

Ring in the New Year with festive party ideas

Although New Year's Eve parties tend to be similar from year to year, hosts can explore the many ways to make their celebrations stand out from those of years past. This handy guide provides ideas to your get creative juices flowing.

- **Establish a color palette.** Many people equate New Year's Eve with the gold and silver hues of champagne. However, you can use any festive color for your party. Use the same colors on everything from invitations to dinnerware to take-home favors.

- **Encourage guest input.** Guests understand the cost of hosting and the amount of planning necessary to throw a festive party, and many will likely reach out to ask what they can do or bring. Figure out in advance which aspects of the party you want your guests to take care of so you have a ready answer when the inquiries start rolling in.

- **Keep musical tastes in mind.** A fun party usually includes an array of familiar songs and music that appeals to the masses. When compiling a party playlist, choose songs guests are sure to know and love. Mix these in with a few of your favorites. You can even ask guests to provide the names of three favorite songs when they RSVP.

- **Dim the lights.** Bright lights can make guests feel intimidated and awkward. Set the mood by turning off overhead lights, opting for ambient lighting instead. For a fun effect, string holiday lights around the room or use a portable disco ball to spread sparkling colors on the floor and ceiling. Candles are another option for intimate affairs, but should be avoided as a safety measure if you're having a large crowd.

- **Set out New Year's fill-in-the-blank cards.** Encourage guest participation with an entertaining idea. Print out small cards that guests have to complete. Phrases like, "The bad habit I want to quit is ____" or "____ was the silliest thing I did last year," can be fun to do and share. Guests can take turns guessing whose card is being read.

- **Have the party catered.** Unless you want to spend the evening in and out of the kitchen, invest in catering. Guests of a late party won't expect a three course meal. However, platters of sandwiches, appetizers and other little munchies will fit the bill. Remember, caterers may book up fast this time of year, so be sure to reserve service well in advance of your party.

- **Create a specialty drink.** In addition

to toasting champagne or sparkling wine, serve a specialty drink creation. This can be a beverage that ties into your color scheme or the theme of the party. Dessert drinks, such as chocolate martinis or vanilla cake-flavored vodka mixers, may be the right flavor for your affair. As the host, you should remember to provide non-alcoholic alternatives as well.

- **Consider more substantial food after midnight.** Encourage guests to eat more and drink less once the clock has struck midnight. Casseroles and other baked dishes are easy to make in advance and have on hand. A breakfast buffet of pancakes, toast and omelets also will fill guests up

with something more substantial than chips and dips.

New Year's Eve parties are a great way to reflect on the last year and look forward to a new one, and hosts can take steps to make their parties memorable for all the right reasons.



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When the new year begins across the globe

New Year's celebrations can be complicated, and those complications have nothing to do with punch bowls or party hats. According to TimeandDate.com, the world has more than 24 time zones. But things are more complex than that because the International Date Line creates three more, and not all time zones are an hour apart. As a result, it will take 26 hours for the new year to encompass all time zones in 2019. The following rundown shows when the new year will be celebrated in various areas across the globe and what time it will be in New York when revelers in those countries are officially ringing in 2019.

- Samoa and Christmas Island will be the first to welcome 2019, doing so when it is 5 a.m. on December 31st in New York.

- Much of New Zealand, with certain exceptions, will ring in 2019 when most New Yorkers are still in bed at 6 a.m.

- Most Australians will be celebrating 2019 when it is 8 a.m. in the Big Apple.

- Japan and South Korea will be welcoming 2019

when it is 10 a.m. in New York. That's right around the time many New Yorkers arrive at their offices.

- The Philippines won't be far behind, welcoming 2019 just an hour after Japan and South Korea.

- Afghanistan will be ringing in 2019 when it is 2:30 p.m. in New York. Times Square figures to be filled up by then.

- Celebrants in Moscow will welcome 2019 when it is 4 p.m. in New York.

- As 5 p.m. quitting time strikes in New York, Greece and 31 other countries will be welcoming 2019.

- When the clock strikes 10 p.m. in New York, Argentina and regions of Brazil will be hard at play celebrating the dawn of 2019.

- New Yorkers will finally get to kiss their sweethearts as the clock strikes midnight in the Big Apple. People as far west as Detroit will be doing the same.

- As many New Yorkers finally lay their heads to rest at 4:30 a.m. on January 1, the 2019 a portion of the party will just be getting started in the Marquesas Islands.