



INNOVATIVE
STRATEGIC
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**WESTCHESTER
WOMEN**
MAGAZINE

FALL 2026

THE ULTIMATE
BACKYARD
TAILGATE



ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

FUTURE
TECHNOLOGY
POSSIBILITIES

CHEF'S
CORNER:
PIZZAGIRLS NY

2026
PARTY & EVENTS
GUIDE

THE AI WOMAN

MEET THE WOMEN EMBRACING AI
AND REDEFINING WHAT'S POSSIBLE



WESTCHESTER WOMEN MAGAZINE

FALL 2026

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CELEBRATE!

The Ultimate Party & Event Guide

There are the big celebrations—the milestone birthdays, anniversaries, bridal showers, weddings and graduations. And then there are the moments that don't necessarily appear on a calendar but are just as meaningful: a family dinner after a long week, a girls' night out, a holiday gathering with friends or a spontaneous celebration simply because life gives you something to smile about.

Whatever the occasion, one thing is certain: you don't have to do it all yourself.

Westchester is filled with talented chefs,

beautiful venues, creative florists and local businesses that make it surprisingly easy to turn an idea into a memorable event. Whether you're hosting an intimate dinner for six or bringing together a crowd of 300, the perfect celebration may be closer—and easier to plan—than you think.

BEGIN WITH THE FOOD

For many of us, food is at the heart of every celebration. It brings people together, starts conversations and creates the memories we remember long after the

plates have been cleared.

And Westchester offers an incredible range of choices.

For a relaxed gathering, a birthday dinner or simply a night when you want someone else to do the cooking, restaurants provide an effortless solution. **The Farm Café** offers a welcoming setting for enjoying good food and good company, while **Mamajuana Café in Hartsdale** brings vibrant Latin flavors and an energetic atmosphere that can make an ordinary dinner feel like a celebration.

If you're looking for something fun and casual, **The Taco Project** can turn a gathering into a festive affair with its crowd-pleasing Mexican-inspired menu. And for lovers of Italian dining, **Il Sorrento** offers the kind of familiar, comforting cuisine that feels right at home around a celebration table.

Want to take your guests somewhere a little different? **Ganso Ramen & Sushi** offers Japanese-inspired favorites that can add an unexpected and exciting element to your event. For those who love bold flavors, **Delicias Peruvian Kitchen** brings the distinctive tastes of Peru to the table and offers catering and private-event services that can make entertaining considerably easier.

And sometimes, the best party is the one you don't have to cook for at all. **Gourmet Express** can help provide delicious food for gatherings when convenience is just as important as flavor. Meanwhile, **Augie's of Larchmont** is a fabulous local option to enjoy great food with family and friends.

The beauty of using local restaurants and caterers is that you can concentrate on what really matters: your guests.

FIND A PLACE WORTH CELEBRATING

Once you've decided what you're serving, the next question is where everyone will gather.



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The right venue can set the entire tone of an event. A beautiful setting can make decorating easier, provide comfortable spaces for guests and take some of the logistical pressure off the host.

For celebrations that call for a little extra elegance, **Harrison Meadows Country Club** offers an appealing setting for everything from intimate gatherings to larger celebrations. With indoor and outdoor event spaces and professional catering and event services, it's an ideal option when you want the surroundings and the details

to feel special without having to coordinate every element yourself.

And don't underestimate the appeal of letting a restaurant become your event venue. A private room or dedicated dining space can be the perfect answer for a milestone birthday, anniversary dinner, shower or corporate gathering—particularly when the food, service and atmosphere are already taken care of.

Sometimes, the easiest way to host is simply to reserve a table and let the professionals handle the rest.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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The Ultimate Party & Event Guide

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FLOWERS MAKE THE MOMENT

Then there are the flowers.

Few things can transform a celebration quite as quickly as beautiful floral arrangements. A vase of seasonal blooms can make a dinner table feel instantly special, while dramatic arrangements can turn a venue into a completely different space.

For weddings, showers, birthdays, anniversaries and holiday entertaining, **Artistic Manner Flower Shop** can help bring a floral vision to life with arrangements designed specifically for the occasion. Whether your style is classic and elegant,

colorful and playful or sophisticated and understated, flowers offer one of the easiest ways to personalize an event.

Eye Candy Florals provides another creative resource for making celebrations memorable. From eye-catching centerpieces to arrangements designed to complement a particular theme, flowers can become more than decoration—they can become part of the experience.

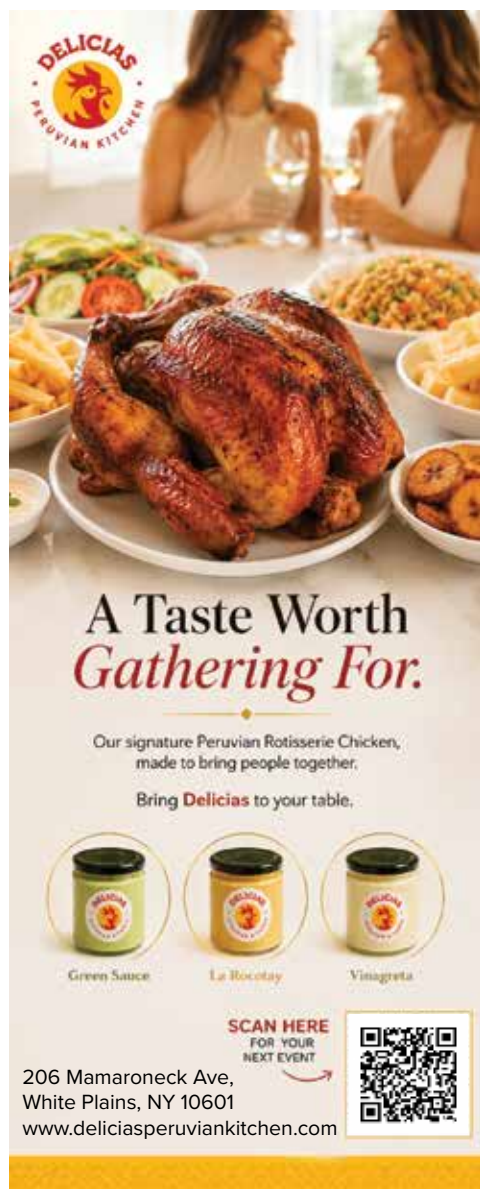
And don't be afraid to think beyond traditional centerpieces. Flowers can welcome guests at the entrance, dress up a cocktail table, highlight a dessert station or add a beautiful finishing touch to a gift table. Even a small arrangement can make an everyday space feel celebration-ready.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

Once the venue, food and flowers are in place, it's the little details that bring everything together.

A beautifully set table. A signature cocktail. Personalized place cards. Candles glowing as the sun goes down. A favorite dessert. Music that gets everyone talking—and eventually dancing.

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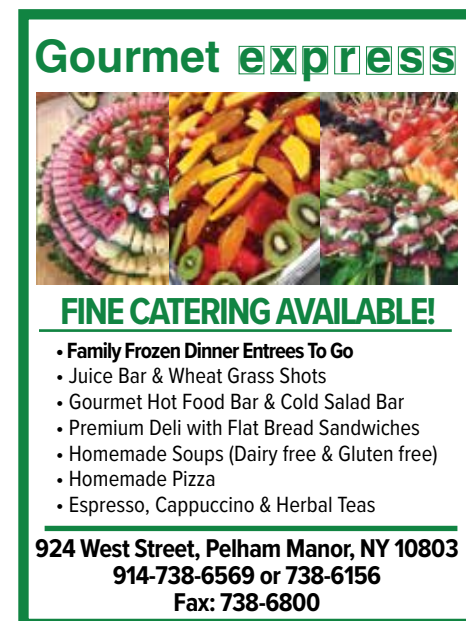


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distinctive to add to your gathering.

The goal isn't perfection. It's creating an atmosphere where people feel welcome.

MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF

Perhaps the most important lesson when planning any celebration is this: you are allowed to enjoy your own party.

Too often, women become the planners, shoppers, decorators, cooks, servers and cleanup crew—all while trying to socialize with their guests. But today's celebration doesn't have to work that way.

Westchester's restaurants, caterers, event venues and florists make it possible to hand off many of those responsibilities to professionals who do this every day. Instead of spending days in the kitchen, you can spend that time choosing the perfect invitation. Instead of worrying about whether the food will be ready on time, you can be getting dressed. Instead of arranging flowers at midnight, you can actually enjoy the celebration.

And isn't that what a party should be?

YOUR OCCASION. YOUR STYLE. YOUR CELEBRATION.

Whether you're planning an intimate family gathering, a milestone birthday, a

sophisticated shower, a holiday party or a once-in-a-lifetime celebration, there is no single formula for making it memorable.

Maybe it's an elegant dinner at **Harri-son Meadows Country Club**. Maybe it's tacos and margaritas with friends from **The Taco Project**. Perhaps it's Peruvian flavors from **Delicias Peruvian Kitchen**, sushi and ramen from **Ganso Ramen & Sushi**, Italian favorites from **Il Sorrento**, or a relaxed gathering at one of Westchester's many neighborhood restaurants.

Add beautiful flowers from **Artistic Manner Flower Shop** or **Eye Candy Florals**, delicious extras from **Rye Country**

Store, and the convenience of local catering from **Gourmet Express**, and suddenly the pieces begin to fall into place.

That's the wonderful thing about celebrating in Westchester: you don't have to look far to find people who can help make your occasion special.

So open your calendar, gather your favorite people and start planning. The next celebration doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be yours.

Because life's best moments deserve to be celebrated—and Westchester makes it easy to celebrate them well.

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MEET THE WOMEN
EMBRACING AI
AND REDEFINING
WHAT'S POSSIBLE

BY LAUREN HURWITZ

If you've spent any time online recently, you've likely been bombarded with headlines about Artificial Intelligence. From warnings about job displacement to complex technical jargon, the conversation surrounding AI can feel overwhelmingly intense. But right here in Westchester, local women are adopting AI not as a threat or a party trick, but as an indispensable tool for daily life...and it's not too late to embrace it!

"The intimidation usually isn't about the technology - it's about not knowing what to ask or being afraid of doing something wrong," says Donna Cravotta, a Mt. Kisco - based AI visibility strategist and founder of Cravotta Media Group. "You cannot break anything, and AI has no judgment. Start with something small and real about your own life. Talk to it like you'd talk to a smart friend who happens to know a lot."

Rachel Dooley, Chief Innovation Officer at Kirkland & Ellis agrees that we are living through a unique cultural moment. "This is the most exciting period of knowledge development in modern history," Dooley says. "Everyone needs to learn these skills for the future, both personal and professional, and we are still in early innings. It's a learn-by-doing moment."

For busy Westchester women balancing careers, family calendars, household management, and personal pursuits, AI isn't replacing human effort but rather lightening the mental load.

REAL WOMEN, REAL SOLUTIONS

In New Rochelle, Dana O'Malley, owner of Kindred Public Relations, relies on AI as her daily "chief of staff." Every morning, she uses AI to synthesize her calendar, to-do lists, and client deliverables into a single, cohesive briefing so she can jump straight into her day without opening a dozen tabs. At home, she uses it to turn chaotic weeknight schedules into structured family meal plans and auto-generated grocery lists, drastically cutting down on food waste and dinner stress.

"It's also my first stop for practical household advice," O'Malley notes, using AI for everything from troubleshooting home repairs and planning kids' birthday parties to researching vacation itineraries. Professionally, she leverages tools like Claude to brainstorm creative story angles and polish media pitches, freeing up energy for high-touch client work.

For small business owners, AI is proving to be the ultimate equalizer. Melissa Panszi Riebe, a New Rochelle resident who works in Dobbs Ferry as the founder of A D'Zine jewelry and the Make Your Mark[et] pop-up marketplace, uses AI as a virtual co-worker.

"As a solopreneur running two businesses, AI gives me a sounding board and strategic partner," Panszi Riebe explains. "The game-changer for me was finding an AI platform built to preserve your authentic voice, specifically MyStoryPro AI, created by a woman-led team. It takes the

guesswork out of back-office operations, translates complex sales analytics into actionable insights, and helps me spot industry trends without losing my human touch."

WHAT AI CAN AND CANNOT REPLACE

As more women bring AI into their routines, a common question arises: where does the machine end and the human begin?

According to Dooley, the line is surprisingly clear. "AI is trained on a massive amount of data, but it treats everything as largely equal until a person tells it what matters," she explains. "That requires taste, judgment, and the ability to weigh facts against context. That will always be human and irreplaceable."

Rather than asking AI to do the thinking for you, experts suggest using it to challenge and refine your own thought process. Two of Dooley's favorite prompts when working through a creative or business problem are simple: "Tell me why this is wrong" and "Ask me questions to help you understand how I'm thinking about this so you can explain an angle I'm missing."

Cravotta recommends starting small with everyday friction points where AI can digest confusing information for you. For instance, uploading complex insurance provider lists or medical group options lets the tool quickly filter which doctors fit your network and criteria. You can also use it to draft quick queries for household fixes, find recipe ingredient swaps, or research local activities. Voice-to-text features on apps like ChatGPT or Claude are especially useful while driving or walking, offering a hands-free way to talk through ideas, outline emails, or organize a list of messy thoughts before you even sit down at your desk.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you're ready to let AI simplify your daily routine, the key is to speak naturally and forget rigid coding commands; the best prompts simply read like a warm conversation with a capable assistant. Give the tool context about who you are, what your goal is, and how you want the output formatted, whether that means asking for a bulleted weekend party checklist or a brief summary of a long document. Remember that you don't have to settle for the first answer but treat initial responses as rough drafts and iterate by asking the tool to make things shorter, warmer, or more concise.

Crucially, while AI provides the structural foundation for your work and life, you provide the soul. Never input sensitive personal data like financial account numbers or private medical records into public models, and always edit the final output so your unique perspective shines through. At its core, AI isn't about automating away our daily lives—it's about buying back our most valuable resource: time. By handing off administrative strain, routine scheduling, and initial drafting to AI, Westchester women are making more room for what truly matters: creativity, community, and connection.





chefscorner_ny

PizzaGirls NY

From a Brick Oven to a Dream in Mount Kisco

BY LILIAN PEÑA



What happens when two women are handed a brick oven they don't know how to use? For Natalia and Laura, the answer was simple – **they figured it out!** Sometimes the biggest dreams don't arrive with a loud announcement.

PizzaGirls NY began when Natalia Cardona and Laura Arias were offered a brick oven someone no longer wanted. They couldn't turn down the opportunity, even though they had no idea what they were doing. They experimented, learned, failed, laughed and kept going until the pizzas got better and even better! Eventually, what started as a curiosity and an unexpected opportunity has become a business.

If you had told Natalia and Laura at 15 years old that one day they would own a pizza business together, their answer would probably have been the same one Natalia gave us with a laugh: **"Craziness."** Neither woman set out to become a pizza maker, let alone build a women-powered business in an industry traditionally dominated by men.

Today, PizzaGirls NY has grown from two women figuring things out as they went into a women-owned business with a team of nine, three food truck ovens, permanent collaborations, pop-ups, farmers markets, private events and workshops. Now, the story is coming full circle as the women prepare to open their own brick-and-mortar restaurant in

the very town that has been part of their journey from the beginning, Mount Kisco. For Natalia, Mount Kisco isn't just another location. **It's home.**

Sometimes the best stories aren't planned. Their story is about much more than pizza.

Their approach remains anything but ordinary. PizzaGirls NY create their own recipes, welcomes ideas from their team and cooks with wood instead of gas. In the beginning, Natalia and Laura even collected and cut their own wood! Asking homeowners if they could take fallen trees and even the town after storms.

That determination is part of what makes PizzaGirls NY special – it wasn't glamorous, it wasn't easy, but it was theirs.

It is about **women empowering women.**

What began organically has evolved into a predominantly women-run operation. Neither Natalia nor Laura entered the pizza business thinking about the lack of women in the industry. Natalia believes confidence begins within and they both are so grateful that they were never underestimated. Natalia said if you walk into a room believing you can do something, she said there is little room for someone else to convince you otherwise.

For them, hospitality comes naturally. Natalia believes women often bring a nurturing, motherly instinct into the experience, wanting people to feel comfortable, cared for and happy. That same spirit extends to their staff, their customers, and

their families.

Family is at the heart of everything they do. Natalia's daughters love helping with the pizzas, while Laura's son proudly tells his classmates that his mom and aunt are opening a pizza restaurant – and that it will have the best pizza in the world! Their children aren't simply watching their mothers build a business; they're watching them build an example.

Motherhood has taught Natalia that leadership is also about showing her daughters what is possible. She wants them to see that hard work can bring them somewhere bigger and brighter.

This doesn't mean the journey comes without sacrifice.

Time is the hardest part. There are friends they haven't seen in months and family moments they sometimes miss.

Yet their children remain their motivation and the women make sure their kids always know they're welcome at PizzaGirls NY with open arms.

The partnership between Natalia and Laura is another ingredient in their success. When asked to finish, "I couldn't have built this business without..." they immediately answered, **"each other."** Instantly!

Their secret? Communication, Respect and Support. Some days one brings

They figured it out!



Natalia Cardona and Laura Arias

50 percent and the other supplies the remaining 50. They talk through disagreements, respect one another's ideas and keep pushing forward. Their friendship even has a rule: when they're working, they're working. When work ends, they're family again. Because businesses can come and go, but family remains. The **most beautiful lesson** in their partnership is their reminder to each other; **you don't have to carry everything alone.**

PizzaGirls NY is preparing to open a new restaurant in **Mount Kisco**, a place that holds special meaning for both women. Natalia grew up there, while Laura remembers how warmly the community welcomed her when she came to this country and helped her learn English.

When Natalia spotted the available space, she asked Laura to slow down so she could grab the phone number. They

weren't forcing anything. They simply explored the possibility, and everything seemed to fall into place. As Natalia puts it, it felt like **the stars aligned.**

Their hope for the new space is simple: that everyone who walks through the doors feels loved, comfortable and welcomed. As they grow, they plan to support local businesses by sourcing from local producers whenever possible.

Ask them what success means and the answer goes far beyond great pizza. It is **who they are, what they give their customers and the relationships they build.**

Their food carries memories of their mothers, their childhoods and their families. Natalia's Margarita pizza reminds her of her father and the fragrant basil he grew. Laura's connection to Marinara brings her back to her mother. For Natalia, food is a love language – nourishing the

stomach, heart and mind.

And their advice to women dreaming of starting something of their own? Listen to those who have walked the road before you. Accept help. Let go of any fear. **"Just do it."**

One piece of advice Natalia recently received captures their journey perfectly: **Your last pizza doesn't define you. It's your next one!**

PizzaGirls NY started from zero, an unwanted brick oven, and two determined women willing to learn. Now, their dream is about to have a front door in **the heart of Mount Kisco**. The grand opening date is still one to watch for, but Westchester, keep your eyes open!

The next chapter for PizzaGirls NY may be their most exciting one yet!



*"Your last pizza
doesn't define you.
It's your next one!"*

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By Stephen T. Greenberg, M.D., F.A.C.S. of Greenberg Cosmetic Surgery and Dermatology

When we think about looking good, we often focus on the mirror — smoother skin, brighter eyes, a slimmer waistline, or a refreshed face. But the truth is, the impact goes much deeper than appearance. Looking good isn't just about vanity. Science shows it can actually improve our mental, emotional, and even physical health.

1. Confidence is a Health Booster

When you feel good about how you look, you carry yourself differently. Confidence encourages you to engage socially, speak up at work, and say “yes” to opportunities. Research shows that self-confidence lowers stress, improves relationships, and even helps with career advancement — all of which positively affect your overall health.

2. Stress Reduction and Emotional Wellbeing

Stress is one of the biggest contributors to health issues, from high blood pressure to weakened immunity. Feeling dissatisfied with appearance can increase anxiety, but when you take steps to look your best — whether through skincare, fitness, or aesthetic treatments, stress levels often decline. A calmer mind supports a healthier body.

3. Motivation for Healthy Habits

Looking good often motivates people to maintain good habits. Patients who feel confident after a makeover or treatment are more likely to stick to exercise routines, eat healthier, and avoid harmful behaviors. It becomes a posi-

tive feedback loop: you look better, you feel better, and you keep doing what's good for your body.

4. The Mind-Body Connection

Your mind and body are deeply connected. When you smile at your reflection, your brain releases “feel-good” chemicals like dopamine and serotonin. This isn't just fleeting happiness, it has lasting effects, boosting immunity, improving sleep, and lowering your risk of illness.

5. Beauty as Self-Care

Today, looking good is recognized as a form of self-care. It's not about vanity; it's about valuing yourself. Whether it's investing in skincare, a med spa treatment, a skin cancer screening or a surgical procedure, these choices help people reclaim confidence and feel aligned with their best selves. When you prioritize yourself, every area of your health improves.

The bottom line is looking good isn't superficial, it's transformative. From boosting mental health to encouraging healthier habits, the way you feel about your appearance plays a direct role in how you live, age, and thrive.



If you are considering a cosmetic procedure, understanding both the result and the recovery is essential. Call 844-486-0005 or visit Greenberg-CosmeticSurgery.com to schedule a consultation and learn what a rapid recovery plan can look like for you.

Is Alcohol Good for Your Heart?

For years, many people believed that enjoying a nightly glass of red wine was doing their heart a favor. But new research is telling a different story.

"If you're over 40 and want to do one simple thing for your heart, the single most impactful beverage to cut back on—or completely cut out—is alcohol," says White Plains Hospital cardiologist Dr. Erden Goljo.

While an occasional drink may still fit into some people's lifestyle, today's evidence suggests alcohol offers no proven heart benefits—and even moderate drinking may increase the risk of several cardiovascular conditions.

The Myth of the "Heart-Healthy" Glass of Wine

For years, studies suggested moderate alcohol consumption might protect the heart. Researchers now believe those findings were likely influenced by other healthy habits common among light drinkers, such as exercising regularly, eating a healthier diet and having better access to healthcare.

"Alcohol itself doesn't appear to be providing the protection people once thought," says Dr. Goljo. "When researchers account for those other lifestyle factors, the heart benefit disappears."

Alcohol and Irregular Heart Rhythms

One of the strongest links between alcohol and heart health is its connection to atrial fibrillation (AFib), the most common heart rhythm disorder. AFib causes the heart to beat irregular-

ly and can increase the risk of stroke, heart failure and other complications.

Research has found that:

- Even one alcoholic drink a day may increase the risk of developing AFib.
 - Risk continues to climb as alcohol intake increases.
 - People with AFib who reduce or eliminate alcohol have fewer episodes and are more likely to stay in a normal heart rhythm.
- "You may have heard of 'holiday heart syndrome,' episodes of rapid, irregular heartbeat triggered by a night of heavy drinking," says Dr. Goljo. "But the risk isn't limited to binge drinking. Regular, moderate alcohol consumption quietly remodels the heart's upper chambers over time, making them larger and more prone to developing an abnormal rhythm."
- Research has also shown that even light-to-moderate drinking may increase blood pressure over time, another major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.



Alcohol Can Weaken the Heart Muscle

Long-term alcohol use can also damage the heart muscle itself, leading to a condition called alcoholic cardiomyopathy. In this condition, the heart becomes enlarged and weaker, making it harder to pump blood effectively.

While this has traditionally been associated with years of heavy drinking, newer research suggests heart function may begin to change with much lower levels of alcohol than pre-

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THE ULTIMATE BACKYARD TAILGATE

HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR FALL GAME-DAY ENTERTAINING

BY LAUREN HURWITZ

There is something truly unmatched about autumn in Westchester. The air turns crisp, the foliage along the Hudson begins to show off, and football season officially returns. While stadium tailgating has its charm, with a little planning, your backyard can become the ultimate game-day destination—with great food, comfortable seating and all the festive spirit of a classic tailgate.

A backyard tailgate lets you trade unpredictable weather for cozy outdoor blankets, beautifully curated spreads and the comfort of your own patio.

The Culinary Blueprint: Gourmet Meets Manageable

When hosting a game-day gathering, the last place you want to be is stuck in the kitchen. Donna Massaro, trained chef and Co-Owner of Petra Island Tours, believes in high-impact, low-stress planning.

"I start by keeping my shopping list light and my wallet heavy," Donna says. "The trick is to choose two to four main food ingredients and build different, creative recipes around them."

For an easy but elevated menu, Donna suggests shrimp as a multitasking star. Start with classic shrimp cocktail, use some for fresh ceviche, and turn the rest into shrimp tacos. "With those three menu items, you've provided your guests with something familiar, something exotic, and something fun—all using the same base ingredient."

For hearty comfort food, Donna loves vegetarian-friendly stuffed mushrooms and a "design-your-own" hot nacho platter. Melt cheese over chips on large trays and let guests add their own toppings. It encourages conversation around the buffet while accommodating individual tastes.

The Visual Palette: Storytelling with Local Artisans

Once the menu is set, think about the aesthetic. Melissa Panszi Riebe, founder of Make Your Mark[et], believes your tailgate table should reflect your community.

"When you feature pieces from local artisans, they become immediate conversation starters," Melissa explains. "You aren't just talking about a tray or a bowl; you are talking about the talented person in your own neighborhood who hand-crafted it."

Start with handcrafted textiles. Artisanal woven runners warm up an outdoor table, while handwoven baskets are perfect for chips,

napkins and utensils.

To show team spirit without looking tacky, Melissa suggests subtle pops of team colors. Use colorful cornhole bean bags or hand-crafted jewelry as decor. Wrapping napkins and utensils in colorful bracelets can even give guests a wearable party favor.

The Drink Station: Interactive Cocktails & Local Flavors

An elevated tailgate deserves an upgrade from the standard cooler. Both experts agree that an interactive drink station can become the centerpiece of the party.

For a brunch kickoff, Melissa suggests a customized Bloody Mary bar with gourmet toppings such as smoked olives, shrimp, beef jerky and local cheese. For something lighter, create a Prosecco bar with seasonal liqueurs and fresh berries.

Donna recommends eclectic, mismatched glassware and clever serving vessels, such as clear mini margarita cups for individual ceviche servings. And give your signature cocktail a playful game-day name, such as the "Hail Mary Mule."

The Flow of the Space: Designing Your Yard for Kick-Off

Layout is everything. Donna advises drawing a mini-map of your yard before guests arrive.

"Put yourself in your guests' shoes," she says. Place a bench near the entrance for jackets and position the bar nearby. Keep the television central, with the buffet off to the side so it doesn't block the screen. Mix tall tables for standing with a lower lounge area, and make sure everyone has a clear view of the game.

For backyard comfort, Melissa recommends placing natural bug-repellent creams and oils around the yard to help keep mosquitoes at bay.

The Golden Rule of Hosting

For the perfect Westchester backyard tailgate, start early and keep it fun. If you want custom pieces from local artisans, give them time to create them, and explore farmers markets and small boutiques for local talent.

Above all, don't sweat the small stuff. As Donna puts it: "Your energy is in everything you touch at your party. Don't put too much pressure on yourself; you're throwing a celebration with the people you care about. Enjoy every moment."

Women Are Redefining Travel Through Solo and Women-Only Adventures



By, Barbara Nichuals, Bayside Travel

Travel has always been about discovering new places, but for many women today, it is equally about discovering themselves. Women-only travel has become one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism as more women choose to explore independently or with like-minded travelers. Whether joining a guided women's tour or embarking on a solo adventure, female travelers are embracing experiences that offer freedom, personal growth, meaningful friendships, and the confidence to step outside their comfort zones.

For many women, travel is no longer simply a vacation—it is an opportunity for personal growth, self-discovery, and connection. Solo travel provides the freedom to create personal itineraries, pursue individual interests, and travel at one's own pace. Whether exploring museums, hiking scenic trails, sampling local cuisine, or simply enjoying quiet moments, solo travelers have complete control over their experience. Travel can also be an investment in oneself, offering a chance to recharge away from careers, caregiving responsibilities, and everyday routines.

Choosing the right destination can make all the difference for women traveling alone. Iceland consistently ranks among the world's safest countries and offers dramatic landscapes featuring waterfalls, glaciers, volcanoes, and the Northern Lights. Japan is another favorite, known for its respectful culture, reliable public transportation, cleanliness, and women-only train cars in many cities. Costa Rica combines adventure, wellness, and natural beauty with its welcoming "Pura Vida" lifestyle, lush rainforests, beaches, and thriving eco-tourism.

Portugal has become increasingly popular for solo female travelers, offering affordable European travel, historic cities, beautiful coastlines, walkable neighborhoods, and friendly locals. Outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to New Zealand, where spectacular scenery, world-class hiking, low crime rates, and an established tourism network make exploration accessible and rewarding. Together, these destinations demonstrate that solo travel can be both empowering and approachable, helping women discover new cultures while building confidence and independence.

Women-only tours offer many of the same benefits while adding the comfort of companionship and shared experiences. Traveling with like-minded women can reduce the anxiety some travelers feel about going completely

alone. Organized itineraries, knowledgeable guides, and pre-arranged accommodations also allow participants to focus on enjoying their destination rather than managing logistics.

Safety and peace of mind are important factors in the growing popularity of women-only travel. A supportive group can make women feel more comfortable asking questions, trying new activities, and stepping outside their comfort zones. These trips can be particularly meaningful for empty nesters, recent retirees, widows, divorcees, and women celebrating milestone birthdays, who are increasingly using travel to rediscover themselves, pursue new passions, and embrace new chapters of life.

As demand grows, respected tour operators are creating experiences specifically for female travelers. Backroads offers active hiking, cycling, and walking vacations in small groups. Classic Journeys features Women Only Walks combining cultural exploration with local female guides. Aurora Expeditions offers women-only polar voyages featuring expedition cruising and educational programming in Antarctica and the Arctic. Intrepid Travel provides women-only tours offering opportunities to connect with local women, artisans, and entrepreneurs. Abercrombie & Kent periodically features luxury women-only journeys combining five-star accommodations, exclusive cultural experiences, and expert-led exploration.

Women-only travel represents far more than checking destinations off a map—it is about discovery, confidence, and personal growth. Whether taking a first solo adventure or joining a curated group journey, more women are choosing not to wait for the perfect timing or travel companion. They are following their curiosity, embracing new experiences, and creating their own paths. And often, they discover that the greatest rewards of travel extend far beyond the destination itself.



To begin your adventure, call Bayside Travel at 914-833-8880 and visit www.luxurytravelservice.com

Is Alcohol Good for Your Heart?

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viously believed. Some people may also be genetically more susceptible to alcohol-related heart damage.

"The good news is that if it's caught early and you stop drinking, the heart can often recover its pumping strength," says Dr. Goljo.

Should You Stop Drinking?

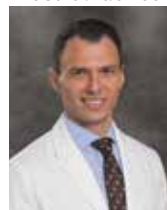
"Not everyone needs to eliminate alcohol completely, but many people could benefit from drinking less," explains Dr. Goljo.

Talk with your healthcare provider about your alcohol intake, especially if you have:

- A history of atrial fibrillation or other heart rhythm problems

- High blood pressure
- Heart failure or a weakened heart muscle
- A family history of heart disease

"If you currently drink, reducing your intake is one of the most evidence-backed steps you can take for heart health,"



says Dr. Goljo. "The goal isn't perfection. It's about making informed decisions based on the best evidence we have today."

Dr. Erden Goljo is a cardiac electrophysiologist with White Plains Hospital Physician Associates who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of heart rhythm disorders. To schedule an appointment, call (914) 849-2690.

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