

Staying in or going out

Couch potatoes and club-hoppers have plenty of ways to say so long to 2005

Stories by Jennifer Duffy

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Did you ring in 2005 on the living room couch — eyes glued to the television until the ball dropped in Times Square?

If you prefer spending New Year's Eve in the comfort of your own home, but want it to be more fun or meaningful, we hear ya.

Chef Jane Cherry plans to spend her New Year's Eve warming by the fire with her 10-year-old son, Grant, and husband, David. The family makes savory appetizers and rents a few movies, too.

"I just don't like being out and about on that night. It's too scary for me because everybody is drinking," the 47-year-old said.

Peggy Holt, a behavioral therapist at the Canyon Ranch health resort, says New Year's Eve is the perfect chance for parents to spend quality time with their children.

"By doing that, it's teaching them that you can have fun without drugs and alcohol. There's a lot of fun to have with good, old-fashioned games," Holt said.

Here are some at-home holiday options for the whole family.

• **Cook together.** Cherry, a personal chef, recommends appetizers for New Year's Eve — and small bites that can be picked up with toothpicks are a hit among children. A great alternative to hot apple cider is wassail, a spiced punch served hot (see *recipes in accompanying box*).

• **Leave the cooking to someone else.** You could boil up some black-eyed peas for good luck and leave the rest of the cooking to someone else. Try Feast Tasteful Takeout, 4122 E. Speedway, for some home-style cookin'. Their New Year's Eve hours are 11 a.m.- 9 p.m.

Get the December menu at www.eatatfeast.com online. Orders need to be placed by Tuesday.

Call 326-9363.

• **Make New Year's resolutions as a family.** Help your children reflect on their year — how they succeeded, what they did well on — and help them plan small goals for the future, said Holt, the behavioral therapist.

"Have the discussion about how they felt their last year went and help them think about what they'd like to do next year," she said.

Explain to them that adults don't always keep their resolutions, Holt said, but then help them enact a plan to achieve their goals.

Make sure they choose small, attainable goals so they don't feel overwhelmed. "Put them in control of setting those goals," Holt said. Allow the children to help set their

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Wassail

(This hot toddy is a traditional grog enjoyed during the holiday season. For the adults, you can add dark rum and brandy after the mixture has simmered.)

- 1 orange, quartered
- 6 whole cloves
- 3 cinnamon sticks, plus more for serving
- 1 quarter-sized slice fresh ginger root
- 8 whole allspice berries
- 64-ounce cranberry juice
- 64-ounce apple juice
- 2 lemons, thinly sliced for garnish

Press 2 whole cloves in each quarter of the orange. In a large pot on the stovetop, place the juices, orange, 3 cinnamon sticks, fresh ginger and allspice berries. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, covered. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.

Remove from heat and place mixture in a crockpot to keep warm. Serve in mugs or handled cups with a slice of lemon and cinnamon stick.

Sweet and sour chicken pineapple skewers

plan to achieve their goals as well, and vow to check in with them monthly to monitor their progress.

• **Make a family New Year's resolution**, perhaps to spend more time together, Holt said. Plan a weekly family meeting night where everyone can add items to the agenda. This is the time to discuss family business — a big trip, chores, allowances.

After the meeting, which should last only 30 minutes, the family should plan to play games or do something fun together, Holt said.

• **Break out the Monopoly** or another game the family likes that gets everyone involved. (This is also true for groups of all ages) Some popular games at Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle's Toys include:

Squint (\$25) — Players are given cards with shapes and lines on them and a list of three words. They must create one of the three words with the shapes and lines they're given. The catch: There's a time limit.

Sleeping Queens (\$13) — Awaken the queens by drawing a king from the card pile. You can steal queens from other players with a knight, put queens back to sleep with a sleeping potion or defend your queen with a dragon. It's for age 8 and up, but Nicole DeMars, who is 21 and works at Mrs. Tiggy Winkle's, owns it and plays it with her peers.

Set (\$15) — A fast-paced matching game. The goal is to get three cards of the same shape, color or shading.

You know all the words to Auld Lang Syne, and the bartender remembers you from last year's New Year's party.

If you love going out, but need some fresh choices, we've got some gigs for you.

Demetri Enriquez likes to go out for this holiday. He usually starts the evening over a leisurely dinner with friends and then hits the bars for more lively celebrating.

Enriquez isn't usually thrilled about the New Year's Eve scene in Tucson.

"It's kinda hurtin' for good, big events," he said, adding that usually bars put on the same type of shows they do any other night, but increase the cover.

His most memorable New Year's Eve in Tucson was at a salsa concert a few years ago, but otherwise his New Year's Eves all blur together.

This year will be a little different. The 32-year-old bass player for the rock band Spacefish will be performing with the band at Plush.

Spacefish, known on the Fourth Avenue bar scene for their eccentric costumes (think banana suits and tennis outfits, with plenty of theatrics to boot), will appear at Plush on New Year's Eve (\$10; doors open at 8:30 p.m. with Golden Boots followed by The Deludes.)

Here are a few other options to dance the night away.

• **Shake your groove thing.** Check out Save the Last Dance New Year's Eve Party at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, 7000 North Resort Drive.

Cost: \$65, includes three drinks, an appetizer and all the dancing you can stand.

When: 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

For reservations, call 299-2020, Ext. 5151

• **Let it snow — yeah, really.**

There will be snow at Hotel Congress for their New Year's Eve Winter Wonderland.

(Have all your ingredients prepped and measured, and your kids can make the sauce and assemble these all by themselves.)

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes

- 1/2 Fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch cubes

- 8 (8-inch) skewers, soaked in water for 30 minutes

Sauce:

- 1 cup pineapple/apricot marmalade or jam, or guava jelly

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce

- 1 teaspoon dried basil

- pinch cayenne (optional)

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

- Party toothpicks for serving

In microwave-safe bowl, melt jam on full power for about 45 seconds. Add soy sauce, basil, lemon juice and cayenne. Mix well. Set aside.

Thread chicken and pineapple chunks alternately on skewers. Set skewers on foil-lined broiler pan. Brush jam mixture generously over skewers. Broil 4 inches from heat for 3-4 minutes per side, turning once, until chicken is cooked through. Brush more jam mixture over skewers just before removing from broiler.

Remove fruit and meat from skewers to a serving plate. Place toothpicks in a symmetrical fashion into fruit and meat and serve.

• *From Jane Cherry, personal chef. www.seejanecook.com*

Pizza pinwheels

Makes about 30 pinwheels

(These hors d'oeuvres are elegant, light and flaky. They are also simple to prepare and kid-friendly.)

- 1/2 cup grated mozzarella cheese

- 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme

Expect snow machines, pine trees and a ball drop from the roof of the hotel. Oh — did we mention there will be music? Live music from Giant Sand and Marie Frank, as well as dance tunes from DJ Buttafly.

Where: Club Congress, in Hotel Congress, 311 E.Congress St.

Cost: \$12 in advance; \$15 at the door,

For information, call 622-8848

• **Have a ball.** A bowling ball, that is. At Golden Pin Lanes, 1010 W. Miracle Mile, there's a party for \$16 per person. The cost includes shoe rental, party favors, a large pizza, a bottle of champagne or cider for each lane and breakfast at 12:30 a.m. Reservations are recommended (call 888-4272.)

• **For a more refined evening,** try "Midnight at the Fox" — the grand opening of the newly renovated theater. The event features a performance by singer/songwriter/pianist Bruce Hornsby.

Cost: Basic tickets are \$250 per person and include a reception with dessert and a midnight toast.

The high roller's ticket —aka the VIP Package — is \$1,000 and includes a loveseat for two in the first four rows of the balcony, an earlier VIP reception, a meet-and-greet with Hornsby and a commemorative gift bag.

Where: Fox Theatre, 17 W. Congress St.

When: 8 p.m.-midnight; the VIP event is 7 p.m.-midnight.

Reservations are required. Call 624-1515.

• **For an even more refined evening,** saunter over to the TSO's New Year's Eve at Arizona Inn.

Ring in the new year with soft sounds from Tucson Symphony Orchestra principal harpist Patricia Harris, the wind quintet, piano trio and jazz combo.

Cost: \$165, which includes hors d'oeuvres, dinner, a champagne toast and dancing.

When: 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

For more information and reservations, call 882-8585.

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- 8 whole allspice berries
- 64-ounce cranberry juice
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- 2 lemons, thinly sliced for garnish

- 3/4 teaspoon dried Greek oregano

- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed

- 2-3 tablespoons marinara sauce, preferably homemade

- 2 ounces packaged sliced pepperoni (about 24 1 1/2-inch-diameter slices)

- 1 large egg, beaten to blend

- Parchment paper

Mix first four ingredients in medium bowl. Cut puff pastry crosswise in half to form two rectangles. Spread about 1 tablespoon marinara over 1 puff pastry rectangle, leaving 1-inch plain border at one long edge. Place half of pepperoni in single layer atop sauce. Top pepperoni with half of cheese mixture. Brush plain border with egg. Starting at side opposite plain border, roll up pastry tightly, making sure to tuck filling as you roll. Seal at egg-coated edge. Press seam with flat edge of a knife. Wrap log in plastic wrap and transfer pastry roll, seam-side down, to medium baking sheet. Repeat with remaining pastry rectangle, sauce, pepperoni, cheese mixture and egg. Chill rolls until firm, about 30 minutes, or chill up to 1 day. (Can be frozen at this point; thaw logs to very cold before proceeding).

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. Cut each pastry roll into about 1/2-inch-thick rounds with a very sharp knife. Transfer pinwheels to prepared sheets. Bake until golden, about 15 minutes. Transfer to platter; serve.

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• Contact reporter Jennifer Duffy at 573-4357 or at jduffy@azstarnet.com. • For more listing on music, comedy and other New Year's Eve events, see Thursday's Caliente.

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