

Ring in the new year with a 'Mocktail'

31 December 2020, by Thor Christensen



WEDNESDAY, Dec. 30, 2020 (American Heart Association News)—At a time when many people are stress-drinking, a New Year's Eve sangria that's alcohol-free is a healthy way to say farewell to 2020.

Filled with vitamins and fiber, this [fresh fruit](#) "mocktail" recipe is a nutritious alternative to what people usually drink before and after singing "Auld Lang Syne."

"It's got benefits that make it a better choice than a [glass of wine](#) or beer or a mixed drink," said Catherine Champagne, a professor of nutritional epidemiology at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Sipping an alcoholic drink or two is a time-honored holiday tradition. But [excessive drinking](#) can weaken the immune system and increase the risk of liver disease, certain cancers and heart damage, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. It also affects brain functions like rational thinking, an important factor in following safety guidance to stop the spread of

COVID-19.

A glass of alcohol-free sangria, on the other hand, offers a wide range of vitamins, including C and K, and antioxidants like beta carotene.

"It also has a ton of potassium, which is one of the hallmarks of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which is good for lowering blood pressure," Champagne said. "Potassium is not something you would necessarily find in an [alcoholic drink](#) or even a soda."

The fresh fruit sangria calls for either 3 cups of unsweetened cranberry and apple [juice](#) blend or 2 cups of 100% cranberry juice and 1 cup unsweetened apple juice.

Just make sure to choose 100% cranberry juice with no [added sugar](#), Champagne said. "You don't want any added cane sugar, [high fructose corn syrup](#) or any other sugar that isn't associated with the fruit itself." Added sugars lack nutrients and add calories that can lead to weight gain, obesity and other [health problems](#).

Thanks to the berries and chopped apples in the recipe, each glass of sangria has more than 2 grams of fiber—a small but significant step in reaching the recommended amount of daily fiber, which varies by age and sex. For example, federal dietary guidelines advise women in their 30s and 40s to get about 25 grams a day, while men in the same age group should get about 31 grams a day.

So, grab a spoon and eat every last bite of fruit after you've finished the juice, Champagne said.

"Fiber is important for good colon and cardiovascular health, and the average American diet does not contain enough of it."

Fresh Fruit Sangria

- 3 cups unsweetened cranberry apple juice blend OR 2 cups 100% [cranberry juice](#) and

- 1 cup unsweetened apple juice
- 1 cup sparkling water (chilled)
- 1 small apple
- 1/2 cup raspberries
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1 small lemon (cut into 8 slices)
- 1 small lime (cut into 8 slices)
- 1 cup crushed ice

In a small pitcher or other container with a pouring spout, stir the juice and sparkling water.

In a small bowl, gently stir the apple, raspberries and blueberries. Spoon into glasses.

Place 2 lemon slices and 2 lime slices into each glass. Spoon the ice over the fruit. Pour in the juice mixture.

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