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9 Tips for a Last-Minute Russian New Year's Celebration

By The Moscow Times

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With the New Year only hours away you'd better make sure you're well prepared.

Here's a list of 9 tips to guide you through those last stressful hours of last-minute preparations before you can say " S nastupayushim!"

1. Be generous.

Pascal Dumont / For MT

New Year's Eve is the ultimate occasion for giving gifts in Russia so forget about last year's resolve to limit your spending. Most Russians skip Christmas, a legacy of the secularization of certain holidays under Soviet rule, but Father Frost is just as generous as Santa.

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Traditional gifts are sweets, chocolates, champagne, or keep an eye out for unexpected bargains.

2. Stock up on fireworks.

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Ring in the New Year with a bang and get yourself some pyrotechnics, preferably ones that are illegal elsewhere (taking the necessary safety precautions, of course!)

3. More is more when it comes to mandarins.

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Mandarins are a must on any New Year's dinner table, plus they'll also give you a much-needed Vitamin C boost to help you recover from your hangover the next day (see tip 5 below).

4. Meet the New Year with meat.

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For most Russians, no New Year's dinner is complete without a meat dish, preferably roast duck.

5. This is not the night to stay sober.

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Prepare some toasts ahead of time (there will be many) and say yes to the bottle.

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6. You can have your cake and eat it too.

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Take advantage of the fact that New Year's resolutions don't count before midnight and stock up on calories. You'll need them to get through the harsh Russian winter.

7. Pickle wisely.

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They might not make your mouth water right now, but after a couple of drinks you'll feel good about eating something akin to a vegetable.

8. Red caviar.

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How many of your foreign friends get to say they spent New Year's "drinking champagne and eating caviar"?

9. They look like Christmas trees...

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But Russians will tell you they are actually New Year trees.

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Or face the fact that your tree will never be able to compete with the pros and head to the nearest mall.

Happy 2014!

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