

# New Year traditions from cultures around the world

On the night of December 31 and the morning of January 1, people in many countries celebrated the beginning of the New Year.



## Spain: Grapes for good luck

In Spain, people eat 12 grapes on December 31, at midnight, a tradition that started back in the late 19th century. The custom was originally thought up by vine growers to sell more grapes at the end of the year, but it stuck! Spaniards eat one grape with each bell stroke, which is believed to result in good fortune.

## China: Red for good luck



Red is a colour that denotes good fortune and happiness in China, it's a hue that's often attached to New Year. You'll spot decorations, fans, gift packets and lanterns in shades of red.

## Greece: Smashing Pomegranates



No matter what time of the year



it is, pomegranates are very important in Greece. In Greek mythology, the fruit represents abundance and life. Just after midnight, Greeks crush pomegranates against their doors—the number of seeds that fall to the ground symbolise how much good luck you can expect in the New Year.

## Columbia: Three Potatoes



On New Year's Eve, Colombians place one peeled, one unpeeled, and one half-peeled potato under their beds. When the clock strikes midnight, they pull out the first potato their hand touches, and the potatoes symbolise different things: a peeled potato means financial ruin. An unpeeled potato promises a good year all around. And a half-peeled potato is a mix of good and bad for the year.



## Sri Lanka: Eating Milk Rice Kiribath



Milk Rice Kiribath, a traditional Sri Lankan dish, symbolises good luck and happiness. Most Sri Lankans start January 1, with milk rice for breakfast in the hope of starting the year with good luck. It is consumed as the first meal of the year. Sri Lankans visit their nearest religious shrine. Religious shrines hold a number of religious activities on this day, including *poojas* and special prayers for devotees.

## Denmark: Throwing old plates

Chucking plates at your friends usually signals a conversation gone very wrong. In Denmark, however,



New Year's Eve traditions like this bring your loved ones the best of luck. Tradition has it that the more broken kitchenware you accumulate on your door step, the better off you'll be.

## India: Building a sculpture of an old man and burning it down

India: People in India make an effigy of an 'old man' that symbolised the old year and burn it at midnight. The burning symbolises the passing of grievances from the old year and makes space for a new year to be born.



## Japan: Soba Noodles



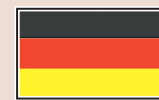
In Japan, people welcome the New Year by eating bowls of soba noodles, or noodles made from buckwheat flour. They're nicknamed 'year-crossing noodles,' and while the origins of this tradition aren't exactly known, generally, people believe that the long noodles represent a long life.



## Brazil: Tossing White Flowers in the Ocean

Brazilians have a custom of throwing white flowers into the sea each new year. Residents will toss flowers and candles into the Atlantic Ocean as offerings to Yemoja, the God of Water who can pass along good things in the upcoming year.

## Germany: Lucky Pig



Pigs and the New Year.

There's actually a connection between the two. Germans call this custom *Glücksschwein*, which translates to 'Lucky Pig.'

Pigs appear as marzipan treats, and noshing on them can foster good fortune in the New Year.



## Norway: Celebrating with a towering cake



Kransekake, a traditional ringed cake often made with at least 18 layers, is eaten in Norway on New Year's Eve. The sugary layers, which look like cookies, are held together with a tasty royal icing.



## England: Listening to Big Ben's bells toll



On New Year's Eve, it's traditional

for British households to gather waiting for the bells of Big Ben, the clocktower at the Houses of Parliament, to ring in the New Year as midnight strikes. As the bells toll, don't be surprised if a huge circle forms, people link hands, and start singing a traditional song called 'Auld Lang Syne'.

Source: [www.glamour.com](http://www.glamour.com)  
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