

All about New Year

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Are There Different Calendars?

Before the year 45BC, we used a calendar based on the cycle of the moon but there were frequent problems with this getting out of sync.

There are still places in the world and different religions who use different calendars such as Ethiopia, Iran and Nepal.

Why not find out the names of as many calendars as you can that are still used today and what the differences are.

Find Out More:



Why January 1st?

In short, Julius Caesar chose the 1st of January in his Julian Calendar because it fitted in with some of their new positions of office but many other dates had been used before that.

Not everyone stuck to the 1st of January. Pope Gregory's calendar in 1572 had 1st of January as the start but the spread of this official date was gradual.



It wasn't until 1752 that England and parts of America adopted 1st of January as the New Year, before then it had been 25th March (around the spring equinox).



Historically and even before Christianity, there were celebrations around the winter solstice and that often marked the start of the new year.

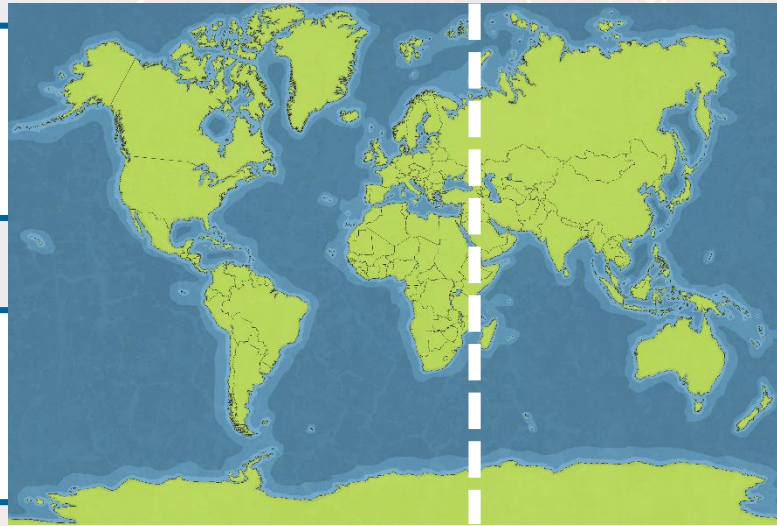


Who Celebrates New Year First?

Due to the different time zones around the world, there is something called the International Date Line so people around the globe know when to start changing the calendar to the next day.

The International Date Line was created in 1884

International Date Line

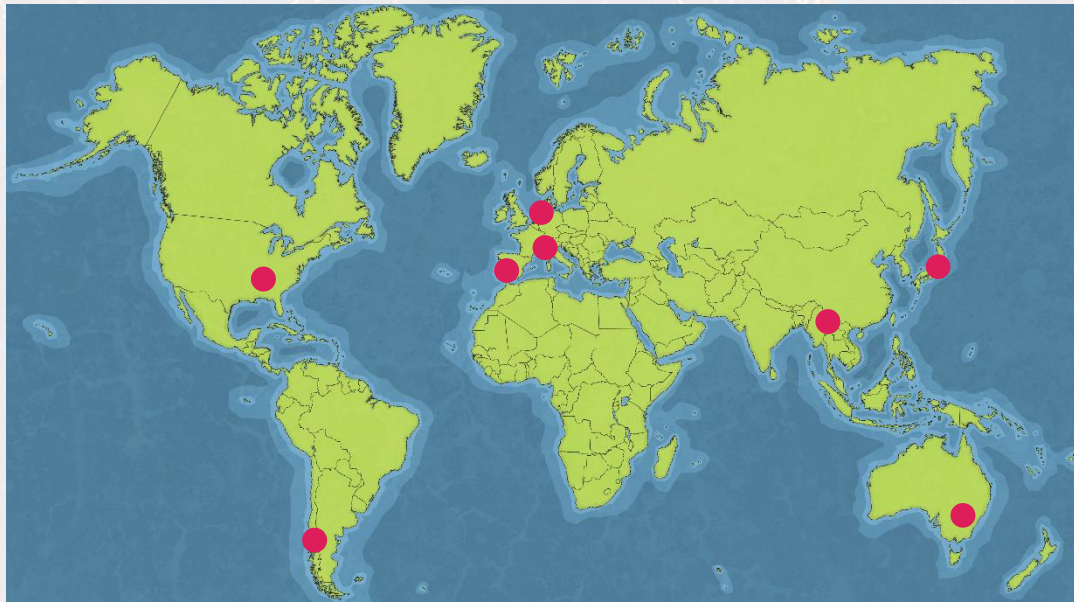


It is not a straight line but runs roughly vertically in the middle of the Pacific Ocean along the end of the map we are used to seeing.

Think about it: Spot where you live, who celebrates new year before you and after you? Use the + or – hours to work out what are you doing when Mexico or Fiji celebrate New Year.

New Year's Eve Around the World

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Chinese New Year is later than 1st January. Red is an important colour for New Year with people giving money in red wallets, hanging red lanterns and even painting their doors red!



Hogmanay

This is the Scottish name for the last day of the year and dates back to Viking times with parties around the winter solstice.

Parties are held in homes and in towns and cities, probably the largest of which is Hogmanay in Edinburgh.

First-Footing is a tradition that starts after the stroke of midnight. It involves being the first person of the new year to go into a house and with that you bring gifts such as bread, coal, money and whisky to bring good luck for food, drink, wealth and warmth for the year ahead. Traditionally, the person doing the first footing would be the one with the darkest hair and historically a man.

Find Out More: Try and find to photos or videos of Hogmanay in Edinburgh to see just how big it is!

Auld Lang Syne

This is a Scottish song now sung widely across the world at midnight on New Year's Eve...here's the first verse and chorus.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.



Auld Lang Syne

The song is also used to close other events or at funerals as it is a song to mark the passing of something and at new year it is marking the passing of the old year.

'for Auld Lang Syne' means 'for the sake of old times' (for old times' sake we might say), this is why you shouldn't sing 'for the sake of auld lang syne' as you would be repeating yourself.

The words were collected and written by Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1788. It actually has five verses.



Find Out More: Look at all the verses and translate them into modern day English.

Stonehaven Fireballs

There are various traditions specific to certain places at New Year, but this one is found in Scotland in the town of Stonehaven.

The tradition has been going for over 100 years. Some say it is to ward off evil spirits and bring luck for the fishing fleet.



Find Out More: Find Stonehaven on a map and then search for Stonehaven Fireballs on the internet, watch videos and you can even watch the webcam on New Year's Eve!

New Year's Resolutions

Starting a New Year signifies a fresh start and people use this to try and make better habits including eating healthily and exercising.

The most common resolution last year in Germany was reducing stress while the Swedish and the UK wanted to get more exercise and the USA wanted to save more money.



Try It: Have a go at writing your own resolutions here: [New Years Resolution Writing Frame](#)

Things to Do

[Reflect and focus on your goals](#)

[New Year Activity Booklet](#)

[Plan some random acts of kindness for the new year](#)

[Play the counting down to the new year board game](#)

Happy New Year!





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