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IT'S A THING

DRY JANUARY

First there was quitting sugar; then there was going gluten-free. Now "sober-curious" women are starting 2019 with a test-drive of the booze-free lifestyle. Why some are rethinking drinking



Kathy,* who works in the insurance industry, was feeling like she'd had a bit too much holiday merriment. In 2017, she decided to follow a Whole 30-like plan in which she cut out carbs, sugar and alcohol for 30 days. "It felt great," she says. So great that she kept up the no-drinking part for 11 months. "I slept better, woke up feeling better and just felt more grounded overall," she says. These days, she drinks occasionally during the weekend. "I enjoy drinking, but I feel better when I don't drink at all," she says.

SOBER SPRINTS

Abstaining, either for a finite time or indefinitely, seems to be an increasingly popular lifestyle choice, like going vegan. "People don't want to eat kale and work hard at the gym, then undo it all with a drink," says Laura Willoughby, cofounder of Club Soda, which offers online courses and "sober sprints" (forgoing booze for a specified period) as well as alcohol-free gatherings to its 25,000 members worldwide. Other groups offer social events, and there are online sobriety "schools," such as Tempest and Soberistas, for people who are concerned that their drinking is a problem, but for whom Alcoholics Anonymous doesn't feel right. They offer a more gradual

approach, if that's what's called for. "We don't expect people to go from a bad relationship with alcohol straight to total sobriety," says Tempest founder Holly Whitaker. "We help people wherever they are in the process."

MINDFUL DRINKING

Many Dry January participants simply want to see how their bodies feel when they don't imbibe, and some say they drink much less after taking a break, because they're more aware. "Just like mindful eating—where you pay attention to what you're consuming in a way that increases enjoyment and gives the body time to send signals that say *That's enough*—it makes sense to listen to what your body is telling you when you drink," says John W. Denninger, M.D., Ph.D., director of research at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Carol, a marketing consultant whose month off stretched to almost a year, says she feels too good to uncork her nightly wine habit again. "I used to think not drinking was temporary, but I'm going to keep it up," she says. "I love that I am saving money and can eat what I want now that I'm not taking in those empty calories. It's mentally freeing." — *Paula Darrow*

Cheers to Mocktails!

These refreshing no-alcohol bevies are as delicious as your favorite mixed drinks (for a fraction of the calories). Happy New Year!



TOST

Pour this festive fizz into a flute. Made with carbonated water, tea, cranberry concentrate and agave, it's the bubbly you crave for only 45 calories a cup (the same amount of traditional Champagne has as many as 180).



BAI

Many mixed drinks contain simple syrup (sugar dissolved in water). Bai beverages contain erythritol, a sugar alcohol that's lower in calories but packed with sweetness. The Bubbles Waikiki Coconut Lime flavor tastes like a mojito and has just 5 calories.



BE MIXED

Blend or stir these sugar-free, single-serve liquid mixers—you can choose ginger lime, cucumber mint or margarita flavor—with ice for a refreshing nonalcoholic drink that won't give you a sugar crash.

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