

» food & drink

Host with the Most

Planning the Perfect New Year's Eve party

by Anne Koval

It's almost midnight. With a party popper in one hand and glass of champagne in the other, a new year is just minutes away. Where you are and who you're with while counting down those last ten seconds can make or break your New Year's Eve. So if you've taken on the task of hosting a New Year's party, follow these party tips to ensure that you and your guests are celebrating in style when the clock strikes midnight.

Invitations:

Timing is key. According to Sarah Vargo, an event planner in Chicago, invitations for larger parties should be sent out at least a month in advance, but smaller, apartment-type parties should use Facebook at least two weeks ahead of time. "The internet keeps the cost of the invitations low, so you can spend more money on the party, and you are able to keep track who can attend and who can't," she said. Vargo suggests using an Evite, an invitation sent online via email, if you want to be more creative in the design of your invitation.

Decorations and Party Favors:

Think cliché: party poppers, metallic blow outs, silver bead necklaces, foil hats, glitter tiaras and

noise makers. Party stores often sell themed novelty or decoration packages for holiday parties. Decorations include "Happy New Year's" banners, beaded door danglers, confetti mix to lie on tables and themed tableware, like plastic martini glasses. According to Kathy Cantillon, store manager of Factory Card and Party Outlet in Champaign, the packages range from small parties of ten people to larger parties of thirty people and over. "You can buy a color scheme to match the theme of your party," she said.

Appetizers:

Celebrating with champagne will require a good amount of carbs on the appetizer table. "Bread and crackers with a lot of cheese helps absorb alcohol," said Michael Camerer of Michael's Catering in Champaign. Camerer relies on a southern tradition to bring good luck for the New Year: black eyed peas. He also suggests starting with "munchies" for the beginning of the night, like chips and salsa, and finishing with solid foods, like pizza, towards the end of the night. "You should always be bringing out food periodically," he said.

Desserts:

Before the New Year's Eve resolution of losing ten pounds sets in, desserts should have a special place reserved on the table for your guests. By New Year's Eve, holiday cookies are already overdone. Camerer believes in dipping, specifically in chocolate dipping. "Apple wedges, strawberries, marshmallows and small slices of pound cake are perfect for dipping," he said.

Drinks:

Brianna Erdmier, a bartender at Kam's, recommends Martini & Rossi Asti Spumante as the drink of the night. Erdmier says the sparkling wine is "sweet and fruity, and compliments desserts well."

The celebration doesn't have to be in a wine glass, however. "For New Year's Eve, offer sweet flavored shots, like buttery nipple shots," she said. The buttery nipple usually consists of one ounce Bailey's Irish Cream and one ounce Butterscotch Schnapps. The shots are only the previews; the party punch is the main attraction. "Any typical party punch with juice and sherbet can be spiked with vanilla vodka or white rum and taste delicious," she said.

Weekly Feed

Plum pudding A tradition that's worth the wait

by Kimberly Callaghan

When the holiday season roles around, traditions become stronger than ever. A huge part of the celebrations revolve around food with families preparing the same dishes every year. Often times, one of those recipes is plum pudding. Plum pudding originated in England during the 15th century and has made its way to a staple of American holiday traditions. Oddly, plum pudding was not typically a holiday treat. It originally fell into a category of minced pies, which combined meats, fruits and vegetables into one large mold. Novelists may have contributed to making plum pudding a must around the holidays.

Surprising to some, plums are not an ingredient. The use of this term comes from the 16th century when it was used to reference any dried fruit. In its contemporary form, meat is no longer used in preparation and has been replaced by suet, a hard fat that is often used in cooking. Besides this cohesive agent, dried fruits, citrus peels, spices, sugar and liquor are used. Because of the diversity of ingredients, families have come to develop their own recipes. In England, an entire day is devoted to preparing plum puddings called Stir-up Day, with the belief that if each family member stirred the batter, they would receive good luck. For further good fortune, a charm could be added before steaming to bring luck to whomever finds it while eating. Stir-up Day takes place at the beginning of winter. Plum pudding needs at least a month to sit before it is ready to eat. Sometimes, people take the holiday season to make their plum puddings for the following year, as yes, these puddings can last that long.

Closing time

Say goodbye to Bar Giuliani

by Michell Eloy

The colorful assortment of gelato that once greeted customers as they entered Bar Giuliani on Green Street is nowhere to be seen. All but the chocolate Ghirardelli mocha flavoring has been packed away. The shelves are empty, the pastries gone.

After five years of business, Bar Giuliani has closed its doors to the CU community. Gary Dicicco, the co-manager of Bar Giuliani, said the bad economy and rising lease prices played a role in the demise of many

students' go-to study cafe, and the news of its closing has been greeted with a somber response.

"Everyone is really, really sad to see us go," said Dicicco. "A lot of people come in here to study. They think we have the best study place on campus, and they really thought we had the best coffee to go along with it."

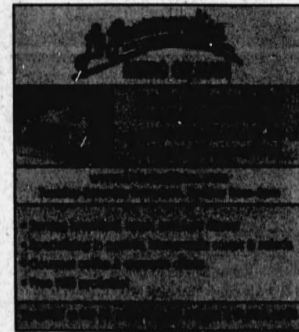
"The quality will be missing," said Nick Kohout, a past barista at Bar Giuliani. "We were the best coffee

in town. Or at least we tried to be. That was our main goal, to make the coffee as best we could."

Though Dicicco said there are no plans to re-open or relocate Bar Giuliani in the near future, he said he would consider doing so if the opportunity presented itself. But for now, students and CU residents alike will no longer be able to enjoy free wi-fi over a steaming cup of coffee or a chocolate mocha. The community will have to get its caffeine fix somewhere else.



DEC 26 - JAN 07 09



come and get it