

New Year

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

The Gregorian Calendar

Pope Gregory XIII changed the dates of the calendar so that Easter could be celebrated at the time it used to be celebrated years before.

Although New Year begins on 1st January in the UK, other countries and religions celebrate the start of the New Year on different days of the year.

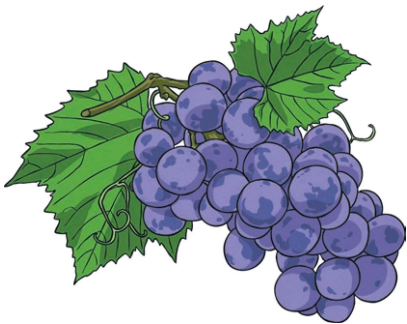
The first country to welcome in the new year is Kiribati, which is in the Pacific Ocean.



New Year in Mexico

Mexicans celebrate the New Year by eating grapes at the chimes of midnight, and making a wish with each chime. Homes are decorated red, yellow, green and white.

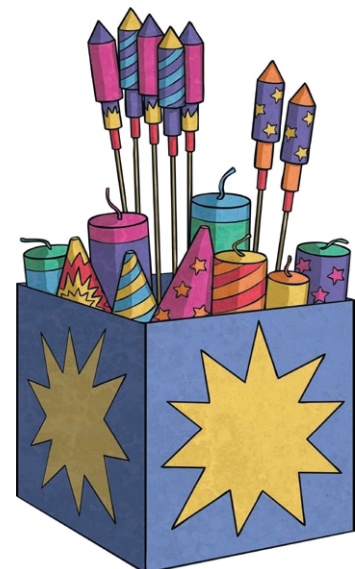
Mexican sweetbread is baked with a charm or a coin inside. The person who gets the coin or charm is said to be blessed with good luck.



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 shows that you are getting rid of all negative things that happened.

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's Eve is called Hogmanay. People visit one another's houses and take gifts, usually a coin, bread, salt, coal and whisky. These represent wealth, food, flavour, warmth and good cheer.

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 are like promises. 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.

Questions

1. What are people saying goodbye to at the start of the New Year?

2. Who changed the dates of the calendar?

3. Which country welcomes the New Year first? Tick **one**.

- Brazil
- Kiribati
- The United States of America
- Mexico

4. Why is a coin or charm baked inside Mexican sweetbread? Tick **one**.

- to bring bad luck
- to ward off evil spirits
- to bring good luck
- as a decoration

5. Which country calls New Year 'Hogmanay'? Tick **one**.

- Brazil
- Scotland
- Mexico
- England

6. Which two of these may someone bring to a friend's house for Hogmanay? Tick **two**.

- sweets
- bread
- coal
- flower

7. Why do you think people choose to make New Year's Resolutions?
