

NEW YEAR'S

Around the World

Brazil

Brazilians, as well as a few other cultures, are known to wear white on New Year's Eve in hopes to ward off evil spirits, bring luck, and attract a sense of wealth. The symbolism of wearing white on New Year's Eve came from an African religion, Candomblé, whose followers always wore white clothes to deliver offerings before midnight to the queen of the sea, Iemanjá — an African deity originally from Nigeria. Along with this tradition, white roses are often used on New Year's Eve as an offering to the deity to attract love, often being placed on open water during the night of events. Brazilians use this as a celebration where they enjoy cultural foods and music with family and friends.



China

The Lunar New Year is often celebrated in the Chinese and other east Asian cultures for fifteen days straight, a tradition that dates back almost 4,000 years. The new year begins on the first new moon on the lunar calendar and ends on a full moon. Family and close friends exchange gifts, decorate their homes together, attend festivals, and exchange red envelopes filled with money or small gifts. In Chinese tradition, red is a symbol of good fortune and wealth, often being used as the main color for decorations. Paper lanterns originated from the Han Dynasty and were often made of rice paper, being used as night lights that evolved into a decorative talking piece. These lanterns are also often made in the color red, lighting the way for a bright new year full of fortuity.



Colombia

If a year full of travel and adventure is something on your 2024 bucket list, the Colombian tradition of carrying suitcases may sound interesting to you! As soon as the clock strikes midnight, grab your suitcase and run one lap around the block. Your luggage of choice does not have to be full, which makes your route easier to walk (some people even run!).



Denmark

Denmark is considered to have one of the most bizarre New Year's Eve traditions in the world. When the clock strikes twelve, citizens grab old plates and glasses for a night of glass breaking. Going around to the homes of family and friends, these dining tools are thrown at the front door as a sign of bringing luck to whoever is in the home. This tradition originated from ancient Greek influence, who used plate smashing as a symbol of the ending of times, but the beginning of something new. It is a known rumor in Danish culture that the larger your pile of broken dishes is, the more popular you are to those you love.



Ecuador

"El Año Nuevo" (the New Year) is a reference often made in Latin culture to summarize a year of old habits and memories. In Ecuador, the old year is sent off by the burning of effigies- a paper Mache model of a person or figure made to be destroyed, typically by fire. The Tradition is said to date back to the yellow fever epidemic, in which the clothes of those who died from the disease were burned as a purification rite. Once the epidemic cleared, the tradition was eventually changed into a positive one- symbolizing a cleansing of the old year before the new one. These effigies can often take the shape of famous icons, animals, politicians, and fantastical creatures painted in varieties of bright colors.



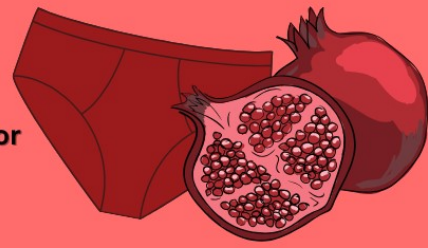
Greece

For many people in the world, New Year's is looked at as a time that brings about a feeling of renewal, and the same is true in Greece. The ancient Greeks are the route to many cultural traditions, one example being the hanging of onions on New Year's Eve outside of your home. This symbolizes growth and rebirth because onions are known to grow in almost any condition regardless of if they are being cared for or not. Along with this custom, a bread consisting of Romano Cheese and cinnamon named Vasilopita is typically made to be eaten on New Year's Day, typically baked with a silver or gold coin inside. It is said whoever finds the coin shall be the most blessed and enjoy a year full of luck.



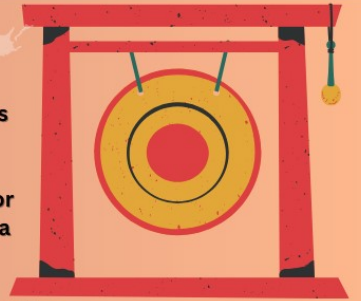
Italy

In many countries, as well as Italy, Pomegranates are a known symbol for fortune and prosperity. During preparations for the New Years Eve festivities, Poms are placed throughout the dinner table. The color of the fruit is also associated with feelings of love or passion, emotions many people seek going into the new year. Along with this color symbolism, people often wear red undergarments in hopes of finding romance or a relationship within the year to follow.



Japan

Oshogatsu, also known as Japanese New Year, typically starts in early December and ends January 1st. The month begins with a decluttering of the home and other environments, especially that of the mental headspace- this process is referred to as Osoji. Throughout this time individuals show appreciation to those they love by sending cards with thoughtful messages and writings. It is said that so many cards are sent during this time that thousands of temporary postal employees are hired each year. Oshogatsu Kazari- or New Years Decorations- are often placed on the front door of homes to attract Toshigami, a God said to visit families every New Year's Day. Just before the clock strikes twelve, a bell is rung or gong is hit exactly 108 times to symbolize the Buddhist belief of cleansing the community of the 108 worldly desires they may have been suffered. This symbolizes a new year with a fresh start.



The Netherlands

Oliebollen- or 'oil balls' - is a Dutch pastry made traditionally on New Years Eve. This pastry consists of small dough balls that are fried on a stove lightly with oil, covered lightly with powdered sugar or cream, and often topped by raisins. Many other countries in Europe make recipes similar to Oliebollen, but reference them by different names like Schmalzkugeln which is used in Belgium and Germany. It is believed Oliebollen was brought to the Netherlands by the Spanish and Portuguese during the Middle-Ages.



Scotland

There is a Scottish custom that refers to the first person who crosses the threshold of a person's home on or after New Year's Day. Since ancient times, families across Scotland have welcomed individuals through their doors with the goal of attracting a better year ahead. The person who takes the first step must usually come bearing gifts, that of which are typically shortbread cookies or whiskey. Hogmanay- a name made by the Scottish for New Year's- consists of a few traditions along with the first footing, one being the torchlit procession. Individuals walk through the streets while holding torches as a way of paying homage to pre-Christian Celtic traditions, some even wear traditional Scottish attire.



Spain

With a New Years similar to that of Italy due to Italy's Spanish influence, many of Spain's traditions are commonly known. For example, traditions such as eating 12 grapes is believed to have originated in the early 1900s due to a group from the city of Madrid who was fed up with the upper class. Extravagant parties were often held during New Years by higher Spanish society, often consuming an exaggerated number of grapes and wine- causing a scarcity. This turn of events led to a protest by the people from the city of Madrid, who stood in front of a building in which a New Year's party had been occurring and protested. When the clock struck midnight, everyone consumed an immense number of grapes as to mock the upper class. The tradition has since changed drastically, especially due to its popularity in many countries. Many now believe eating 12 grapes under a table as soon as the clock strikes twelve can attract a year full of luck and prosperity, but typically are looking to attract love.



Switzerland

Every year on December 31st in Switzerland, ice cream shop lines are out the door as people wait to buy supply for the New Year's festivities. At the stroke of midnight, scoops are dropped on the ground outside as families and neighbors gather for a bit of chaotic fun. This tradition is believed to bring good fortune, laughter, and happiness in the year to come. Though this is not the only event that occurs throughout the evening, it is definitely one of the more out of the ordinary.



United States

Since 1904, Times Square in New York City has been advertised as the center of focus for America's annual New Year's Eve celebration. The tradition of New Years in New York originated from the mind of Adolph Ochs, the owner of the New York Times who looked to celebrate the opening of the Newspapers headquarters at the start of the year. Because the event had a turnout of over 200,000 people, the celebration had evolved into a tradition. Growing in extravagance every year, Ochs commissioned the Time Square Ball in 1907 which weighed around 700 pounds and was made from wood and iron. From that year forward, the ball has been dropped and redesigned many times- now said to measure 6 feet long and weigh more than 11,000 pounds. The most recent ball had been designed by Philips Lighting and Waterford Crystal, allowing the ball to display around 17,000 different patterns. This is why the ball is different every year!

