

New Year's Eve – Around the World Good Luck Edition

In **Spain**, it's customary to eat 12 grapes – one at each stroke of the clock at midnight. Each grape represents good luck for each month of the coming year.

In **Germany** and **Finland**, people predict the coming year by casting molten tin or lead into a container of water then interpreting the shapes as they harden. A heart or ring may mean a wedding, a ship can predict travel, while a pig signifies there will be plenty of food.

In **Armenia**, it is tradition to knead “good wishes” into every batch of bread baked on the last day of the year.

In hopes of a travel-filled new year, residents of **Colombia** carry empty suitcases around the block!

In **Turkey**, traditions including running the faucet and sprinkling salt on their door steps at midnight to ensure prosperity. While in **Switzerland**, it's believe that by dropping dollops of whipped cream on the floor that it will ensure prosperity in the New Year.

A New Year's Even tradition in **Russia**, includes writing ones wishes down on a piece of paper, burning them wish a candle, and then drinking the subsequent ashes in glass of champagne.

In hopes of good luck, in **Denmark**, people “leap” into January, by standing on chairs and jumping off them together at midnight.

Fruits and vegetables, play a significant New Year's role in **Greece**. In ancient Greek mythology, the pomegranate symbolizes fertility, life and abundance and has come to be associated with good fortune. On New Year's it's customary to smash a pomegranate against one's front door, with the belief that the number of seed that scatter will direct correlate to the amount of good luck to come. Likewise, many hang onions on their doors in order to promote growth throughout the New Year.

In the **Philippines**, the circle symbolizes prosperity and many will ring in the New Year wearing polka dots. Many families will also display piles of fruit on their dining tables and similar to the Spanish will eat exactly 12 round fruits (usually grapes) at midnight.

In **Scotland**, the celebration of Hogmanay (New Year's) includes the custom of “first-footing”. After midnight, family and friends visit each other's home. The first person to cross the threshold after midnight should carry a gift of luck. Although the tradition varies, those deemed especially fortunate as “first footers” are new brides, new mothers, those who are tall and dark (and handsome?) or anyone born on January 1.

Finally, in **Japan**, the Japanese welcome the New Year with a bowl of soba noodles in a ritual known as toshikoshi soba, or year-crossing noodles. It is believed that the noodles shape and length signifies a long and healthy life. The soba noodle is also believed to signify strength, as the buckwheat plant (which is used to make soba noodles) is quite resilient.

These are just a few of the many traditions celebrated around the world. On the next page, see if you can unscramble the words associated with these worldly customs!

New Year's Eve - Word Scramble

dooG uLck _____

pesGra _____

adBre _____

Tvelra _____

tlSa _____

phamCgnea _____

isWhes _____

pingJum _____

Pgranaomete _____

lkaPo-tods _____

irFst-oofting _____

Ndlesoo _____



New Year's Eve – Word Scramble

Good Luck
Grapes
Bread
Travel
Salt
Champagne
Wishes
Jumping
Pomegranate
Polka-dots
First-footing
Noodles



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