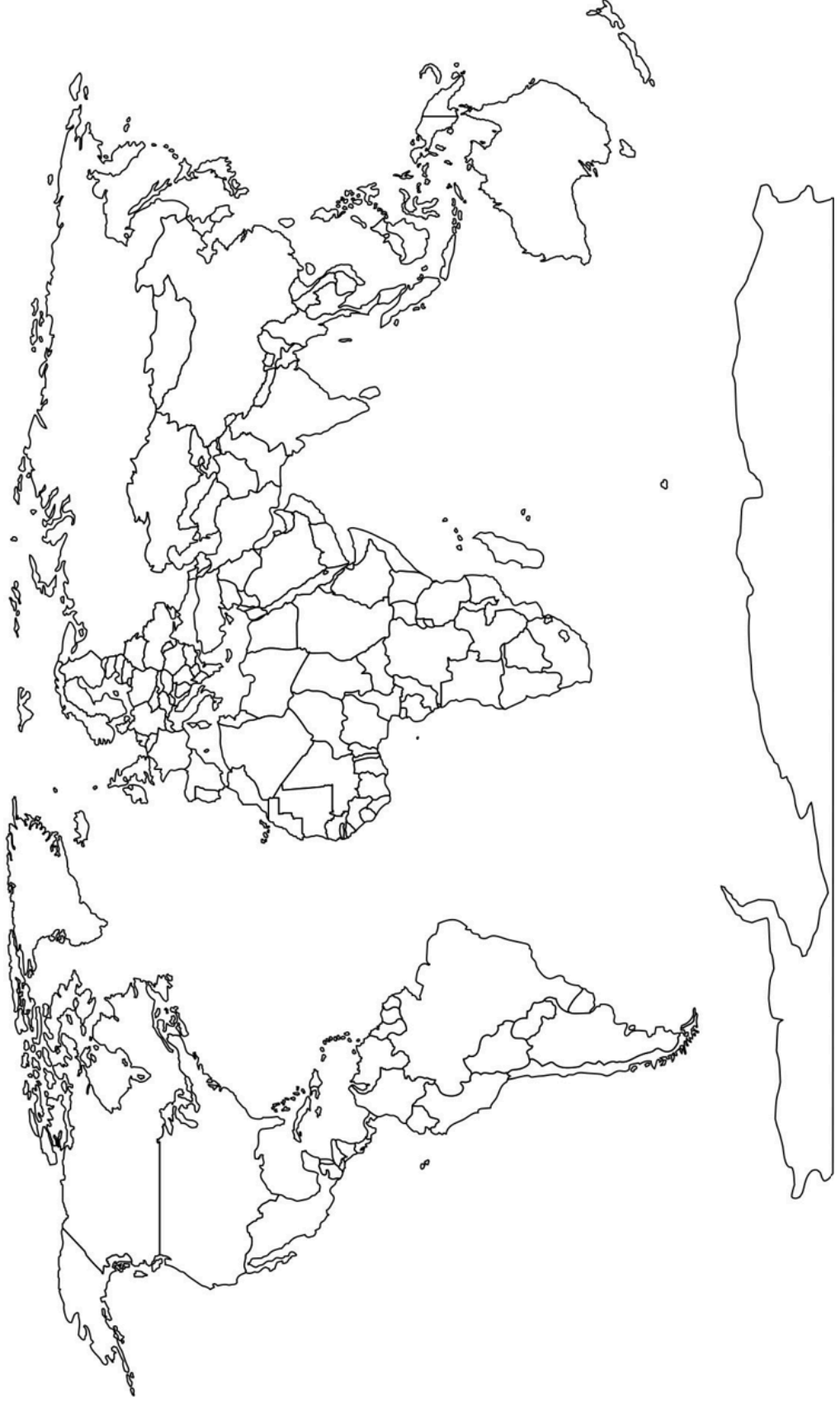


New Year's Traditions from Around the World



We will be studying different countries and their customs as it relates to celebrating the New Year.

World Map



History and General Knowledge of the Many New Year Celebrations

Today you will study the history of the holiday. Please read the following section. You will need to annotate each section.

A History of the New Year: A move from March to January

The celebration of the new year on January 1st is a relatively new phenomenon. The earliest recording of a new year celebration is believed to have been in Mesopotamia, c. 2000 B.C. and was celebrated around the time of the vernal equinox, in mid-March. A variety of other dates tied to the seasons were also used by various ancient cultures. The Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Persians began their new year with the fall equinox, and the Greeks celebrated it on the winter solstice.

Early Roman Calendar: March 1st Rings in the New Year

The early Roman calendar designated March 1 as the new year. The calendar had just ten months, beginning with March. That the new year once began with the month of March is reflected in some of the names of the months. September through December, our ninth through twelfth months, were originally positioned as the seventh through tenth months (septem is Latin for "seven," octo is "eight," novem is "nine," and decem is "ten.")

January Joins the Calendar

The first time the new year was celebrated on January 1st was in Rome in 153 B.C. (In fact, the month of January did not even exist until around 700 B.C., when the second king of Rome, Numa Pontilius, added the months of January and February.) The new year was moved from March to January because that was the beginning of the civil year, the month that the two newly elected Roman consuls-the highest officials in the Roman republic-began their one-year tenure. But this new year date was not always strictly and widely observed, and the new year was not observed until sometimes celebrated on March 1.

Julian Calendar: January 1st Officially Instituted as the New Year

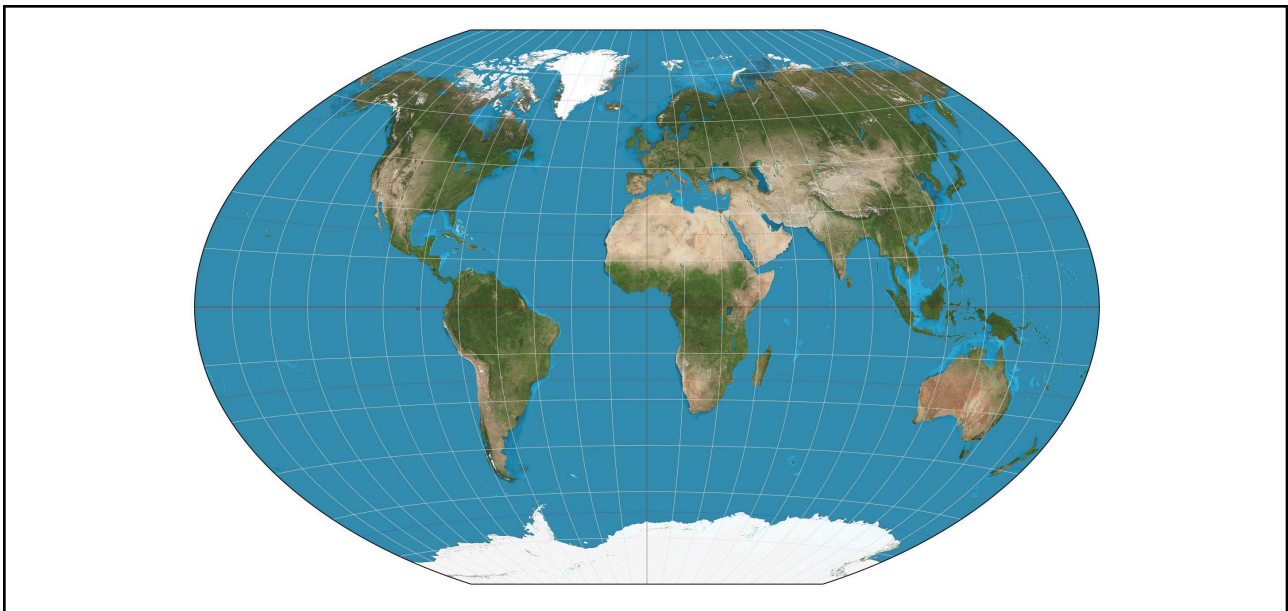
In 46 B.C. Julius Caesar introduced a new, solar-based calendar that was a vast improvement on the ancient Roman calendar, which was a lunar system that had become wildly inaccurate over the years. The Julian calendar decreed that the new year would occur with January 1, and within the Roman world, January 1 became the consistently observed start of the new year.

Middle Ages: January 1st Abolished

In medieval Europe, however, the celebrations accompanying the new year were considered pagan and unchristian-like, and in 567 the Council of Tours abolished January 1 as the beginning of the year. At various times and in various places throughout medieval Christian Europe, the new year was celebrated on Dec. 25, the birth of Jesus; March 1; March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation; and Easter.

Gregorian Calendar: January 1st Restored

In 1582, the Gregorian calendar reform restored January 1 as new year's day. Although most Catholic countries adopted the Gregorian calendar almost immediately, it was only gradually adopted among Protestant countries. The British, for example, did not adopt the reformed calendar until 1752. Until then, the British Empire -and their American colonies- celebrated the new year in March.



North American New Year Celebrations

Read the following passages of celebrations found on the continent of North America. Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year in America – Traditions and Customs

Gatherings and fun moments include watching championship football games in the stadiums. The streets are crowded with youth and elderly people dressed fashionably to welcome the new year with great joy.

Times Square in New York City hosts several events which are hosted by the television celebrity Dick Clark. Many people love watching these programs broadcasted on the television with all their family and friends. The streets are decorated with lanterns, flash lights and colored papers. Flags are also adorned to express happiness. Giant vibrant colored electric apples are lowered to the ground at the time when people start saying “Happy New Year”.

American New Year customs are very colorful and entertaining events. You can have fun at the dance parties which is one of the major celebrations on New Year’s Eve. At the stroke of midnight all the Americans share kisses and express their New Year greetings. This tradition came into existence from the masked ball which symbolizes evil spirits. It is believed that when you kiss it wipes off the evil spirits and purifies the new beginning.

With the change of celebrating ways people have altered this tradition. They honk car horns to express the announcement of New Year party time. People blow paper blowers and whistles which is a very exciting way of wishing happy new year!

Traditional American feast on the new year.

In the United States, it is believed that black-eyed beans are very lucky. It is an American custom on New Year to prepare special dinner with different cuisines to gather for family feasts.

A special soul food with rice which is popularly called Hoppin’ John is consumed with black eyed beans. During the party people also have cakes and champagne which is considered very auspicious.

New Year Celebrations in Canada

Party culture is more prominent and visible in the urban part of Canada. People living in rural areas celebrate more of a traditional New Year. People living in the rural part of Canada, and particularly in the Canadian province of Quebec, usually go out with their friends near a pond or a river for ice fishing on New Year's Eve. They spend the entire night together while ice fishing and celebrating New Year. The long night parties leave little for everyone to hold anything on New Year Day, and therefore, it is mostly spent resting and recovering. However, some people prefer to plan a picnic to nearby panorama, popular markets, or a tourist place. However, the tradition of bursting fireworks is something which is enthusiastically and evenly followed in both the urban and the rural part of Canada.

Other New Year Celebrations in Canada

Some of the most extraordinary crafted shows of fireworks occur in the major cities of Canada including Montreal and the capital city of Ottawa, where technology driven fireworks are blown off as soon as midnight brings New Year on its rucksack. These firework shows are enthusiastically awaited by everyone. People from distant places come and participate to be a part of such extravagant celebration affairs. They are well complemented by the great music, which is served during the entire night by prominent deejays, musicians, singers, and different bands of the country and the world. These celebrations draw thousands and millions of people from around the globe. With the moment of the arrival of the New Year, everyone wishes for each other, and spiritedly pray for a peaceful and pleasant time ahead. Other than these, there has been an increased trend of organizing sports events, magic shows, and special cultural programs on the occasion.

Traditional New Year Celebrations in Canada

There are few customs and traditions which are rigorously followed with a belief that they bring good luck, peace, and prosperity to everyone. One such belief calls for going for a polar bear swim on New Year. There is also a tradition of clapping and roaring at the time of midnight when New Year arrives in Canada. It is done with a belief that it sways away all the past evils and negative energies. In Canada, kissing is considered to be a traditional way of showing love and conferring wishes to someone, and also a way of strengthening pleasant ties with people. Therefore, people in Canada prefer to kiss and wish Happy New Year at midnight. Also, exchanging New Year gifts is also a way of expressing New Year wishes in Canada.

First footing tradition is also prominently followed in Canada, as a part of which a male and preferably a young person is expected to enter the household on the midnight of New Year. Other than that, consuming a bowl of black-eyed pea soup, collecting coals from hearth in the midnight, visiting friends' place in early hours of New Year, etc. are other prominent New Year customs, which are followed by almost everyone in Canada.

New Year in Mexico – Traditions and Customs

Mexico is a culturally rich country. Mexican New Year is celebrated with a number of traditions. A number of colors are associated with the Mexican New Year traditions and each of the color refers to some significant thoughts.

The native families arrange for Mexican New Year Parties on the New Year eve and decoration plays a vital part of the preparation. Apart from lots of colors, Mexican pan dulce is a crucial part of the party decoration. Mexican pan dulce is served at midnight, just at the juncture of the New Year. The baker puts a lucky coin or pendant on the sweet bread or Mexican pan dulce. The person who gets the lucky pendant or coin during the Mexican pan dulce cutting ceremony is considered the luckiest person in the next one year.

Traditional Mexican New Year games play a key role in the New Year celebrations. These games are played only to entertain the guests. These games are deeply associated with Mexican traditions. For example, in a game, the Mexican people are asked to write the good and bad events of the current year. These lists have to be made before midnight. At 12 o'clock, they are asked to throw the lists in the fire and turn to ashes. This tradition symbolizes the removal of all negative vibes and energy and at the same time, it refers to a new beginning.

Before New Year's Eve, the Mexican people have to clean and wash their bodies, houses, and other possessions. According to Mexican New Year traditions, the Mexican people have the later night dinner on New Year's Eve. There is a popular Mexican New Year custom that the Mexicans have to eat one grape in each click of the clock before twelve seconds of 12 o'clock.

Each grape signifies the good luck of one month of the New Year. In Mexico City, a large street festival is arranged on the New Year eve while in other parts of the country, small bonfires, food, and dancing festivals take place. Fireworks and bells are the companions of New Year morning. You can see fireworks and hear ringing bells until the daybreak of the New Year.

There are numerous New Year traditions in Mexico being followed during the festive time. Most Mexicans have a late night dinner along with their families on New Year's Eve. One tradition is to eat twelve grapes at midnight on 31st December. While eating, people make a wish for the coming New Year.

If you think of traveling in the New Year, Mexicans normally take their luggage outside of their house and go for a walk at midnight.

Apart from these traditions, people eat various traditional foods on New Year's Eve. A staple food is dried and salted codfish called Bacalao. Toasts are prepared with sparkling cider and ponche which is a hot fruit punch.



The American Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Canadian Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Mexican Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

South American New Year Celebrations

Read the following passages of celebrations found on the continent of South America. Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year In Argentina – Traditions and Customs

Argentina, the second largest country of South America, is considered to be a land where people prefer to strictly abide by the customs and traditions of the country, and more precisely the beliefs of Roman Catholicism. Argentina holds a long ancient history of passing on these traditions and customs from one generation to another.

Traditionally, New Year celebrations in Argentina involve a late dinner, with close friends and family members in attendance. Bursting firecrackers is another important part of it. There are few other popular, prominent, and interesting traditions usually followed by most of the people in Argentina.

One such out of the ordinary and unusual tradition asks to run around a house with a suitcase in hand, with a belief that doing so will ensure more traveling in the coming year.

There is one more tradition of eating beans on New Year, which is done with a belief that doing so will ensure safety to the present job, or will open up gates for new and better job in the coming year. There is another popular tradition of going swimming in private and public pools, rivers, and lakes.

This tradition is considered to be very close to the heart of the natives of Argentina. Turrón and pan dulce which are being served as the customary dishes on New Year is also a part of customs and traditions in Argentina.

New Year Celebrations in Argentina

New Year celebrations in Argentina witness people coming out of their houses to be a part of the street parties. As soon as the clock turns twelve, people sing, dance, and celebrate.

Bursting crackers is an intact part of celebrations of New Year in Argentina, and small children and people of young age leave no stone unturned to ensure that the grandest and most appealing of fireworks shows occur in their part as soon as the moment of New Year arrives. Usually, the entire family comes out of their houses to move to party places, and to be a part of the firework show. Fireworks usually go on until the dawn of the first day of the New Year, with people dancing, singing, eating, drinking, and celebrating during the whole night.

The majority of the population of Argentina is Roman Catholic. On the first dawn of the New Year, they prefer to go to Churches and Cathedrals to offer prayers to God for happiness, peace, and prosperity for the New Year. The afternoon time is usually booked for picnics, swimming, or family gatherings. Though it is not a stern tradition, out of their generosity and love, elderly people confer young kids of the family with gifts and goodies.

New Year in Venezuela – Traditions and Customs

Venezuela celebrates with high-energy celebrations, in the light of the traditions and customs of Venezuela make it a different experience for everyone who is participating in it. The popularity of New Year celebrations made in Venezuela is immense, and this is the reason behind why people from different corners of the world arrive in this tropical country during the New Year's time.

New Year Celebrations in Venezuela

During the time of New Year, the entire Venezuela gets into a party mood. To make it look like a big party stage, the entire of Venezuela, including its markets, streets, shopping centers, and business centers are covered up with vibrant colors and lights. Other than that, some real lively parties go on in different parts of the country, with some of them also acting as hosts for rock concerts, live music shows, music choirs, and live band performances. With midnight getting closer and closer, all street parties, and parties going on in clubs, bars, and discotheques reach at their intense best.

Other than those coming out of their houses and participating in social New Year celebrations, there are some who prefer to stay at home while being glued to television sets or a radio station. Most of the people watch or hear the live telecast of the countdown of the New Year. Other than that, there is a tradition of broadcasting songs expressing sadness at the end of the year. As soon as midnight arrives, everyone cheers out loud, and wishes everyone good luck and New Year wishes for the coming time. The Cathedral of Caracas located in the city of Caracas has a tradition of ringing twelve bells at that moment.

Craft fairs organized during the time drew a large number of visitors, in particular those looking to explore the cultural and traditional aspects of the country. These craft shows display exquisite works of local arts, which are loved by many. For the fact, there is a great demand for these locally manufactured products among the foreign as well as local tourists, much because of their high quality, great creativity sense, and astonishing beauty. These craft shows also serve great food belonging to the local and South American cuisines.

Traditional New Year Celebrations in Venezuela

Traditionally, the New Year celebrations made in Venezuela are very much similar to the celebrations made in other South American countries, and the European country of Spain. Most of the traditions followed during the time are believed to confer its practitioner with good luck in the coming time. Some of the prominent traditions include wearing red underwear, which is believed to confer one with a love partner in the coming year. Similarly, wearing yellow underwear is believed to confer one with deep contentment in the New Year.

There is another tradition of having a high value bill, which is believed to confer one with wealth and prosperity in the coming New Year. There is another prominently followed tradition of moving out of the house with some luggage in hand on New Year's Eve. Also, people write wishes on pieces of papers, and then burn them with a hope that they get fulfilled in the coming year

New Year in Brazil – Traditions and Customs

New Year, which is also called 'Ano Nove' and more popularly as 'Revillion' in Brazil, is celebrated vastly around the Brazilian customs and traditions. Even after holding a strict adherence to its customs and traditions in the New Year celebrations, the famous Brazilian party culture finds a major acceptance as a mode of celebration. Pubs, party halls, discotheques, clubs, and beaches saw both local people as well as foreign tourists grooving to the local Brazilian party tunes. Brazil is considered to have one of the most prominent and widely celebrated festivals.

New Year Celebration in Brazil

During the New Year time, the South American nation of Brazil seems to get immersed deep in the tides of celebration. Big parties are organized all over Brazil. The biggest ones are organized in the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro. Preparation for the New Year parties begins a day before the celebration day. Special efforts go into the crafting of the fireworks, which are lit up exactly at the midnight of the New Year to welcome and celebrate it.

A half an hour firework show sees people celebrating and wishing for everyone's good luck for the coming year. It is followed by dinner, which has Brazilian cultural dishes like rice, chicken, farofa, salads, and marajucá mousse on the platter. The whole celebration mood remains on a constant high for the entire New Year night with people playing music and dancing altogether. Major cities of Brazil also host musical concerts, dance performances, and special art shows for the day.

Traditional Celebrations of New Year in Brazil

New Year celebrations in Brazil revolve largely around the customs and traditions, which can be stated as countless in numbers. A significant one among those customs is to consume lentils and rice on the day. Doing so is considered to confer blessings, good luck, fortune, and prosperity in one's life.

Also, there is a tradition of wearing white on the day, as doing so is traditionally believed to bring and sustain good luck for the rest of the year. On the midnight of the arrival of New Year, local people residing in and around the beach city gather at the beach, and as a part of tradition jump seven times into the beach and throw flowers in the beach while wishing for a happy and prosperous year ahead.

New Year in Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro hosts beach parties, where people participate, eat, drink, dance, and celebrate the mood of New Year. Brazilian Carnival is another major attraction, where people dressed up in flashy clothes walk down through streets while celebrating New Year by singing and dancing to the tunes of traditional music of sambha, frevo, forro, pagoda, Axe etc.



The Argentinian Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Venezuelan Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Brazilian Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

European New Year Celebrations

Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

British New Year – Traditions and Customs

British celebrations of New Year are a defined and precise reflection of the customs, cultures, and traditions as followed and held by British people. British celebrations reflect high vigor, enthusiasm, pleasure, and delight; and at the same time give a glance of their rich customs and traditions. They reflect the British belief that one should initiate anything with positive hopes and beliefs of pleasurable coming time.

Also, one should move ahead and overcome the past problems and difficulties of life, and should only remember them to learn a few good lessons of life. With this as the crux of all, the British celebrate their New Year. Off late, one has a visible experience of an addition of contemporary traditions to New Year celebrations in Britain, such as taking oath, making resolutions, etc. British New Year celebrations are eminent all around the world, and common and royal people from all around the world put in efforts to be a part of it.

New Year Celebrations in Britain

New Year celebrations in Britain saw a lot of planning and preparation going on before the key day arrived. Traditionally, British New Year celebrations begins on New Year's Eve, i.e. 31st December of the old year, and go on until the dawn of the New Year's Day, i.e. January 1st of the New Year. Setting off fireworks is an important celebration tradition, which gained eminence in the last few years.

As soon as the church bell rings at midnight, these fireworks are set off. Also, people all around the place, whether in houses, streets or parties, wish and hug one another while spreading and celebrating immense cheer and joy associated with New Year. Also, the tradition of sending gifts, presents, New Year cards, flowers, cakes, and candles to near and dear ones have also gained immense popularity.

The Edinburgh part of Scotland holds a massive party on New Year's Eve, which extends from Prince's Street and goes on through Royal Mile to end at Edinburgh Castle. However, not everyone can be a part of this regal party.

New Year in England

In England, there is a tradition of opening the back door of the house as soon as the church bell rings twelve. It is considered to be a reflection of one's farewell to the old year. Then a dark haired moon, preferably young and good looking, is asked to enter through the front door with salt, coal, and bread in his possession. Doing so is traditionally believed to bring good luck, and also ensure abundance of food (bread), money (salt), and warmth (coal) in the coming year.

One should prefer to bring in a stranger. Also a blonde, a woman, or a red-haired person are unwelcomed, as they are considered to bring bad luck to the house. Apart from England, it is also rigorously followed in Scotland.

New Year in Scotland and Wales

In Scotland, New Year is referred to as 'Hogmanay', which has been derived from the name of an oak cake which is distributed among small children on New Year's Eve. In Wales, New Year's Eve is referred to as 'Nos Galan', while New Year's Day is referred to as 'Dydd Calan'.

On New Year's Day, small children wake up early in the morning, and then make a visit to all the neighbors in the neighborhood, while singing New Year special carols. People out of generosity and love, give them coins, cookies, mince pies, apples, and other sweets. This goes on until noon.

Please use the following website to research "Hogmanay" to create your second slide

<http://www.rampantscotland.com/know/blknow12.htm>



The English Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Scottish Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Welsh Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

European New Year Celebrations

Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year in Austria – Traditions and Customs

Traditional celebrations of New Year in Austria involve preparing a punch with ingredients of cinnamon, sugar, and red wine, which then is dedicated and devoted to Saint Sylvester. There is another tradition of burning of mortars, which is believed to sway all the evil spirits and negative energies of the past, and ensure everything pleasant and positive for the coming New Year.

Dinner on New Year's Eve is another prominent tradition in Austria. These dinners are prominently planned and based on the core of pig, which is considered as a symbol of good luck. Apart from the special dish of suckling pig, various other food items and ingredients such as cookies, chocolates, maple sugar, fudge, marzipan, etc. are prepared in the shape of a pig. After the traditional course with core on pig, green peppermint ice cream is served in a four leaf clover.

The first morning of the year, i.e. on the morning of the New Year's Day, people gather at an intended place. Small children come out of their respective houses, and visit every door of the neighborhood while singing New Year carols. New Year also initiates a carnival called Fasching on New Year's Eve, which goes on until the time of Lent.

A lot of parties and balls are also thrown during the period. Social prayers are organized, where small children sing carols. A molten lead is poured in a bucket of water, and then predictions are made on the basis of the shapes formed out of the molten lead in the water. Sighting an old woman on the occasion is considered to be an inauspicious indication.

New Year Celebrations in Austria

At twelve, wishes are exchanged with all those present around. Also churches and cathedrals ring twelve at that moment, and with that, all those present on the streets and in parties make noises, and blow trumpets and drums. Hugs and kisses are the most common way of showcasing one's greetings and wishes to others. People dance all through the night on the tunes of the eminent Blue Danube Waltz to celebrate. Some of the prominent cities of Austria also have firework shows.

Prominent New Year Celebrations in Austria

Vienna organizes 'Straus operetta Die Fledermaus' in Vienna State Opera every year on New Year's Day and on New Year's Eve. It holds immense popularity all over the world, and sees throngs of people coming in from far off places. It is also accompanied by a performance of Vienna Philharmonic, who performs an all Strauss concert, with members of the Strauss family and contemporaries. The music being presented in the show is not only dynamic, but also wistful at the same time. In other prominent happenings on New Year in Austria, the old town of Innsbruck has brass band parades and evening fanfares.

New Year In Holland – Traditions and Customs

People in Holland prefer to spend more of their New Year's time with close friends and family, rather than being a part of social celebrations. Everyone irrespective of their age and gender participate in different board games, and mutually enjoy the telecasting of various Dutch comedy shows which has traditional Dutch summaries of the year at the core of it. With the New Year drawing closer, one would hardly find anyone on the streets or any social party places.

However, as soon as the clock rings twelve, people exchange best luck wishes with one another, and then they come out of their houses to celebrate the occasion on the streets. It is the post midnight period which witnessed people having more social celebrations.

Traditional New Year Celebrations in Holland

There are few traditions which are rigorously followed by the people of Holland during the time of New Year. Though most of them hold their roots in the Dutch soil, others have been much more locally rooted and followed. Everyone ensures to clean up their houses before New Year arrives, as doing so is considered to be a part of the purification process. For this, people collect Juniper and water after sunset. There is a tradition of carrying Juniper branches to home, which are later burned with a belief that doing so sways all prowling germs and diseases out of the place. According to a widely popular Holland belief, a person who wakes up most early in the morning in the household on the day of New Year, would take up Hit pint to spiced ale it over those who are sleeping.

Holland has a footing tradition, as a part of which the first person arriving on the threshold of the house defines the luck of those residing in for the rest of the year. In case, a dark haired, young, and good looking man arrives, it is considered as a symbol of good luck. In case, a woman, a blonde, or a red haired person arrives, it symbolizes bad luck.

There is also a traditional custom of preparing a special Dutch dish with the name of 'Oliebol'. It is a traditional Dutch doughnut, deep fried in different flavors, and covered with icing sugar during the time of New Year. Apart from this, several other dishes such as cordials, cheese, bread, wine, shortbread, oatcake, scones, currant loaf, oatmeal cakes, savor cones, cheese, and New Year black buns are something to have in their platter list during the dinner and party time of New Year.

People also gather to light a bonfire on New Year's Eve, with an old school belief that doing so bids a farewell to the Old Year and welcomes the New Year. On New Year's Day, one witnesses small groups of young children who wake up early in the morning, and then make a visit to every house in the neighborhood while singing New Year special songs. As a mark of showing love and greetings for New Year, people in turn give them sweets, coins, and apples. This tradition has to be completed before noon arrives, as anywhere doing it after the noon time is considered as a fool.

New Year in France- Customs and Traditions

New Year's Day is popularly called Jour des Étrennes, and le Jour de l'An. New Year's Day celebrations are referred to as 'Reveillion'. It is counted as amongst the oldest festivals of France, and thus an official public holiday is observed for the day. People in France go and meet their friends and families, to celebrate the special day with mutual solemnity and ecstasy. New Year celebrations begin on New Years' eve and go on until the 6th January of the New Year. In France, New Year's Eve is referred to as la Saint-Sylvestre.

Traditional Celebrations of New Year in France

On New Year's Eve, a traditional ceremony is organized in France, as a part of which, a special festive cake with the name of la galette des rois is cut. A special feast, called le Réveillon de Saint-Sylvestre is planned, which has traditional dishes such as pancakes and foie gras (flavored duck or goose) on the platter. Also, champagne is served to the visitors. According to French traditions, this special dinner brings prosperity and good luck to the lives of all those attending the feast. The Southern Western part of France organizes an evening procession, in which masses of people participate. The people participating in the procession sing and dance through the parade, which is headed towards the vinery for mull wine.

Going on a cruise ride on the occasion of New Year is increasingly becoming popular in France. A cruise ride on New Year's Eve, and the idea of welcoming New Year in the middle of an ocean or sea makes it an extraordinary and unforgettable moment for the destined.

The two day New Year's parade organized in Paris is another popular celebration, which people die to be a part of. Thousands of local people along with foreign visitors as well as special artists, singers, dancers, and performers march and perform through the procession, which goes through various streets, before ending up at Trocadéro, under the Eiffel Tower.

People prefer to have private house parties with only close friends and families invited. A special dinner for the day is prepared, and a ball called "une soirée dansante" is organized. The evening saw people celebrating and welcoming the New Year with cheerfulness and festive mood. Apart from partying hard, wishes are made, and gifts are shared with near and dear ones.

Tradition of Poisson d'avril

There is another important tradition of Poisson d'avril, a French word which literally means for an April fish. The tradition begins in the post period of the time, when January 1 was officially declared as the New Year's Day. Since that time, anyone who does not follow the same is considered to be a fool or an April fish. People started planning pranks around them by sending them fake party invitations and New Year presents. In the present time, the tradition has developed as a fun and entertaining time for young children in France.



The Austrian Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Dutch Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The French Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

European New Year Celebrations Continued

Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year in Germany – Traditions and Customs

Many efforts go into planning to ensure a grand farewell to the old year and much grander welcome to the New Year. New Year's Eve is called 'Sylvester' in Germany, as a mark of honor to Saint Sylvester, who used to live in Germany in the fourth century. Saint Sylvester is credited as the one who mended leprosy, and baptized Constantine the Great, the Roman Ruler. Saint Sylvester is also credited as the only Pope to have met members of the family of Jesus.

New Year Celebrations in Germany

Majestic parties are thrown all over Germany in discotheques, pubs, clubs, restaurants, and hotels. Throngs of people come to these parties to eat, drink, sing, dance, and celebrate New Year. These jollity parties initiate on the New Year's Eve and go on the entire night to finish on the next morning. With the arrival of the New Year, everyone present in the party shares wishes with others, and makes resolutions for the next year. The most grand and famous parties occur at Brandenburg Tor in Berlin, which thousands attend.

However, not everyone wishes to be a part of these grand social parties, but rather prefer to have a more public celebration, where only friends, families, and close people are invited. As soon as the clock at midnight turns twelve, people exchange wishes, hugs and kisses one another, and open up champagne bottles to illustrate their pleasure for the moment. Lighting up fireworks and crafting them in beautiful sequence is also a major part of New Year celebrations in Germany.

Traditional New Year Celebrations in Germany

One tradition is foretelling the future of the coming year, which is called 'Bleigiessen'. It is performed by falling molten lead in cold water. The shape then formed in the water is considered as the basis of the predictions made for the future of a person. For instance, a heart or ring shaped formation suggests wedding, a ship shaped formation suggests journey or traveling, a pig shaped formation suggests abundance of food, etc.

In Germany, there is a major following for the tradition of leaving a bit of the New Year's Eve food until midnight, until the time New Year arrives. There is a traditional belief that doing so confers plenty of food for the entire coming year. Also, a dish of carp or herring (a special dish of fish), and carrots and cabbage on the platter, along with champagne raised for a toast on New Year's Eve is considered to bring financial stability for the coming year. Also, people share meat and cheese with close friends and family members over the feast. Also, lentil soup with wieners is another popular dish for the evening, which is prepared a few days ago before the big day.

New Year In Switzerland – Traditions and Customs

New Year celebrations across the world involve different traditions and customs. In every tradition, the main focus is on celebrating the end of a year and welcoming the beginning of a New Year with new hopes and promises.

In Switzerland as well, this is no different. In fact, there are some New Year customs in Switzerland, which despite being similar with others in other places, have their own unique Swiss touch. Celebrations in Switzerland begin on New Year's eve, with a gathering of family and friends.

Ideally, there are no traditional dishes which are associated with New Year celebrations. However, many people prefer to celebrate this special occasion with sweets and desserts. Often families gather together to make the dishes, but buying from the store is also preferred in many places. Basically, making or buying food at the New Year is all about convenience.

Traditionally, Swiss celebrate New Year twice in a year. The country follows the Julian calendar, so they celebrate New Year for a second time on 13th January. This day also marks Sylvester's Day – a traditional day for exchanging gifts and dining with the family. During the festive season, Swiss take to the streets in colorful costumes and perform the symbolic ceremony of chasing away spirits. The great thing about this second celebration is that, if you cannot be in the country on 31st December, you can take part and witness the celebrations on 13th January.

New Year Celebrations in Switzerland

Some of the festivities witnessed around this time are pretty much similar to what you can see in other places. Live music, extravagant displays of fireworks and free flowing drinks, are some of them. The New Year celebrations at the banks of the River Limmat and Lake Zurich attract more than 150,000 people every year. The festivities here feature ringing of the church bells at midnight and illuminating the sky with spectacular fireworks.

If you like to celebrate New Year well into the night, the city of Zurich is an ideal choice. Here, the live music pauses only for the fireworks, and then runs until three in the morning. The city has excellent public transport services, which can be used by revelers to go back to their hotels. You will enjoy the wonderful New Year celebrations here, with family and friends. Apart from these two cities, other places in Switzerland also see exciting festivities around this time.

New Year in Greece – Traditions and Customs

In Greece New Year's Day is also celebrated as the Feast of Saint Basil who was one of the forefathers of the Greek Orthodox Church. Also known by the name of Protochronia.

The morning of the New Year comes alive as children go from door to door singing carols (kalanta) and they are rewarded with a coin in return.

Playing the Cards:

Games are organized in pubs, clubs, coffee houses and homes all through the country. Even the State Lottery is played with much enthusiasm. In the homes people spend their time playing these games as they wait for the clock to announce the midnight. Here betting amounts are generally kept minimal and friendly diversions are offered so as not to upset anyone who is not winning.

First Footing – Kalo Podariko:

Kalo Podariko or the tradition of First Footing is a very common custom in Greece on the juncture of the New Year setting in. It is believed that a First Footer should be a person with a kind and loving heart, and as such, a child is often made a First Footer for their pure, innocent and honest hearts are believed to usher in good omen. After the First Footing takes place, other members of the family then follow by stepping in one by one inside the house.

Feasting with an Extra Place Setting:

Feasting is a common phenomenon for New Year celebrations around the world, and the New Year celebration in Greece is no exception. Members of the family gather together to enjoy a sumptuous meal, and on the table it is often the custom to leave an extra place. This place is meant for Saint Basil. Households in Greece consider it auspicious to include their favorite Saint in their New Year celebrations.

Smashing a Pomegranate:

From ancient times pomegranate has been considered to be a sign of fertility, prosperity and regeneration. A little before the clock strikes twelve it is the custom to turn off all lights and for the family members to step out of the house. After the First Footer makes an entry at midnight, the next person rolls the fruit holding it in the right hand with force against the door and smashes it open. It is believed that the number of seeds that get scattered is directly proportional to the amount of good luck the family would be blessed with in the upcoming year.

Stepping on a Mossy Stone:

People collect stones that are mossy from nearby water. It is considered to be a good omen to step on a mossy stone before entering the house on the New Year's Day following the First Footer.

Hanging Squill Bulb or an Onion or something similar:

The Greeks use bulbs of squill or onion or something similar to hang on to their front door on New Year's Eve. This tradition is believed to be an ancient one and prevalent even in the times of the celebrated Greek thinker of the 6th century BC Pythagoras. These plants have the quality of growing fast and even surviving when uprooted. As such, since times immemorial the Greeks have designated these to symbolize growth and regeneration. After the New Year sets in, the homeowner takes the bulb inside the house and keeps it in the house the rest of the year.

Vassilopita – bread with a precious coin:

Vassilopita is sweet and savory bread that is baked especially for the occasion of the New Year with a coin made of silver or gold put in it. These days' people often put a euro in it or a plain round button wrapped in a silver or gold foil. On New Year's Day it is the custom for the eldest member of the house to cut this cake – one slice is reserved for Jesus, another for Virgin Mary, a third for Saint Basil, and one each for the Church, the House and the Poor. The rest of the cake is then cut and distributed among members elder to the younger. The one who gets the coin in his/ her slice of cake is believed to bring in good luck. The slices kept aside in the names of Jesus, Mary, Saint Basil, Church, Home and Poor are either given to the guests who visit the home or distributed among the needy.

Kali Hera or Kali Xera:

It is a traditional ritual for Greek children to receive gifts of kali (money) during the New Year. This custom stemmed from the fact that money has never been abundant in the country of Greece, and that too many toy shops or other shops to buy gifts suitable for children were not rampant either. As such, people used to give their children, nephews, nieces, or grandchildren money which was a mark that they are wishing for prosperity for their little ones in the upcoming New Year. Often people accompanied these monetary gifts with sweets or pastries.

Fireworks and Jubilations:

It is very common to find people thronging night clubs, pubs, bars and as well as shopping plazas on the occasion of New Year. Streets get crowded with people and traffic becomes very slow. In keeping with this festive spirit, the various municipal bodies also deck up the main avenues and landmark locations. In many places sponsored musical events too are organized for. In many places throughout Greece elaborate firework displays can be seen that further add on to the mood of festive fervor. People get enthralled by many such entertainment options, and generally enjoy until sunrise the next day.



The German Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Swiss Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Greek Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

Asian New Year Celebrations

Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year in China – Traditions and Customs

New Year in China is completely different and unique from any of the New Year celebrations made in any part of the world. In China, New Year is also called 'Gung Hay Fat Choy' or 'The Spring Festival'. The day of New Year is celebrated on the first day of the Chinese calendar.

History of New Year in China

The New Year celebrations in China hold an entire history of its own. Once, there used to live a giant beast with the name of Nian, who used to swallow many human beings with a single bite. After some time the natives came to know that the beast is afraid of the red color and loud noises. Since then, they started burning firecrackers and using red color in order to keep the giant beast scared. Since they got themselves liberated from the giant beast's scare and conferred themselves with a new life, they started celebrating the day as GuNian (Pass over the Nian) or New Year day.

The Date of New Year in China

In China, there is no one fixed day of the New Year, and thus the date changes every year. It is celebrated in accordance with the Chinese calendar, which is a blend of the solar and lunar calendar. According to the Chinese calendar, the day of the second moon after the winter solstice is meant to be celebrated as New Year; it lasts about a month. Last day of Chinese New Year is celebrated as the Lantern Festival.

New Year Celebrations in China- Customs and Traditions

In the present day life, one hardly gets an entire month-long period to celebrate it. In Taiwan, the first five days of New Year are conferred as holidays, while Mainland China and Singapore have two to three days of holidays. It is only during that time, that one can precisely sense the New Year mood, enthusiasm, and celebration in China. Chinese people consider New Year as a mark to forget all the past troubles, and move ahead with an optimistic attitude.

People buy themselves new clothes (preferably red), get a haircut, and clean and decorate their houses with red colored banners. Doing so is considered to bring good luck for the New Year. All past financial dues are preferred to be cleared with the beginning of the New Year. Also, red envelopes with some money inside it are given as presents to young children, unmarried adults, and parents. Traditionally, the money should be new bills and an amount of an even number (excluding '4' in any form). Also, fireworks are planned and made on the New Year day, with a belief that doing so sways away all evil spirits and energies. Lighting up houses with fancy lights, and decorating it with symbols of peace, prosperity, and luck is also a common tradition followed in concord with New Year celebrations.

Japanese New Year – Traditions and Customs

New Year is the most important occasion in the Japanese calendar. It is celebrated on January 1, but before 1873, it was observed according to the Chinese lunar calendar. Even though the date of the celebration has changed, the occasion is celebrated with proper Japanese New Year traditions. It is so important that all businesses are closed that day, but New Year's lasts two weeks.

Popular Japanese New Year Traditions

Otoshidama: Otoshidama is an old New Year tradition of Japan, in which they give money to the kids. In this custom, you have to hand a decorated envelope to the children. The amount of the money, which the Japanese offer to the children, depends upon the age of the children.

Mochi: Mochi is a tradition, when people make rice cakes on Japanese New Year. The main purpose of making Mochi is decorative. Mochi is made in kagami mochi. Daidai, a bitter orange, is placed at the top of the decoration. Mochi is made before New Year and is eaten when the celebrations of New Year begins.

Japanese New Year Customs

There are a number of Japanese New Year customs, among them, some important ones are mentioned below:

- In order to keep away the evil spirits, the Japanese hang a straw rope in front of the entrance of their home. This brings good fortune.
- At the juncture of New Year, they start laughing and they think that this would keep away the evil spirits.
- The Japanese go to the temple and ring the temple's bells 108 times. They think that ringing the bell 108 times will keep away all the evil forces.
- Those who believe in the Shinto religion, decorate their houses with green plants and bamboo. Green plants signify new life and bamboo signifies honesty.
- Japanese make lobsters with paper and decorate their houses with them. They think that the back side of the lobsters resembles an aged person, which symbolizes an earnest desire for endurance.

It is celebrated in two festivals: The Greater festival and the Lesser festival. In the Greater Festival, Japanese people offer prayers for their dead family and friends. In the Lesser festival, they offer prayers for having good crops. Following the prayer, the bird-scaring ritual begins.

Apart from all these New Year traditions of Japan, they also play games on New Year eve. In fact, in some communities, it is mandatory to play Japanese New Year games. There is also a custom of arranging entertainment shows during the New Year celebrations and lavish dinners..

New Year In Philippines – Traditions and Customs

New Year happens to be one of the biggest festivals that gets celebrated in the Philippines with grandeur and great enthusiasm. Apart from modern trends of social gatherings and parties' people here also follow almost all the age-old traditions and customs that have been prevailing since long.

The New year eve or the Bisperas ng Bagong Taon paves the way for the new year with great food and drink with people enjoying with family and friends. Special meals are prepared and all the members of the family take that together as that's considered to be auspicious and lucky for the year to come. The menu is decided with good luck charms in mind. Pancit or noodles are prepared for long life, whereas eggs are eaten as a symbol of new life.

Sticky rice or malagkit are cooked so that good luck sticks to you all throughout the year and the meal never contains any animal flesh as they are considered to be inauspicious. The meal is served with twelve different fruits where each signifies a month, and they are all round shaped which is considered to bring luck and fortune to all.

The family members offer prayers after dinner. The midnight mass or the Media Noche is an age-old and important custom followed in the New year by the people in the Philippines. They strongly believe that this mass will bring and retain good luck throughout the year by driving all evil forces away from their life forever.

The New Year in the Philippines is celebrated with lots of noise and sound as it drives away all evil spirits from our life and creates space for good ones. Fireworks of different types are common sights and they have a special name called Filipino Paputok and they are done so that good fortune and happiness comes with a guarantee in the New Year. At home people dance and play loud music for the same reason. In the rural areas, the villagers clang pots and pans to create noise. In the urban areas, whistles are blown, horns of the cars are pumped and other ways of creating noise are adopted during the celebrations.

Houses are cleaned properly to welcome the new year. The inhabitants keep their doors and windows open as the clock strikes twelve so that good fortune can enter and evil goes away. A weird but followed custom as the Filipinos is to wear polka-dots dress during the New year as round shapes signify prosperity and happiness. They fill their pockets with round coins that are believed to bring more wealth. Children interestingly believe they can be taller if they jump high at midnight.

It is a tradition to greet and wish every member of the family as the New Year knocks at the door. Children show immense respect to the elders of the family. The good wishes of the peers and the blessings of the elders surely makes the upcoming New Year to be a Manigong Bagong Taon or Happy New Year.



The Chinese Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Japanese Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why



The Filipino Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

Australian New Year Celebrations

Please fill out the sheet at the end of this section picking one tradition from each country that you would like to try. Remember to annotate each reading directly on the paper.

New Year in Australia – Traditions and Customs

New Year is considered as a time of optimism by one and all, and Australia is no different. The whole of Australia engages itself in enthusiastic celebrations of New Year, with customs and traditions holding the core of it. New Year celebrations are traditionally made over an extended period of six days, with January 6 being the last day of celebration.

New Year Celebration in Australia

No matter whether one chooses to stay at home or come out, the mood of zest and celebrations of New Year remain on a constant high among people of Australia. Usually, with New Year being a public holiday, people along with their friends and families come out of their houses to be a part of the group celebrations as made at beautiful beaches, discotheques, pubs, clubs, hotels, and social parties organized for the purpose.

Celebrations with a high degree of fervor all over the place continue for the first six days of the New Year. The highly fervent New Year celebrations in Australia are world popular, which is the reason why Australia emerges to be the favorite tourist spot among visitors in and around the time of New Year.

Traditionally, people prefer to make a visit to the Church to offer their prayers to the supreme Lord. People along with their families make an early morning visit to the local or main Church to pray to the Lord in order to get conferred with His blessings for the New Year. For the fact, the traditional custom of formally announcing the arrival of the New Year is officially considered to take place with the twelve rings of the bell in the Church at midnight of the New Year.

As soon as people hear the twelve rings, they mutually show their bliss by cheering and making noises through drums, trumpets, horns, and other musical instruments. It is followed by sharing hugs, kisses, and wishes with all those who are present. Also, a beautifully crafted show of fireworks, which takes place at exactly the 00:00 hours of January 1, is something which people enthusiastically and eagerly wait for.

Major New Year Celebration Hubs in Australia

Though the entire Australia celebrates New Year with customs and traditions with unparalleled degrees of happiness and joy, the New Year celebrations and parties as made out in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Darwin are highly popular, more prominently for their grand celebrations and peculiar show of fireworks.

New Year in Sydney, Australia: Sydney hosts one of the most enthralling New Year celebrations of the whole world. With the arrival of New Year, the famous Sydney Harbor Bridge is lit up with more than 80000 fireworks, creating an extraordinary and unforgettable experience for the spectators. The degree of firework is intense and extravagant to an extent that it can be viewed anywhere within the radius of 16 km. around Sydney.

The fireworks are perfectly string along with the soothing music, presented by a group of vocalists of Sydney Council. Another major attraction is the Sydney New Year beach party, along with other New Year parties thrown on the eve of New Year, in which people pleasantly engage in activities such as bonfires and camping. A ride through a cruise is necessary to complete the New Year celebration experience in Sydney.

New Year in Melbourne, Australia : The Melbourne city of Australia is another major hub for celebrating New Year with an experience that remains etched in mind until the end of life. Melbourne is highly popular for the parties it throws on New Year's Eve. Discotheques, pubs, hotels, and restaurants saw masses of people coming and becoming part of high energy parties, where arrangements are made for special buffets and exceptional dinners.

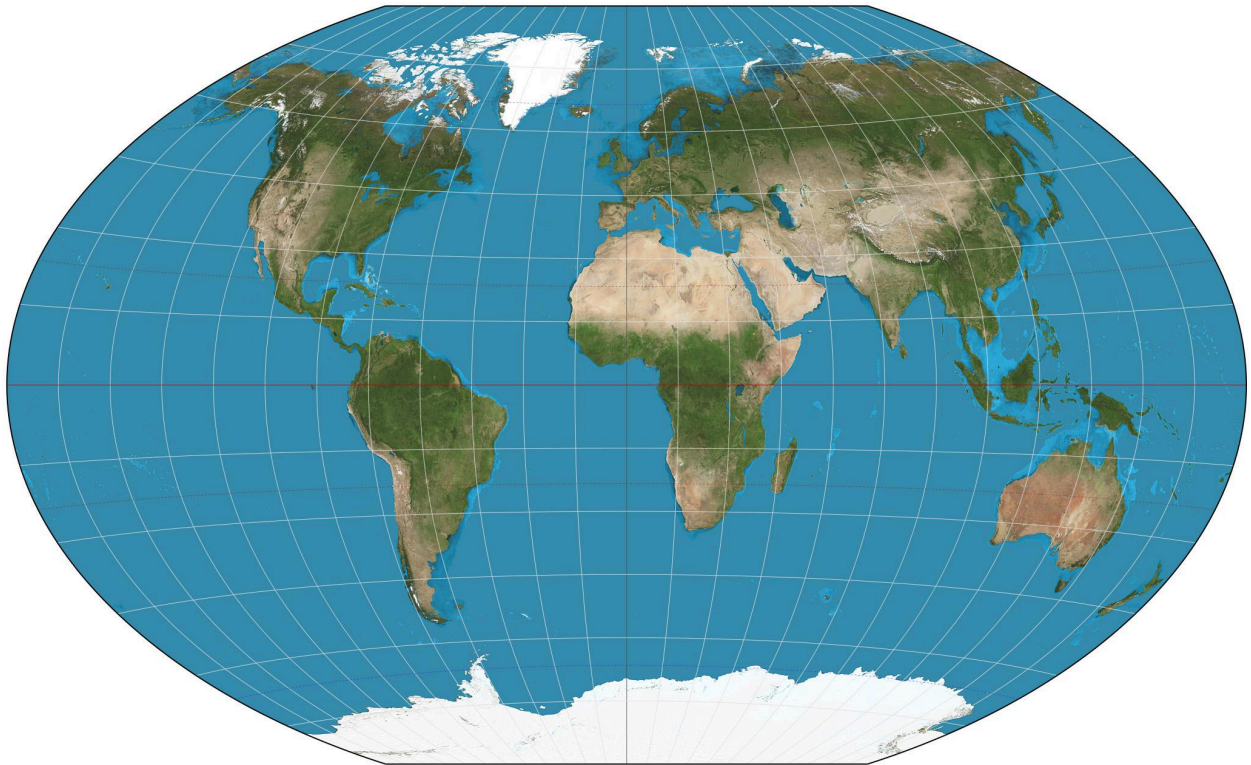
The famous rock bands performing across the Melbourne city add a complete new oomph to the New Year vigor. Another major attraction which one can't afford to miss is the depiction of the Chinese-Australian rituals, as a part of which traditional practices of 'sacrificing to ancestors', are performed with dedication and enthusiasm in the China place in Melbourne.



The Australian Custom that You Would Like to Try and Why

Your Turn: Choose Your Own Country's New Year Celebrations

You may choose any country that we have not already learned about in class to create a page just like the others in this packet. Make sure to include traditions/customs, food, and celebrations.



Project Time

It is now time for you to create a project of your own. You are only limited by your own imagination. Pick one aspect of New Year's festivities around the world and develop/devise/generate/invent some type of "thing"

- 1) You may want to recreate a mathematically accurate scaled down replica of the ball dropping in Times Square. Then take it a step further and demonstrate it to the class.
- 2) You may want to create an international cookbook of New Year's recipes. Then take it a step further and cook one to share.
- 3) Research an aspect similar to "Hogmanay" and film yourself, your family or your friends recreating the custom.
- 4) Any idea of your choosing subject to teacher approval, then take it a step further

