



NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS: KISS SOMEONE!



- When the clock strikes midnight, you're supposed to kiss someone you love.
- It's not just about stealing a smooch: According to the Washington Post, this is borrowed from English and German folklore, which stated that it's “the first person with whom a person came in contact that dictated the year’s destiny.”
- Choose your partner wisely!



WATCH SOMETHING DROP!



New York City Mayor Ed Koch gives the thumbs-up sign as he flips a switch to test the Big Apple Ball in 1981.

- Crowds have been gathering in New York City's Times Square to watch the ball drop since 1907.
- The first one was just iron and wood.
- Today you can watch a 12-foot, 11,875-pound sphere covered in 2,688 Waterford Crystal triangles and 32,256 LEDs make its descent.
- Or, you can see something else fall as a visual countdown to the new year: Plymouth, Wisconsin hosts a Big Cheese Drop. Kennett Square, PA drops a giant mushroom. And New Orleans, LA drops a *fleur de lis* (they had also dropped a big gumbo pot).



EAT OR WEAR SOMETHING ROUND!



WESTEND61 / GETTY IMAGES



FRED FROESE / GETTY IMAGES

- Many cultures believe eating round foods on New Year's Eve will lead to prosperity.
- In Italy, lentils in a New Year's dish serve the same function as the black-eyed peas in Hoppin' John, with their round shape representing coins.
- And in the Philippines, it's customary to eat 12 round fruits, one for every month, to ensure a year of abundance.
- And in the Philippines, partygoers wear circles, too. Polka dots are all the rage on December 31, increasing the chances for a fortunate New Year.



WISH JAR: SAVE A WISH FOR NEXT YEAR



- Write down a resolution, goal, wish, or note to your future selves, put it in a jar, then save it for the year.
- On the next New Year's Eve, you can retrieve the jar and read the notes to see how far everyone has progressed.

HELEN SCHRYVER PHOTOGRAPHY / GETTY IMAGES



MAKE A TOAST!



Champagne has become the New Year's Eve drink of choice, but your parents might have clinked coupes filled with Wassail, a special cider-like punch with English origins, a "hot pint," the Scottish spin, or mulled wine, Holland's traditional drink, instead of the bubbly beverage.

- The first time alcohol was recorded as being used to toast the New Year was during the reign of Julius Caesar.
- By the end of the 19th century, a New Year's Eve champagne toast was a standard in America.
- This was largely due to a New York cafe called Café Martin which was owned by two French brothers –both connoisseurs of champagne.
- It was also the place to be on New Year's Eve as they hosted the largest New Year's Eve party in New York!
- The wine tradition is now a mainstream staple to any New Year's Eve party.



SING "AULD LANG SYNE"



HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

- “Auld Lang Syne” is often credited to Scottish poet Robert Burns, who was the first to transcribe an old folk song.
- The phrase 'auld lang syne' roughly translates as 'for old times' sake', and the song is all about preserving old friendships and looking back over the events of the year.
- It is sung all over the world, evoking a sense of belonging and fellowship, tinged with nostalgia.



MAKE A RESOLUTION!



ISABEL PAVIA / GETTY IMAGES

- You might think that making resolutions for the new years is a relatively recent trend, historically speaking, but the tradition is very old — probably more than 4,000 years old.
- Historians believe Babylonians — one of the first cultures to actually celebrate the changing of the year — made promises to pay debts or return borrowed objects.
- Do you have any New Year's goals for the coming year?