that big-white-dress day seems just too far off for you, why not let your girlfriends sprinkle you with confetti and toast the most important relationship of your life – the one with yourself, of course? Now, I know I'm being silly but, silliness aside, the theme of your party can literally be anything you want. The way to finding your theme is finding clues in the

lifestyles of your girlfriends. Is there anyone getting married? Well, that's easy, as a hen night is already in the making. How about a pregnant girlfriend? Then throw her a baby shower (very US, now very everywhere). And what about the wild women of suburbia? Beyond supermarkets and flirting with the guy at the petrol pumps how about a whisky-filled poker night *Desperate Housewives* style? You see, the possibilities are endless and the more girlfriends you think of the more you can become inspired and the more frivolous your theme can be.

Choosing your theme

Now we've established that one way of throwing a get-together is theming your night in, why not use some of these suggestions as a taster to gather the girls? To make your night in really swing (or special), look out for the follow-up ideas for each of the mentioned nights later on in the book.

The Night: Chocolate and Crying, aka The Get-Over-Him Party

In honour of Your dumped girlfriend (she shouldn't be sitting on the sofa with a bottle of wine solo singing 'All By Myself').

Evening frolics Picture of said dumper pinned on a dartboard attacked with much sharpened arrows. Guess the Chocolate: the dumpee is blindfolded and squares of different chocolates are put into her mouth. She has to guess what they are. (This is purely medicinal you understand, as chocolate has been revealed to have a lot of amazing chemicals in it, one of which is phenylethylamine - don't bother trying to say it after a few Sea Breezes - that acts as a mild sedative.) Lots of cuddles along with relaxing, pampering and a makeover to make her feel extra loved (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).
Chick disc 'You Keep Me Hanging On' by Diana Ross and The Supremes.

The Night: Cradles and Cupcakes, aka The Baby Shower

In honour of Your very pregnant girlfriend.
Evening frolics A great pedicure (see Ready-to-wear Feet, Chapter 7). Let's face it, you spend hours looking at your toes during labour so they may as well be buffed and polished. The tipple? Camomile tea for its relaxing qualities. (For great games see Oh Mummy! Games For The Baby Shower, Chapter 5.)
Chick disc 'Make Yours a Happy Home' by Gladys Knight & The Pips.

The Night: Pampering To Go

In honour of I'd-be-a-beauty-therapist-in-my-other-life girlfriends.

Evening frolics Plenty of painting, polishing and preening, along with sloughing, slathering and slicking (check out Super-Easy Massage, Chapter 6; Facing up to Skin Solutions, Chapter 7; and Salon Secrets to Take to Your Bathroom, Chapter 8.)



Chick disc 'You're Beautiful' by James Blunt.

The Night: Chill Out and Relax

In honour of Free-spirited girlfriends.

Evening frolics The chill-out bit includes lots of deep meditative breathing to let out the angst and bring in the calm. (See all of Chapter 6 for great ideas.) And as for the men, this is where your Best Gay Friend (BGF) comes into it (see page 19 for why you should invite him). Boy, does he know the way to a man's inner what-makes-his-mind-tick thinking. If you have no BGF, check out Mystic Hand Signals in Chapter 6 for clues on your man!

Chick disc 'You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman' by Carole King.

The Night: Big Date Night

In honour of The girlfriend who thinks he might be The One.

Evening frolics It's the dressing-up scenario to lead him into serious temptation. The shoes that make your legs look up-to-your-armpits long; the bra that belies you're a 32AA; the right colour lipstick that puts a smooch into your pout. (See Chapter 8 for brilliant makeover ideas including the best way to fake a tan – honey-toasted skin is essential for any big date night.)

Chick disc 'Get up (I feel Like Being a) Sex Machine' by James Brown.

The Night: Hen Party, aka The Bachelorette Party

In honour of Your soon-to-be-hitched girlfriend (the one with the big sparkler).

Evening frolics Where do I start? The suggestions are endless (see Games for a Hilarious Hen Night, Chapter 6, for ideas.) A karaoke machine so that you can sing 'I Did Survive', (instead of 'I Will Survive') plus oodles of pampering; having Muriel's Wedding playing constantly in the background.

Chick disc 'Ladies Night' by Kool & The Gang.

The Night: Reality Night

In honour of Your girlfriends who need to feel less dysfunctional.

Evening frolics Mind games – that's what reality TV is all about: picturing the scene of you stranded in the jungle or on an island, or in a house with nine of the least-liked people in your world. How would you handle them? (All of Chapter 6 will help angst-ridden friends chill out and relax with life!)

Chick disc 'Stars of CCTV' by Hard-fi.

The Night: The DVD (I'm-in-the-mood-for-a-movie) Night

In honour of Your movie-buff girlfriends.

Evening frolics Being unashamedly, absolutely, totally girlie in your viewing and lining up: The Doris Day Collection including *Pillow Talk* (surely Rock Hudson wasn't gay?); *Fried Green Tomatoes and The Whistle Stop Café* (the sisterhood at its best); *Grease* (Danny and Sandy rule, OK); any rom-com starring the big-wide-smile herself, Julia Roberts – *Steel Magnolias* would be great to hire and keep an eye on in-between mini makeovers; the film is set around a beauty parlour dontcha know? (See Chapter 8 for fab beauty tips.) *Shrek*. Don't you just love Princess Fiona with that hint of green skin tone? Oh, and let's not forget *Tootsie*. Dustin Hoffman wore some great dresses! (See The

DVD (I'm-in-the-mood-for-a-movie) Night, Chapter 5. And don't forget to check out the movie quiz!)
Chick disc 'Let Me Entertain You' by Robbie Williams.

The Night: Poker and Whisky Night

In honour of The wild, wild women of suburbia. Take inspiration from Sharon Stone in *Casino*.
Evening frolics Mastering a poker face. It's harder than it looks especially after a Cosmopolitan too many. Wising up on poker terms: Bad Beat, Calling Station, Flop, Muck, Rainbow … they do mean something you know, along with knowing your hand rankings: high card, three of a kind and flush. You're then ready to play Blackjack, Hook, Line and Sinker, and Rock 'n' Slots. Check out websites that sell basic poker sets online, including chips, roulette wheels, green felt tables and tip booklets. Now you're ready to hustle girlfriends! (See The Hot-Card Shuffle Poker Night, Chapter 5.)
Chick disc: 'Bad' by Michael Jackson or Vegas mainstays like the Rat Pack.

The Night: Sympathy and Slammers

In honour of The girlfriend having issues with her mother/another girlfriend/boss/mother-in-law-from-hell.
Party frolics After tears and tissues, tea quickly leads to tequila slammers to chase away the blues. (Lighten the

The Poker Cheat Sheet

Post this near the table to remind guests of hand hierarchy. That way no one has to ruin a perfectly good bluff by asking if a pair of ten beats a full house. Smart, hey?

Royal Flush: ace, kings, queen, jack and ten in the same suit
Straight Flush: five cards of the same suit in sequence
Four of a Kind: four cards with the same rank
Full House: three of a kind and a pair
Flush: five cards, any rank in the same suit
Straight: five cards, any suit in sequence
Three of a Kind: three cards with the same rank
Two Pair: two sets of cards of equal rank
High Card: if no one has a pair or better, the highest ranked card wins

mood even further by checking out Frolics for Everyone, Chapter 5.)
Chick disc: 'We Are Family' by Sister Sledge.

The Night: Heels and High Jinks, aka Sex And The City

In honour of The fiendishly fashionable.
Evening frolics Learning the art of walking in red-hot

heels minus the traffic warden stance. Pedicures, naturally. And buffing off callouses caused by desirable but terribly uncomfortable shoes. (This night calls for The Catwalk Caper, Chapter 5, as well as for pampering and preening. Look at Chapters 7 and 8 for suggestions à gogo.)

Chick disc: 'Naughty Girl' by Beyonce.

The Night: Desperate Housewives (for the sometimes not-so-yummy mummies)

In honour of Sick-covered, sleep-deprived mummies.

Evening frolics Laughing hysterically about how you thought you were stressed when you were in a full time job. Remembering the last time you had sex - leisurely. Whipping up an eye mask to disguise the baggage under them. Playing lots of funky dance music to help shift your mood from milky mum to party girl. (Do the Discover Your Dosha quiz in Chapter 6 to find yourself (again!) and Kitchen-Cupboard Beautifying Secrets in Chapter 7, for those chained to the kitchen sink.)

Chick disc 'Relight My Fire' by Dan Hartman (or Take That cover).



The Night: Footballers' Wives

In honour of *The Big Match* lovers.

Evening frolics Singing rowdy football songs, ogling over premier league footballer's thighs and playing along with the footballers' wives bit with a decent manicure and a fake tan (mahogany shade optional). (Beautiful Body Secrets in Chapter 8 ensures you never turn the very fake shade of a wooden door again.)

Chick disc: 'Three Lions (Football's Coming Home)' by the Lightning Seeds with David Baddiel and Frank Skinner.

Bring on the girls (but which ones?)

Your UGNI needs to have the right mix of girlfriends to make it sizzle, crackle and pop. There's no point inviting a hotchpotch of girls who you know don't really get on. The whole point of the evening is to chill – by this I mean be calm, not creating an atmosphere chillier than the Arctic. Remember: when the hostess is relaxed, your guests will be, too. This is where friends' specific plans need to be drawn up. So, for instance, don't invite the recently bitter divorcee to the Hen Night in or the girlfriend who's placed an ad in the lonely-hearts column and hasn't had a single reply to

the Big Date Night party. It just doesn't make for one big happy girl fest! But that doesn't mean you can't have an interesting mix of girls – it's just about balance. Here are a handful of girls that we're all familiar with and probably have in our in-crowd; it's just a question of where to slot them.

THE UP-FRONT SINGLETON

She's happy to be unattached, and 'on the shelf' to her means something you pick up from the supermarket. She pities Bridget Jones ('That woman is just so tragic. Who can be that desperate for a man? She needs to get a life.') This singleton is perfect for Heels and High Jinks. She can also quite easily be slotted into Chill Out and Relax night in as she has good karma about her where it concerns men.

THE OUTRAGEOUS GOSSIP

This girl can talk for England. Make that Ireland and Wales, too. She works in public relations and knows everybody and everything. Outside of the gossip papers she's in the know about who's sleeping with whom, who will be bedding whom and who's checked into rehab. This gossiper is perfect for the Desperate Housewives night. Those mummies need an injection

of gossip running through their veins to remind them there's more to the daily nappy/poo/lack-of-sleep gossip outside mummy world.

THE THERAPY (NUT) CASE

A great friend but with even greater issues. She uses therapy as an emotional crutch and spends most of her week visiting her colour therapist searching for her aura, her acupuncturist searching for her meridians, her aromatherapist to soothe away her stress, her reflexologist to find and treat her inner angst and, of course, her shrink (poor guy) to sort out her muddled head. A great guest for the Chill Out and Relax night (deep breathing is second nature to her), also the Reality Night. All those mad people actually make her look sane.

THE BABY MAKER

This girl can't stop popping them out. She is in baby heaven and she can't stop gurgling about them. This can be boring once she gets on a roll (she can recite the whole contents list of the Mothercare catalogue) but she's the poster girl for the ultimate Baby Shower. Her role will be 'mothering' the mum-ready-to-drop and will advise and comfort away her fears – of which there

will be many. The DVD night is just her thing, too. Those baby-making hormones constantly circulating around her body make her ideal for those weepy movies.

What makes a good girlfriend?

- She keeps your very dark secrets to herself.
- She doesn't judge or try to change you.
- She makes you laugh until you cry.

What makes A bad girlfriend?

- She constantly criticises you.
- She asks if you've lost weight yet.
- She's always last at the bar and first out the taxi (meaning she never pays her way).

THE DIVA

This girlfriend is Marilyn Monroe, Liza Minnelli and Mariah Carey all rolled into one. She's had tragedy (does a broken nail count?), she's glamorous and, boy, is she demanding! She arrives always enveloped in a cloud of Chanel No. 5 or a bespoke fragrance a sugar daddy has created for her. Heels and High Jinks is very much her party, as is Poker and Whisky. Oh, and she

gives great sex tips, too. Where she picks them up from you daren't ask!

THE BEAUTY JUNKIE

Her hobby is staking out the beauty floor of a department store and, just like the Therapy Case, she relies on an arsenal of experts to get her through the week. Although hers are Gino her Italian hairdresser, Frieda her colourist, Maisy her masseur and Iris her manicurist and pedicurist. Her knowledge in the pampering area is phenomenal. Of course, the Pampering To Go party has her name written all over it. She'd love the Footballers' Wives party also; she's always appreciative of a man with a waxed torso.

BEST GAY FRIEND (BGF)

He's been mentioned earlier, but I'll mention him again, because he can be key for an unforgettable night. Apart from knowing the inner workings of the alpha male (great for the Hen Night in) he has a superb eye for fashion – so perfect for the Big Date Night party and is also great for smoothing over a crisis. What he doesn't know about handling a tetchy mother-in-law can be



written on a napkin. A Sympathy and Slammers night in would be the party to invite him to.

THE DRAMA QUEEN

Making mountains out of molehills and brewing up a storm in a teacup is what this girl is all about. She literally stars in her own life (in the leading role of course) moving through her day as if she's auditioning for Scarlett O'Hara – and you love her for it, as life is never dull when she is around. Book her in for the Reality Night.

PARTY POOPER Drinking out of plastic cups. It just doesn't set the tone for a high-class evening. Hire glasses if need be.

PARTY SOOTHER Make each girlfriend feel special by greeting her with a flourish of kisses and magically appearing with a cocktail.