

How to plan a safe New Year's Eve night out

New Year's Eve is a popular night to paint the town red. That popularity could skyrocket even further as the world says goodbye to 2021 and ushers in 2022. Many cities and millions of individuals toned down their New Year's Eve shenanigans a year ago, as the COVID-19 pandemic made it hard to celebrate safely. But the rollout of three effective vaccines has beckoned revelers out of their homes, and that could make for an especially rowdy New Year's Eve.

Fun might be the top priority on New Year's Eve, but safety must be in the mix as well. As individuals make plans for a night out this New Year's Eve, it can help to keep these safety tips in mind.

- Utilize a car service. Whether it's a ridesharing service like Uber, a taxi cab or even a private limousine for large parties, leave the New Year's Eve driving to the professionals. This ensures that no one will drive after having too much to drink. Even revelers who can control their alcohol consumption should avoid driving if they plan to drink. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a person need not be legally impaired to experience impairment. Drivers with a

blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 are considered to be legally impaired. But the NHTSA reports that a BAC of .05 can reduce coordination, lead to a reduced ability to track moving objects, make it difficult to steer, and produce a slower-than-normal response to emergency driving situations.

- Go out for dinner first. Experts at the University of Notre Dame's McDonald Center for Student Well-Being note that having food, especially foods that are high in protein, in your stomach prior to consuming alcohol will help slow the processing of that alcohol. Someone who has not eaten will typically hit a peak BAC between 30 minutes and two hours of drinking. But someone who has eaten will typically peak between one and six hours of drinking depending on the quantity of alcohol consumed.

- Make a plan. Overconsumption of alcohol is not the only potential danger lurking on New Year's Eve. Large crowds can make it easier for friends to become separated, especially if they plan to visit more than one establishment before or after the clock strikes 12. When going out with a group on New Year's Eve, create an



itinerary, complete with meet-up spots, for the entire night. This ensures anyone who gets lost can easily find his or her way back to the group. Individuals who are wandering alone on New Year's Eve may be vulnerable to criminals who are looking to prey on people whose inhibitions have

been lowered by alcohol and/or the festive atmosphere of the night. A rowdy New Year's Eve may be on tap as the world ushers in 2022. That likelihood only underscores the importance of emphasizing safety when going out this December 31.

Family-friendly activities for New Year's Day



People spend so much time planning New Year's Eve revelry that they may not consider that they have another day on the holiday calendar to enjoy after the clock strikes 12. New Year's Day activities may differ significantly from the countdowns and parties of the night before, but that doesn't mean it can't be equally enjoyable.

Chances are children are home from school for holiday breaks, meaning New Year's Day activities should probably be family-friendly. Check out these family-friendly ways to spend New Year's Day.

- Catch (or play) a football game. New Year's Day and football go hand in hand, and families can likely find a game on television to enjoy together. Of course, it's also fun to burn off a few New Year's Eve calories by playing a game of football in the backyard on January 1.

- Host a New Year's Day meal. Give people plenty of time to recover from last night's antics by inviting neighbors or friends and their children over for a brunch, late lunch or early dinner. Potlucks are great for these occasions because no one will likely want to cook for a crowd.

- Enjoy a movie marathon. Spend the day in comfortable clothes and make a new family tradition. Select one movie for each family member to watch and then cue up the streaming service or dust off that DVD player. Use holiday mugs for hot cocoa and dig into any leftovers from holiday dinners. If a marathon at home isn't up your alley, check out the showings at a nearby theater and enjoy an afternoon at the cinema.

- Take a hike. Enjoy the

cold weather up close and personal with a hike in the brisk air. State parks or nearby nature preserves may not be busy on January 1, making them an even more relaxing respite.

- Tackle an organizational project. Get the whole family together and take on a project that has been pushed aside, such as organizing the garage or cleaning out the refrigerator.

- Volunteer with a local charity. Give back to the community and start off the new year on a positive note by volunteering as a family. New Year's Day presents an ideal opportunity to spend time together as a family.



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