

# Young times

## Out with the old . . .

The big night has finally arrived! When the clock strikes midnight, the British hold hands and sing Auld Lang Syne, but how do they see in the new year in other countries? **Julia Belluz** reports



**▲ Spain**

Spaniards celebrate New Year's Eve, or *La Noche Vieja*, with a tradition that you might find difficult to swallow. At midnight families gather together and everyone eats 12 grapes — one for every chime of the clock. This ritual was started 100 years ago by farmers who were left with too many grapes after the harvest. For every grape you eat as the clock chimes, you get a month of good luck. Then Spanish people do what they do best — party until the early hours!



**▲ Germany**

Germans have a tradition known as *Bleigessen*. Before midnight everyone drops a piece of molten lead into cold water. The shape that it forms tells them what the year ahead will bring; a heart or ring shape could mean a wedding, while a ship signifies a journey and a pig means plenty of food!

**▼ China**

The Chinese new year starts on a different day each year, depending on the Moon's cycle, and celebrations last for 15 days. Over the holiday period people visit their families and often exchange red packets of money, or chocolate coins, because the colour is considered lucky. On the 15th day, families light candles outside their homes and there are parades of lanterns and dragons. The Chinese believe that the dragons will chase away bad spirits.



**▲ Bangladesh**

The Bengali new year (*Pohela Boishakh*), is celebrated in the spring. People empty their houses and descend on the streets, where teenagers keep their eye out for potential girlfriends or boyfriends. Women dress in special saris, which are often yellow, and everyone feasts on sandesh, a coconut sweet.

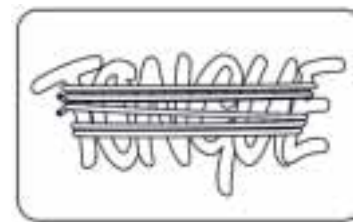


**◀ Brazil**

Brazilians have many superstitions about the new year and wear yellow underwear because it is deemed to be lucky. In big cities such as Rio de Janeiro, people spend the night of December 31 at the beach. They wet their feet in the sea and spread flowers in the water.

### daily dingbat

Which word or phrase is this? Say what you see.



**Christmas Eve's answer** Nuts and bolts

### puzzle of the day

#### picture ladder

Write the name of each object in its numbered row in the grid. Then read down the letters in the yellow squares to reveal a covering for a wound.

1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

### joke of the day

**What is the best Christmas present?  
A broken drum — you can't beat it**

**Christmas Eve's answers** 1. Trent 2. Severn 3. Avon 4. Shannon 5. Thames 6. Humber



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