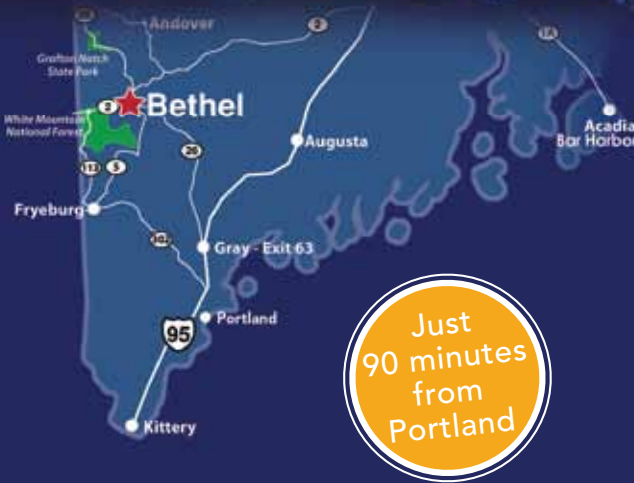




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What R U Doing New Year's Eve?

Be part of a happening, join the crowd, and kick up your heels—2015 is so last year. Here are a few ideas.

BY KAREN HOFREITER

In Italy, it's lentils. In Austria and Cuba, pork. Ring-shaped pastries are the thing in the Netherlands and Mexico; a giant glittering ball dropping from the sky means you're in New York. A glittering eight-foot sardine dropping from the third floor of the Tides Institute means you're in Eastport. Portland, too, has its own way of celebrating the New Year (and it's a bit more exciting than scarfing down a bunch of grapes while counting down from 10 (Spain). Here are just a few to make a memorable New Year, the Maine way.

CITY GLITTER

Celebrate at the height of sophistication at the **Portland Regency Hotel's** New Year's Eve Gala. "This event is for anyone looking for a great evening of fun and dance and a celebratory start to the New Year," says David Davis, director of sales. Float into the ballroom like king and queen at the prom while sipping a glass of complimentary vino. Get your taste buds dancing with savory hors d'oeuvres and decadent desserts before waltzing onto the dance floor and into a sea of tuxedos and gowns. Spend the final hours of 2015 twirling, swinging, and two-stepping to the jazzy



stylings of Jim Ciampi and his seven-piece big band before starting the New Year with a glass of bubbly. (20 Milk Street, 727-3436, theregency.com; 8 p.m.-1 a.m.; for tickets brownpapertickets.com, \$160 for two; \$389 overnight package includes tickets for 2.)

Another weekend of celebration can be had at the **Danforth Inn** (163 Danforth Street, Portland, 879-8755, danforthinn.com; 2-night package \$380 pp) where a two-night stay includes an eight-course dinner at Tempo Dulu, live jazz, and a tasty touch of international flair with oliebollen, a Dutch New Year's pastry tradition.

For a night of mystery, head to the **Marriott Sable Oaks** for their Midnight Masquerade (200 Sable Oaks Drive, South Portland, 871-8000, Marriott.com) or dance the night away (quite literally) at Maplewood Ballroom Dance (383 Warren Avenue, Portland, 878-0584, maplewooddancecenter.com.)



Countdown at Pearl Ultra Nightclub on Fore Street.

PORTLAND AFTER DARK

If you're looking to start the New Year doing some good, you can "party with a purpose" at **Boone's Fish House** annual New Year's Eve Charity Gala (86 Commercial Street, Portland, 774-5725, boonesfish-house.com) with a fireside five-course dinner by chef Harding Lee Smith, a live band, and midnight champagne toast.

KENNEBUNKPORT PARTY NIGHT

If you'd rather a tried-and-true "best party ever" (according to repeat revellers), don't miss the 13th annual New Year's Eve Dinner Dance Party at **Pier 77**. Dressed in your party best, linger over a five-course dinner featuring never-been-on-the-menu-before dishes by chef Peter Morency. With only one dinner seating, there's plenty of time between courses to kick up your heels to jazz and easy rock tunes played by the seven-piece band. But make certain to save a little energy for the final countdown. "Last year there was not a soul in their seats when the New Year rang in," says co-owner and captain of festivities Kate Morency. (77 Pier Road, Kennebunkport, 967-8500; 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.; tickets including 5-course dinner, \$100 per person.)

A fun and flirty New Year's can be had at **David's KPT** at the BoathouseWaterfront Hotel where boomers and millennials accessorize with silver-glitter fedoras and gold tiaras. Against the dramatic backdrop of the Kennebunk River, enjoy colorful cocktails at one of the three open bars and an extensive spread including food and dessert sta-



Out & About

Not one for city crowds? Escape to the mountains. **Sunday River** has fireworks, ski & stay packages, dinner up the mountain at the Peak Lodge, followed by a party at the Foggy Goggle to ring in the new year. sundayriver.com

tions and a raw bar. A DJ will be spinning popular tunes from a span of generations while 70-somethings show off their fancy choreographed steps next to high-energy free-styling 20-somethings. "We are always amazed at the diversity of the guests, yet everyone feels like family. It's a great experience," says general manager Jeff Fightmaster. (21 Ocean Avenue, Kennebunkport, 967-8225, boathouseme.com; 7 p.m.-1 a.m.; for tickets brownpapertickets.com, \$135 advance/\$160 same day; 21+.)

JUST RELAX

For those who want to start the New Year relaxed and refreshed, a festive reprieve at the **Meadowmere Resort** could be just the thing. "We're the place to escape and celebrate," says director of sales and marketing Allyson Cavaretta. Spend the day soaking at the spa and getting a massage before heading to Jonathan's restaurant for a prix-fixe dinner and dancing until the New Year. Don't worry about staying out too late—an extended check-out means you're welcome to sleep late. (74 Main Street, Ogunquit, 646-9661, meadowmere.com; 2-night package Dec. 30-Jan. 1, \$275 per person.) ■



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