



Event planner Christina Currie (left) joins her client and holiday party hostess Lira Sadural.

Jingle Mingle with 2016 Holiday Trends

YES, IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that the holidays are just around the corner! Whether you're hosting a small, intimate party for your friends with egg nog, or hosting your annual holiday party that is the talk of the town, you may be looking for the latest trends.

Every year, there are new party trends in food, cocktails, and entertainment. Most party connoisseurs cringe at the thought of hosting another ugly Christmas sweater party, or serving cocktail links. Instead, we want to be the first to wow our guests with the latest party crazes. Here are the hottest holiday party trends for 2016.

FA-LA-LA...FOOD TRUCKS!

Yes, it's a concept that is here to stay and it's hot! Why does catering always need be indoors? The growth of the food truck culture has skyrocketed across the U.S. and overseas. Some food truck vendors may create custom holiday menus just for your event. The food truck pulls up to your front door, makes everything fresh onsite, provides signage, and all tableware. No clean up or hassle. Set your bar up in your home and leave a sign on the bar for the hours of the food truck(s). Con-

sider hiring a variety of food trucks for your event. Great options include pizza, tacos, hot dogs, beef sandwiches, empanadas, French fries, sushi, cupcakes, and doughnuts. You'll be amazed on the variety of cuisines.

MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT: CRAFT BEER AND SPIRITS

Local craft spirits and beer businesses are popping up everywhere, showcasing their artisanal and craft spirits and cocktails. Their mission is to connect enthusiasts and novices alike with a broad selection of amazing spirits and beers. Your party would provide a great setting to educate your guests and provide an interactive experience. Search your local business listings for a craft beer or spirit company.

DECK THE HALLS: ENTERTAINMENT

The days are over when guests would squeeze into a box to take a funny photo.

Photo booths have evolved into cozy vignettes. The concept is to step into a lounge setting, not a box, to take your photo with your friends. You can make this vignette large enough for sizable groups

or small enough to make it intimate. Here's how you can create your custom photo setting. Set up a simple backdrop with drapes and holiday décor. Add a couch with decorative throw pillows. Festive props such as Santa and elves hats, large candy canes, and hand-held signs are sure to be the rage for your holiday party. The signs can be made for marketing purposes or just creative holiday phrases for your party. If you don't have the tools or patience to make the hand-held signs, go to your local craft store to have them made. This photo vignette can be done with a selfie stick or by hiring a professional photographer. If you hire a photo booth company, they give you the option to print the photos onsite for fun guest favors.

'TIS THE SEASON: PARTY FAVORS

Although not necessary, it's a nice gesture to hand out a little something at the end of your party. Consider putting together a breakfast basket for the next morning, for your guests. Add local baked goods, pain reliever tablets, a small bag of coffee beans, and an ornament. A small tag that expresses your appreciation is a lovely added touch. Your local stationery designer can make the small, personalized tags.

PEACE ON EARTH: CHARITABLE EVENTS

While entertaining guests with your stylish, sophisticated holiday party, think about how you can help those who are in need during this time of the year. Ask your guests to bring items for a food or toy drive, or to donate winter clothing. Contact your local churches or charity organizations to set up a direct donation. Ask the charity to provide you with brochures or signs about their organization. This trend will never go out of style.

Remember, creating a festive environment for your holiday party will ensure your guests will have memorable time. Holiday parties are successful when you keep the vibe flowing throughout the event. Whether you decide to feature food trucks, or your local craft beer enthusiast—adding elements of surprise to your party will keep your guests entertained during this festive season. Happy holidays! 🍷

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