

STATETIMES

SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday



15 New Year’s Traditions From Around the World

As you make your plans to ring in 2022, consider partaking in one of the New Year's traditions from around the world. The past few years have truly been unlike any other, but one thing has been clear—certain practices are now more important than ever, as they keep us grounded and remind us of the future ahead (and what to look out for, if you're following any New Year's superstitions). Many still can't travel this year, so we've rounded up a few of our favorite New Year's traditions from cultures all over the globe. Pick one that lends itself to virtual celebration, or ask a few friends to join in the fun. (Or you can always just make a plan to watch some of the best New Year's movies instead.) We all need all the good luck we can get! May 2022 be a year of good fortune with a generous dose of sanity. And don't forget to make those New Year's resolutions.

- United States: Watching the ball drop**

Millions of Americans gather around their television sets (or on the streets of Times Square, despite freezing temps) to watch the ball drop at the stroke of midnight each year. Kicking off in 1907 to ring in January 1908, New York Times owner Adolph Ochs created the event to draw attention to the Times's new headquarters, and it's been an annual spectacle and one of the most popular New Year's Eve celebrations ever since.
- Brazil: Heading to the beach**

"In Brazil, people usually go to the beach since it's the summer there. Immediately after midnight, you're supposed to jump seven waves while making seven wishes," says Hudson Bohr, a Brazilian photographer based in NYC. The tradition is rooted in paying homage to Yemanjá, the goddess of water. "Before you get in the water, you're supposed to wear all white, as it symbolizes purity."
- Spain: Eating 12 grapes**

The Spanish start off their new year by eating 12 grapes, which symbolize each strike of the clock. The tradition of las doce uvas de la suerte started in the late 19th century and is believed to ward off evil while boosting your chances of a prosperous and lucky new year. However, this will work only if you manage to eat all of the grapes in a matter of seconds since they need to be gone by the time the clock finishes striking midnight.
- India: Building a sculpture of an old man and burning it down**

"Back in Bombay we'd make an effigy of an 'old man' that symbolized the old year and burn it at midnight," says Stephanie Fernandes, an associate creative director at BBDO San Francisco. The burning symbolizes the passing of grievances from the old year and makes space for a new year to be born. "Everyone would gather around singing 'Auld Lang Syne' and then it would turn into a little party. Bombay is very cosmopolitan and was home to people of various faiths, therefore we'd have a ton of different festivals, but this was one that united across ages and faiths."
- Japan: Eating soba noodles**

People in Japan kick off the new year by eating a warm bowl of soba noodles. The tradition dates back to the Kamakura period and is tied to a Buddhist temple giving out the noodles to the poor. Because the long thin noodles are firm yet easy to bite, it is believed eating them symbolizes a literal break away from the old year.
- France: Feasting with Champagne**

While the notion of drinking wine in France is about as groundbreaking as florals for spring, the French up the ante and go all out on Champagne to celebrate the new year. There is usually plenty of dancing and party hopping, but this year gatherings
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- will likely be virtual (it's Zoom season, the holiday edition). The food choices, however, remain the same: sparkling wines are paired with oysters, turkey, goose, or a Cornish hen.

**Haiti: Sharing soup joumou**

"January 1 is actually Haitian Independence Day," says Olivier Joseph, a graduate student at Pritzker School of Medicine in Chicago. "We eat pumpkin soup (soup joumou) because it was a delicacy that enslaved Black people were not allowed to have. We often go to other people's houses and bring some of our soup and swap for some of theirs—everyone makes it a little different."

**Denmark: Throwing old plates**

Chuckling plates at your friends usually signals a conversation gone very wrong. In Denmark, however, New Year's Eve traditions like this bring your loved ones good luck. Tradition has it that the more broken kitchenware you accumulate on your door step, the better off you'll be.

**Canada: Going ice fishing**

Freezing temps don't keep Canadians from starting the new year with a winter favorite sport—ice fishing. According to Global News, families will rent heated huts and cooking equipment so that they can enjoy their feast with loved ones on the spot.

**Philippines: Serving 12 round fruits**

On New Year's Eve, families in the Philippines make sure to serve 12 round fruits, like apples, grapes, and plums, which are believed to represent prosperity due to their shape, which mirrors coins. As for the lucky number, each fruit represents one month out of the year.

**Mexico: Giving the gift of homemade tamales**

In Mexico families gather to make New Year's Eve food—specifically tamales, which are corn dough stuffed with meat, cheese, and veggies all wrapped in husks—and then hand them out to loved ones on New Year's Eve. On New Year's Day, the warm pockets are often served with menudo, a traditional Mexican soup made from cow's stomach.

**Greece: Hanging an onion outside the door**

Not only are onions a kitchen staple, they can also bring you good luck for the new year ahead. In Greece it's tradition to hang an onion outside your door. Believed to symbolize fertility and growth (thanks to its ability to sprout on its own), the onion is hung on the door after church service on New Year's Day.

**Colombia: Placing three potatoes under the bed**

On New Year's Eve, Colombian households have a tradition, called agüero, of placing three potatoes under each family member's bed—one peeled, one not, and the last one only partially. At midnight each person grabs for one with eyes closed and depending on the potato they select, can either expect a year of good fortune, financial struggle, or a mix of both.

**Ireland: Banging bread against the walls**

To ward off evil spirits, families in Ireland make way for a healthy and prosperous new year by banging loaves of Christmas bread against the walls and doors throughout the home.

**Norway and Denmark: Celebrating with a towering cake**

Kransekake, a traditional ringed cake often made with at least 18 layers, is eaten in both Denmark and Norway on New Year's Eve. The sugary layers, which look like cookies, are held together with a tasty royal icing.
- Doctors recommend THESE practical New Year's resolutions for good health in 2023
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- What is your New Year's resolution for 2023? Is it to lose weight and attain your best figure? Or is it to take less stress and become a calmer version of yourself? The ideas are endless, but before you resolve on doing 'this' and 'that' for the next year, were you able to achieve your resolution taken in the beginning of 2022? If the answer is "oops no!," then you are not alone. Often, New Year's resolutions break sooner than we can imagine, with some people pulling them off for a couple of months, while some fail within the first week of January! Two of the most common reasons why our good intentions do not come true are: (a) We cannot change our habits overnight, and (b) We set too-idealistic goals And then we end up winding back to the same-old routine. Mind it, if chosen wisely, your New Year's resolution can help transform your life for good. To help you out for 2023, here are some doctor recommendations on how you can choose good health in the new year and ahead. Dr. Jyoti Kapoor, Senior Psychiatrist and Founder, Manasthali, recommends the following easy-to-do and super effective health resolutions for 2023:

**Spend 15 minutes in nature every day**

One simple health goal that can bring positive returns is spending time in nature every day. It will expose you to sunlight. Sunlight can benefit your health by helping you make Vitamin D. It can also help you sleep better at night.

**Find an exercise you enjoy**

It is a great idea to resolve to exercise more in the new year. But, it's important to choose an exercise that you enjoy doing so that you are more likely to continue it. It's okay to try a few things until you find what sticks.
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- Practice self-care**

Before you can take care of the other people in your life, it's important to take care of yourself. In the new year, strive to give yourself time to rest and do the things you enjoy. This can help you feel happier all year long.

Dr. Mala Kaneria, Consultant Infectious Diseases, Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre, believes our body should be like a well oiled engine, which, if well nourished physically and mentally, will give a good mileage. Here are Dr. Kaneria's recommendations:

**Eat a healthy balanced diet consisting of all nutrients**

An important factor here is to have everything in moderation and to maintain regular timings. Depriving ourselves of food items that we like will increase the craving, hence moderation rather than total abstinence is recommended. Skipping meals is a bad idea and should be avoided. Food fads and trying to follow the latest diet trend such as a zero carbohydrate diet may be detrimental to one's health in the long run. Water intake should be optimal to stay hydrated and flush out toxins from the body.

**Choose good company**

"Satsang" means good company. Being around people who cherish you and transmit positive vibes, goes a long way in contributing to good mental and physical health. Solitude is preferable rather than being around people who don't add value to your life and contribute to your growth.

**Stress should be kept at bay**

Stress should be kept at bay by avoiding overthinking, engaging in hobbies, and decreasing screen time. Meeting family and friends over meals and coffee is one of the best ways of beating stress. Practicing yoga and meditation also contributes to
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- lowering stress levels.

Regular short vacations and holidays are important to recharge your batteries. Me time is probably more important than being surrounded by people all the time. Solo holidays can do wonders for your well being. Lastly, self love and self parenting are the primary drivers of good health. Your health is your responsibility and no one else's. For women's gynecological health, Dr Ritu Sethi, Senior Consultant Gynecology, Cloud Nine Hospital, Gurgaon and Apex Clinic, Gurgaon, recommends certain routines to follow for good health in 2023.

**Women's gynecological health routine**

Making an appointment for routine Pap smears is necessary as this test checks for pelvic problems such as cervical cancer. If anything abnormal is found, it can be treated in its earliest stages. Every pregnant woman needs to sign up for proper prenatal care. This is the only way for them to ensure a healthy pregnancy. The most important thing women can do for their gynecological health is to know and respect their body.

Dr. Atul Mathur - Executive Director, Interventional Cardiology and Chief of Cath Lab, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi says that a simple set of goals can help you make a better person and could help you transform your health for your own good. Apart from the above mentioned tips, Dr. Mathur adds:

**Annual medical check**

Regular body health checks will help you maintain blood pressure, blood sugar, bad cholesterol and help to keep diseases at bay.

**Get better sleep**

A good 8-hour sleep is always recommended. Stick to a sleep schedule, avoid caffeine before sleep, balance fluid intake and exercise early.
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