

46 ways to leave 2020 behind: Chicago restaurants dishing out New Year's Eve specials that bring the party home

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Rarely in modern history have so many been so eager to leave behind an old year and greet the new. Chicago-area restaurants have revelers in mind for New Year's Eve on Thursday with meal kits, appetizer spreads, signature cocktails, bubbly and party favors to keep things festive while remaining safe. With indoor dining shut down in the state, some area restaurants have been overwhelmed with orders during the holiday rush.

Here are some tips restaurant owners have offered to make ordering takeout smoother: Order well in advance. Call to place the order and pick it up yourself. Don't call several times to make changes. Check the order and pickup dates and times. Remember to tip. If you're doing a curbside pickup, leave a tip between 10% to 20% in a clearly marked envelope in your trunk.

Now that you've read up, here are 50 Chicago-area spots offering specials for New Year's Eve.

Azul Mariscos + Muelle

Ring in the New Year a few hours early with a Latin American-inspired countdown at 10 p.m. (the restaurant will close at 11 p.m. in compliance with city COVID-19 restrictions). The festive night on the heated, tented patio will feature a three-course prix fixe dine-in menu, with options ranging from a surf-and-turf with grilled skirt steak and a choice of jumbo shrimp, lobster or king crab legs; to seafood-stuffed pineapple. Guests can also choose a seafood platter piled with crab legs, lobster, prawns and shrimp starting at \$350. For those celebrating at home, pick up lobster empanadas with chipotle aioli and elotes, plus chips, salsa and guacamole for \$29. The full to-go cocktail menu can be found online for a delicious toast to the new year. Prix fixe dinner from \$40. *1177 N. Elston Ave., 773-770-3766, azulmariscos.com*