

# New Year

The New Year begins at midnight when 31st December ends and 1st January begins. It is often seen as an important time where people say goodbye to the past year and welcome in the new year.

But how did this changing of the year come about and how is it celebrated?

## The Gregorian Calendar

The calendar was changed in October 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII, which is why it is called the Gregorian Calendar. The Pope changed the dates of the calendar so that Easter could be celebrated at the time of year it used to be celebrated by the early Church years before.

1st January is also known as the day to commemorate the saints. Other countries and religions celebrate the start of the New Year on different days of the year.

New Year's Eve is also known as Old Year's Day or Saint Sylvester's Day.

## New Year in Mexico

Mexicans celebrate the New Year by eating a grape at the chimes of midnight, whilst making a wish with each chime. Homes are decorated red, yellow, green and white representing the hopes they have for the coming year.

Mexican sweetbread is baked with a charm or a coin inside. The person who gets the coin or charm is said to be blessed with good luck.



Another tradition is to write down all the bad or unhappy things that happened to you during the year, and then throw the list into the fire. This symbolises getting rid of all negative energy.

Because of the time differences around the world, the first country to welcome in the new year is Kiribati. It is in the Line Islands in the Pacific Ocean.



In Brazil, New Year marks the beginning of the summer holidays. There are live concerts, a spectacular fireworks display and millions of revellers on Rio de Janeiro's beach, Copacabana.

### **New Year in Europe**

In Europe, most people celebrate New Year with friends and family, throwing parties or going to pubs and bars. Often fireworks, games and a special meal are part of the celebrations too.

### **New Year in Scotland**

In Scotland, New Year is called Hogmanay. People visit one another's houses and take some unusual gifts, traditionally a coin, bread, salt, coal and whisky. These represent wealth, food, flavour, warmth and good cheer.

In the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, a huge celebration takes place along Princes Street. The cannon is fired at Edinburgh Castle at midnight, then there is a large fireworks display.

### **A Time to Reflect**

New Year is a time to look back on the past year and look forward to the new one. It is a time when people make New Year Resolutions. These give people the chance to try to make changes in their lives. Adults might decide to change their jobs or move house, and children might plan to do their homework, help more around the house or join a club.



# New Year Questions

1. Why is the New Year often seen as an important time?

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2. Why is the calendar known as the Gregorian Calendar?

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3. Why is Kiribati the first country to welcome the New Year?

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4. Identify one other name by which New Year's Eve is known.

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5. Explain one of the traditions that Mexicans might carry out at New Year, and give the reason.

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6. What are the "revellers" on beaches in Brazil?

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7. What is "Hogmanay"?

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8. Why do people celebrating Hogmanay, take unusual gifts to friend's houses?

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9. Describe what happens in Edinburgh?

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10. Why do people make New Year Resolutions?

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