



# Birthday Party FAQs

## Where do parties occur?

In a real train car built in 1925. It's the Museum's official birthday party rental space!

## How many guests can fit in the party car?

The party car has a maximum capacity of 20 guests. This includes 15 child guests and 5 adult guests. If siblings of party guests plan to attend as well, they are counted as part of the 15 child guests.

## Can I invite more than 20 guests to my party in the party car?

Unfortunately, because it is a train car, the space is limited and therefore the capacity total cannot be increased.

## When can I have my party?

Saturdays and Sundays at noon or 3 pm.

## How long are the birthday parties?

Each party features 1 ½ hours in the party car.

## What does the party schedule look like?

We do 35-45 minutes of hands-on activities and the rest of the time may be used for host-provided snacks, gifts, etc. with a bathroom break in between if needed. We may start or end with the activity depending on what works best for you. Parties with a Dome feature as the chosen activity will potentially have a different timeline based on the Dome schedule.

## What are the activity choices?

There are four theme options for birthday parties—Dig into Dinosaurs, Awesome Astronomy, Fizz Bubble and Goop (chemistry)—or you may include a Dome film. Dome selections will depend on that day's show schedule.

## Can I do a hands-on activity and a Dome feature?

You are welcome to do both a hands-on activity and a Dome feature for an additional \$5 per guest. Please note: there will be the same 1 ½ hour time period allotted for the party car.

## Can my guests visit the Museum?

Your guests can visit the Museum, but if any additional parents or siblings of your guests would like to explore as well, they will need to pay admission. They can do this easily at the Guest Services desk.

## Are there any age restrictions for parties at the Museum?

We ask that the birthday child be turning a minimum of five. There are no age restrictions for guests. They can be younger than five years old, but the activities are geared toward the age of the birthday child.

## What does the Museum provide?

We provide 1 ½ hours of event time in the party car, hands-on activities (or tickets to a Dome feature); solid colored plates, napkins, cups, tablecloths and flatware; a special t-shirt for the birthday child; free print-at-home party invitations; admission for your party guests to explore all permanent Museum exhibits; and two 72" x 30" tables and chairs for guests.





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## What should we bring?

Decorations (helium-filled balloons not permitted), party favors and refreshments! We provide solid colored plates, napkins, etc. If you would like themed supplies, please feel free to bring them.

## Is there time to set up?

The party host is welcome to come ½ hour before the party to decorate the party car or set up food.

## Is there a place to store food in the party car?

There are no refrigerators or freezers in the party car. There is a counter space for staging/serving food. Please bring a cooler if you need to keep something cold until serving. There is an outlet if needed for a crockpot or warming tray

## Does the party car have a restroom?

No, the party car does not have access to running water. This means there are no working toilets or sinks for washing utensils or hands. There are restrooms located in the Museum not too far away.

## What should my guests do when they arrive at the Museum?

Please ask all your guests to arrive 5-10 minutes before the party start time and wait in the Rotunda. Please meet your group in the Rotunda and wait for Museum staff to take everyone to the party car.

If your guests plan to explore the Museum before the party, please remind them to meet the rest of the guests in the Rotunda a few minutes before the party start time and not at the party car.

## Is the party car climate controlled?

There is heating and air conditioning in the party car. However, because the event space is a real vintage train car there is no insulation. Guests may feel some effects of the weather, such as humidity.

## What if there is inclement weather?

In the case of inclement weather, please check our website [www.smv.org](http://www.smv.org) for Museum updates. If the museum opens on a delay, it won't affect the start time of your party. In the case of inclement weather closing during the scheduled party time, your event will need to be rescheduled. Please call our Group Sales office at 804.864.1400 to reschedule.

## Is the party car accessible to wheelchairs?

The party car is an authentic train car and as such has steep steps and has not been retrofitted with a ramp. If you anticipate any person in your party having mobility challenges, please contact us in advance so we can make alternative arrangements.

## How big is the party car?

Length: 84 feet 3 inches  
Width: 9 feet 10 inches  
Height: 12 feet  
Weight: 169,800 pounds

## What kind of a train car is it?

This is a real vintage train car made in 1925 by Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation. It is Kitchen Car #20 and was connected to Car ONE from 1982 to 1991 before it was retired. Before that, it served as a coach car and sleeper car as part of different trains.

