

Happy
New
Year!



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Custom: An accepted practice of a community or people; the usual manner of doing something -
Webster's Dictionary, 1998

People around the world celebrate the New Year in different ways and at different times. This is because people use different calendars. A long time ago people divided time into days, months, and years. Some calendars were based on the movement of the sun, some were based on the movement of the moon, and some were based on both. All over the world there are special customs or traditions people use to celebrate the New Year.

Here in the United States we celebrate on Jan. 1 with fireworks, parties, football, and parades. Some people believe you should eat collard greens for wealth and black-eyed peas for good luck. At the stroke of midnight, we usually sing an old Scottish song by the poet Robert Burns called "Auld Lang Syne" or Old Long Since - meaning reflecting upon days gone by. Here is a list of a few other customs around the world...Not always on January 1st!

Japan- Jan. 1 "Shougatsu" Children look forward to this day because parents and relatives give them money. Families eat special dishes and go to shrines to pray for a prosperous New Year.

Spain- Jan. 1 "Año Nuevo" At midnight, everyone eats twelve grapes for good luck. People also throw water out the window (throw out bad luck).

Mexico-Jan. 1 "Año Nuevo" It is customary to walk around the block with a suitcase.

Argentina-Jan. 1 "Año Nuevo" Most people go swimming!

Brazil-Jan. 1 People wear white for good luck, go to the beach, and watch fireworks.

Columbia-Jan. 1 People stuff a doll with fireworks and things which they don't want that give them sadness or bad memories. At midnight, they set it on fire.

Canada-Jan. 1 There is a customary "Polar Bear Swim"! BRRRRRRR

China- around Feb. 10 People eat dried pumpkin seeds, watch dragon dances, eat a meatless dinner for good luck, and children get money in red envelopes. Fireworks are supposed to scare away evil spirits. People wish each other "Kung Hey Fat Choy" or Happy New Year! All the lights are supposed to be on in the house to represent warmth and friendship.

Vietnam-Feb. 10 "TET" Ladies wear red and yellow and the men wear black. People go to temple first, then eat earth cake, which is made out of rice, beans, and pork. Children get red envelopes with money like in China, but they also give their teachers red envelopes with money. If the teacher refuses to take it, it is an insult!

Iran-Mar. 21 "Nowrouz" Children get New Year's presents, and many kinds of cookies are specially arranged on tables in every home. (and eaten!)

Israel-Oct. 1 "Rosh Hashanah" People eat apples dipped in honey and pray that the new year will be a sweet one. Some people eat a fruit called a pomegranate (so they would multiply) and a fish head (so they would be leaders, not followers) They also eat a sweet round loaf of bread called challa, symbolizing a full cycle of life.

India-end of Oct. "Diwali" or "Festival of Lights" People light oil lamps and candles to ward off bad spirits

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People around the world celebrate the New Year in different ways and at different times and have different *customs*. This is because people use different calendars. A long time ago people divided time into days, months, and years. Some calendars were based on the movement of the sun, some were based on the movement of the moon, and some were based on both. All over the world there are special customs or traditions people use to celebrate the New Year. Here in the United States we celebrate on Jan. 1 with fireworks, parties, football, and parades. Some people believe you should eat collard greens for wealth and black-eyed peas for good luck. At the stroke of midnight, we usually sing an old Scottish song by the poet Robert Burns called "Auld Lang Syne" or "Old Long Since"...meaning reflecting upon days gone by. Here is a list of a few other customs around the world...Not always on January 1st!

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Mexico-Jan. 1 "Año Nuevo" It is customary to walk around the block with an empty suitcase, to bring new adventures and travel in the New Year.

Argentina-Jan. 1 "Año Nuevo" Most people go swimming! It is summer here!

Brazil-Jan. 1 People wear white for good luck, go to the beach, and watch fireworks.

Columbia-Jan. 1 People stuff a doll with fireworks and things which they don't want that give them sadness or bad memories. At midnight, they set it on fire.

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Name _____ Date _____

New Year Customs Around the World Quiz

1. In India, the Festival of Lights is held in which month?

2. In which country is it customary to have a Polar Bear Swim on January 1st?

3. Where do they set a doll on fire? _____
4. People wear white for good luck and go to the beach in which country?

5. On Rosh Hoshanah, apples are dipped in honey for a sweet New Year.
Where and when does this custom take place?

6. TET is the name of the holiday where children give their teachers red envelopes with money. Where and when does this custom take place?

7. Where do they eat twelve grapes at midnight?

8. What kind of sweet food do children get in Iran at Nowrouz? On what date? _____
9. Dragons and fireworks scare away evil spirits in which country?

10. What do they do in Mexico to ring in the New Year?

BONUS: DO YOU CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR IN A SPECIAL WAY? HOW?

