

# THROW A GREAT NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY ON A BUDGET

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There's no reason to start out the New Year with new debt hanging over your head. Put away the credit cards and throw a great party on a budget. ***With the proper planning, it's easy to host a New Year's Eve party that's both stylish and inexpensive.*** Avoid letting a lack of funds be an excuse for not enjoying the New Year with your friends and family.

You're likely to find that many of your friends don't have plans, so offer to be the host. With some smart planning, the party might even be free for you!

**Use these ideas to host an inexpensive New Year's Eve bash:**

- 1. Start the party later.** If you start the party during normal dinner hours, people expect dinner. Start the party at 8:00 or later, and people will feed themselves before coming over.
- 2. Let your guests bring the food and drinks.** Encourage everyone to bring their favorite dish and a bottle of alcohol to share. It can cost a small fortune to feed a large group on your own. It's even more costly to provide alcohol. ***With this strategy, you might be able to get away with providing little more than ice.***
  - Consider having a signup sheet for certain items to avoid duplications. What will you do with 6 different spinach dips and 4 bottles of rum?
- 3. Leave the Champaign until midnight.** Prior to midnight, it's okay to use inexpensive Champaign in a punch. Save the straight Champaign until it's really time to celebrate.

4. **Keep the decorations simple.** There's no need to purchase decorations for a New Year's Eve party. Dimmed lights and a few candles look nice, regardless of the season. If you have some white or clear Christmas tree lights, they can work well, too.
  
5. **The music sets the mood.** You can largely determine the mood of the party with the music you choose to play. Classy music equals a classy party. ***The music you already own is surely good enough to play on New Year's Eve, and it won't add any additional cost.***
  - Encourage others to bring their favorite tunes. It's never been easier to accommodate everyone than it is now with the current technology available.
  
6. **Skip the invitations.** Create a Facebook event or an Evite and then simply email all your friends and family. It's an easy way to communicate and provide directions to your home. Use technology to make things easier. Your time and money are important.
  
7. **Have your own "photo booth."** Although an actual booth isn't required, have an area set aside for taking photos. Maybe even stock that area with funny hats, sunglasses, feather boas, or other "dress up" items you have laying around the house. This adds a lot of fun to your get-together.
  - ***Photos taken with a digital camera are free, and the pictures can be posted on Facebook for everyone to see and download.***
  
8. **Use those old games in the back of your closet.** Most adults rarely have the opportunity to play games anymore, unless it's Candy Land with their 4-year old. Encourage your guests to bring games, too.
  
9. **Make free confetti.** Shred your junk mail. If you don't have a paper shredder, a

friend or neighbor probably will. Any type of mail or paper source will do. But, junk mail is at least colorful!

***Hosting a great, affordable New Year's Eve party is simply a matter of spreading the cost among your guests, making use of the items you already have, and some creative ideas for fun.*** It doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. If you've stayed home the last several years on New Year's Eve, perhaps this is the year you can host your own party without breaking the bank.