

ZonedOut

Find a New Year's celebration in Eastern, Central, Mountain or Pacific

By Rose Davidson

The Big Apple may get the nod as the most well-known when it comes to New Year's travel destinations, but cities all across the U.S. hold their own festivities with the same level of anticipation – and, arguably, less hassle.

Many even feature fireworks displays to really welcome the new year with a bang.

So instead of trying to navigate New York City and the overwhelming crowds that are sure to fill Times Square, spend the final moments of this year at one of the many other celebrations this country has to offer. And with festivities in every time zone, you can observe the celebrations again and again (and again).

Kiawah Island, S.C.

EST Far from the bustling big city celebrations, the festivities at Kiawah Island Golf Resort in South Carolina are much more relaxed. And at just a short distance from Charleston, the resort's evening lineup is oozing with Southern charm and hospitality.

The night starts with an array of dining options, including a special five-course prix fixe menu at The Ocean Room, the resort's four-star steakhouse. After dinner, guests can congregate in the lobby lounge of the resort's Sanctuary Hotel for

cocktails, conversation and dancing as the clock counts down.

Two outdoor fireworks displays are set to take place at the resort: a traditional show at midnight and an early show at 10 p.m. The earlier fireworks serve as the finale for the family celebration happening at the resort's Night Heron Park, which includes activities such as train rides and jump castles. Authentic Lowcountry foods such as collard greens and Hoppin' John can be found at the festival as well.

"We have the Gullah culture here," says Mike Vegis, the resort's director of public relations.



Kiawah Island Golf Resort

If you're still not finished celebrating when the morning rolls around, the resort also holds a Polar Bear Plunge at noon on New Year's Day, followed by an after-party with music and more food.

New Orleans, La.

CST Most of the Crescent City's festivities revolve around Jackson Square, where those counting down the clock can see a giant LED-lit Fleur de Lis drop from atop Jax Brewery. But don't miss the chance to catch a glimpse of Baby New Year; the 6-foot-tall Styrofoam icon in a Saints helmet and a purple-and-gold diaper survived Hurricane Katrina and is now a bit of a local celebrity.

Immediately following the drop, the city's "Symphony in the Sky" fireworks are set to light up the night above the beautiful backdrop of the Mississippi River. The spectacle doesn't distract revelers from embracing the true spirit of New Orleans, though.

New Orleans' "Symphony in the Sky"



Seattle isn't the only West Coast city with a major New Year's Eve celebration. Visit www.cityscenecolumbus.com to learn about the Portland Champagne Ball.

After the display, "everyone picks their favorite venue and heads back inside and continues the night," says Sarah Forman, communications coordinator for the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau.

If you really want to immerse yourself in the culture, lively parties will undoubtedly

ensue in the French Quarter until the wee hours of the morning. Whether you're looking to enjoy a local brass band performance or treat yourself to one too many cocktails, you can easily keep the celebration going until dawn.



Gullivan Center

Salt Lake City, Utah



Sometimes one night just isn't enough, so Salt Lake City offers EVE. The three-day celebration is spread over multiple venues – this year, likely more than 10.

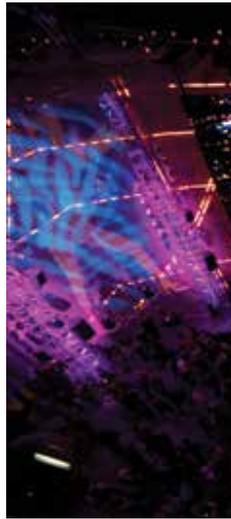
Nick Como, communication director for Salt Lake City's Downtown Alliance, refers to EVE as "an all-access pass

to the best art, museums, comedy shows and activities" in the city.

On New Year's Eve, not only are those venues open to all visitors, a free trolley helps transport people from one place to the next.

EVE is entirely family-friendly and includes a festival at open-air retail destination The Gateway, equipped with face painters, balloon sculptors and children's crafts. The other featured attraction is Gullivan Center, which will host live music and, on Dec. 31, a midnight fireworks display that Como says is not to be missed.

The three-day pass costs just \$15 and there's no limit to how many can be sold,



Nearby for the New Year

Who says you have to leave Ohio to ring in the new year right? Here are just some of the events taking place on Dec. 31 in the Buckeye State.

First Night Columbus 5 p.m., downtown Columbus, www.firstnightcolumbus.com

This event features loads of family-friendly live entertainment to keep spirits high as the clock winds down on 2013. A fireworks show at midnight is set to cap off the night.

Cleveland POPS 18th Annual New Year's Eve Concert and Dance 9 p.m.-1 a.m., Severance Hall, 11001 Euclid Ave., www.clevelandpops.com

Enjoy music and comedy from identical twins Will and Anthony Nunziata. After the concert, dance the night away in the hall while taking advantage of the cash bar and free coffee and desserts.

Cleveland Rocks New Year's Eve Celebration 6 p.m., Public Square, downtown Cleveland, www.ohiohomecoming.com

Hosted by Ohio Homecoming – a group of young leaders with a passion for cel-

ebrating the city of Cleveland – this free event includes food trucks and other vendors around the square, along with a beer garden and live ice sculpting to go with the evening's theme of "electric ice," says event co-chair Tony Madalone. Later on in the night, electronic dance music group Krewella performs and fireworks light up the night sky.

New Year's Eve Blast on Fountain Square 8 p.m.-1 a.m., Fountain Square, downtown Cincinnati, www.myfountainsquare.com

Rock the night away with live music at Cincinnati's free outdoor celebration. Organized by 3CDC, a nonprofit group that's working to revitalize the city, the event is sure to entertain. Also be sure to take advantage of the ice skating going on at the square's U.S. Bank Ice Rink.

New Year's Eve Around the World 8 p.m., Schuster Center, 1 W. Second St., Dayton, www.daytonperformingarts.org

Artistic talents will combine as all three members of the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance join forces. Dayton's opera,

ballet and philharmonic orchestra have planned a special performance featuring music from countries across the globe. African, Russian and Austrian are just a few of the cultural samplings guests can look forward to experiencing.

"Madness at Midnight" Walleye Drop 6 p.m.-midnight, Madison Street, Port Clinton, www.walleyemadness.com

The small Lake Erie town of Port Clinton has been dubbed the "Walleye Capital of the World", so it stands to reason that the area's way of observing New Year's Eve is to drop a gigantic fish from the sky at midnight. Wylie, as the fish has come to be known, is a 20-foot, 600-pound fiberglass piece of art that also serves as the city's mascot. Local businesses get in on the celebration as well, offering walleye-inspired food and drink.

First Night Akron 6 p.m.-midnight, downtown Akron, www.firstnightakron.org

This family-friendly event is an alcohol-free celebration of the arts in Akron. The evening will feature music, dance and theater, as well as visual and interactive arts.



INDULGENCE New Year's Eve Bash

though there are only so many overnight accommodations around the city. For out-of-town guests, Como suggests getting one of the downtown hotel packages offered for the holiday – and getting it early.

“It’s a great New Year’s tradition and many hotels sell out,” Como says.

Seattle, Wash.

PST While some on the West Coast may be staking out their claim for a seat at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, others will be stage-hopping in Seattle when the clock strikes midnight.

The upscale INDULGENCE New Year’s Eve Bash will be held in the Seattle Center EMP Museum, a contemporary pop culture museum focused on music and science fiction. One ticket buys access to five experiences: museum exhibits, DJ performances, live comedy, live music and a show put on by a local radio station.

“Other parties have a DJ or a band – they have one thing going on – but we try to give our guests as many experiences as possible within one party,” says event producer Andrea Martin. “You never get bored. There’s always something exciting going on.”

The museum, situated next door to the Space Needle, also offers the perfect vantage point for catching sight of the midnight pyrotechnics that will shoot out from the iconic landmark. If the weather gets too windy, there’s also the option to watch the fireworks from inside the EMP – the museum projects the show on its LED screen, which just so happens to be the largest in the world. **CS**

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