

New Year Traditions Around the World

Seven unusual New Year traditions that will give your family's celebration a fun twist!



In the United States, they celebrate New Year's Eve by watching a ball drop and blowing horns. But around the world, people do all sorts of quirky things to ring in the New Year. We've gathered eight unusual customs that'll entertain you:

Drink Wishes

In lieu of resolutions, Russians focus on wishes. One tradition is to write your New Year's wish on a scrap of paper (the smaller the better!) at midnight, set it on fire, and drop the smouldering remains into your drink. For your wish to come true, the contents of your glass, ashes and all, must be gulped down before the clock strikes 12:01 a.m.!

Eat Grapes

The Spanish make sure to have a bunch of grapes on hand on New Year's Eve. Known as "Las Doce Uvas de la Suerte" ("The Twelve Grapes of Luck,") they eat one grape per chime of Madrid's Puerta del Sol clock tower at midnight. That is a lot of fast chewing! Also followed by Mexico and other former Spanish colonies, this tradition is believed to bring prosperity and chase away evil spirits. Want to try this with the kids (especially ones under 4)? Be sure to halve or quarter the grapes first.

Don Lucky Undies

Pull on a pair of festive underwear to ring in the New Year! In Italy and Spain, scarlet skivvies are thought to bring good luck. In Venezuela, they believe yellow ones will bring money. Can't hurt to try!

Pass on a Pig

In Germany, swine are swapped to celebrate New Year's Eve. Known as "Glücksschwein" ("Lucky Pig"), these little piggies are made of marzipan — a type of candy made from almond meal. Consuming the treats is thought to bring good luck for the coming year. If you can't find pig-shaped candy, try this tradition with cookie cut-outs.

Go Dotty!

In the Philippines, they go crazy for circles! In anticipation of the New Year, people dress in polka-dots or other circular patterns; the roundness is thought to bring prosperity.

Take a Step

In Scotland, people celebrate Hogmanay (the word for the last day of the year) with the practice of first-footing. The custom involves being the first person to cross the threshold of a friend or neighbour's house and giving a symbolic gift. The gift can include a coin for prosperity, bread for food, salt for flavour, coal for warmth, or a drink for cheer.

Grab a Suitcase

Hoping to squeeze a holiday into the New Year? In some Latin American countries, it's believed that carrying a suitcase in a circle will increase your chances of taking a trip. So if you're eager to jet-set, take your suitcase out of the closet and run around your block or house as fast as you can when the clock strikes 12.

New Year traditions from around the world.

1) Find and copy a phrase which means 'gathered.'

2) How is New Year's Eve celebrated in the US?

3) What do Russian's do with paper at New Year?

4) List two countries where grapes are a feature of New Year's celebrations.

_____ and _____

5) Which colour of underwear is thought to bring money?

6) What is the correct name for the Lucky Pigs eaten in Germany?

7) Why do you think people hope for things like wealth and holidays when celebrating the New Year?

8) Did you make a New Year's wish this year? What did you wish for?

9) Do you think the grape tradition was the best choice for illustrating this article?



- If yes, explain why.
- If no, explain which you would have chosen instead and why.

10) Write a short review of this article. Was it an enjoyable read? Why?
