

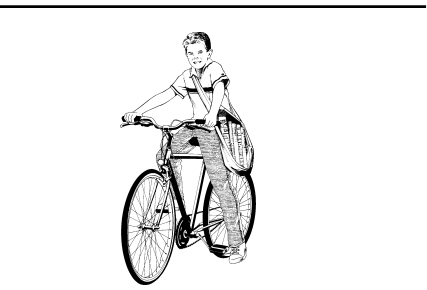
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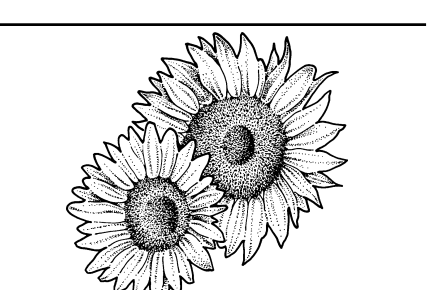
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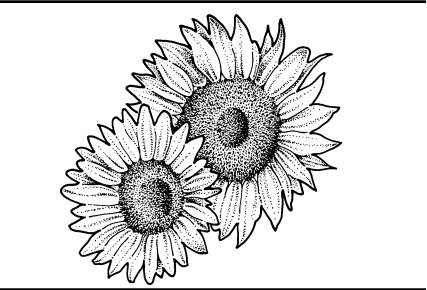
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## Have a safe and fun time while ringing in the new year, 2006!

New Year's traditions vary around the world. It is for some a time for family, for others a holy day and for still others a time of partying with reckless abandon.

What is universal for the holiday is that it marks a new beginning, the end of one year and start of the next.

New Year's Day has been on a variety of times on various calendars throughout history, and even today is not celebrated on the same day all around the globe.

Most of the world follows the Gregorian calendar, which starts the new year on Jan. 1, but in some countries, it is celebrated as a holy day by those who still follow the Julian calendar, including some of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

In China, the new year is not celebrated on the same day each year. It was Feb. 9 in 2005 but will be on Jan. 29, 2006. The Chinese New Year is the second New Moon after the winter solstice. It is based on astronomical observations, and has nothing to do with the Pope, emperors, animals or myths.

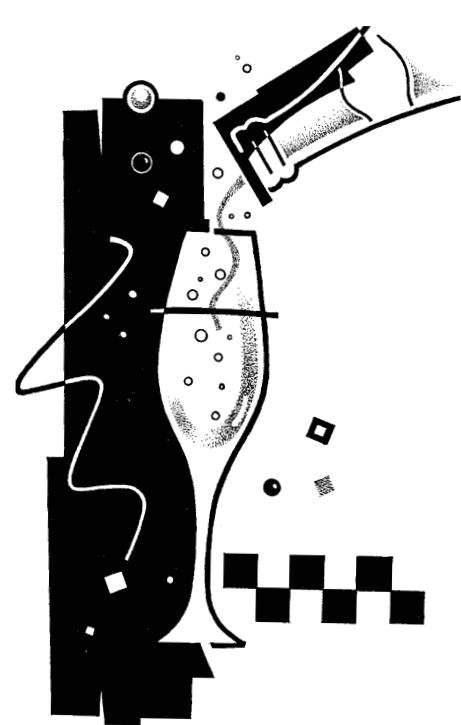
In Japan, New Year (shogatsu or oshogatsu) is the most important holiday, celebrated for three days. Most businesses close from Jan. 1-3, and families gather to spend the days together.

Years are viewed as completely separate in Japan, so all duties are supposed to be done by the end of the year, and the new year is viewed as a fresh start. Bonekai (year forgetting) parties are held with the purpose of leaving the old year's worries and troubles behind.

Much of this country watches the ball dropping in New York's Times Square, as a 1,070-pound, 6-foot-diameter Waterford crystal ball is lowered starting at 11:59 p.m. and reaches the bottom of its tower at the stroke of midnight.

The custom derives from the time signal that used to be given at noon in harbors. Other ball drops are held at Copacabana beach in Rio de Janiero and Sydney Harbor in Australia.

Other New Year's traditions around the world include a Vienna New Year Concert in Austria, a Junkanoo parade in Nassau, Bahamas, and Polar Bear Clubs plunging into cold water on New Year's Day in several cities. The Coney Island Polar Bears Club in New York is the oldest cold-water swimming club in the United States, with



members entering the chilly surf since 1903.

Whether you celebrate with a few of your closest friends and family or have a big bash, the food and drinks can make or break the celebration. A few party recipes found at allrecipes.com include:

**Sassy Chicken Enchilada Dip**  
3 cooked, boneless chicken breast halves, shredded  
2 (8 ounce) packages light cream cheese, softened  
4 green onions, chopped  
1 (10 ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chile peppers  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
1 teaspoon chopped cilantro  
1 tablespoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon cumin  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon paprika  
In a bowl., mix the shredded chicken, light cream cheese, green onion, diced tomatoes with green chile peppers, garlic and cilantro. Season with chili powder, cumin, oregano and paprika. Cover and chill at least 2 hours. Serves 16. Prep time: 15 minutes. Ready in 2 hours, 15 minutes.

**Gluehwein**  
Gluehwein is a German/Austrian winter-

holiday drink that most tourists know as an after-ski drink. After you come in out of the snow, it is supposed to make you glow with warmth again.

The person who submitted the recipe warns that since you drink the wine warm, be aware that the alcohol goes to your head extra quick. Drink it when you have come in and do not have to go out again.

3/4 cup water  
3/4 cup white sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 orange  
10 whole cloves  
1 (750 milliliter) bottle red wine

In a sauce pan, combine the water, sugar and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer.

Cut the orange in half and squeeze the juice into the simmering water. Push the cloves into the outside of the orange peel and place peel in simmering water. Continue simmering for 30 minutes, until thick and syrupy.

Pour in the wine and heat until steaming but not simmering. Remove the clove-studded orange halves. Serve hot in mugs or glasses that have been preheated in warm water. (Cold glasses will break.) Serves 6. Prep time 10 minutes, cook time 35 minutes.

**Non-Alcoholic Margarita Punch**  
1 (12 fluid ounce) can frozen lemonade concentrate  
1 (12 fluid ounce) can frozen limeade concentrate  
1 cup confectioners' sugar  
4 egg whites  
6 cups crushed ice  
1 liter carbonated water  
1 lime, sliced  
coarse salt

In a 4 quart container, combine lemonade concentrate, limeade concentrate, powdered sugar, egg whites and crushed ice; mix well. Cover and freeze at least 30 minutes before serving.

Spoon 2 cups slush mixture into blender. Add 1 cup of carbonated water. Blend until frothy. To serve, rub rim of glass with lime slice, dip in salt and fill glass. Garnish with lime slices. Serves 24.

Information on the holiday is from Wikipedia, a free on-line encyclopedia, from [www.chinapage.com](http://www.chinapage.com) and [www.japan-guide.com](http://www.japan-guide.com).

## Following safety tips can help avoid tragic start to year

While many are partying hard to celebrate the beginning of the new year, injecting some common sense and reason can help avoid a tragic start.

An editorial by Anish Chandy found at [www.buzzle.com](http://www.buzzle.com) offers tips for avoiding drunk-driving accidents and fires, gives hits for helping pets through the holiday and suggests starting each year off with a fire safety check of your home.

Tips she offers include:

- Not drinking and driving is common sense. Designate a driver before the first drink. Public transportation is another safe option, as is spending the night at a friend's home.
- Hosts should be sure to serve nonalcoholic drinks and have the strength to refuse to serve a friend who is finding it difficult to keep his emotions in check, a sign he's becoming a drunken lout. Avoid relying on a person's physical appearance alone to determine his state of drunkenness.
- Beer and wine are just as intoxicating as hard liquor. A 12-ounce beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce wine cooler and an ounce and a half of liquor contain the same amount of alcohol.



- Mixers do not help dilute the alcohol; in fact, they can have the opposite effect. Carbonated mixers like club soda or tonic water cause alcohol to be absorbed into a person's system more quickly. Fruit juice and other sweet mixers mask the taste of alcohol and may cause people to drink more.
- Fatty food provided with the alcohol help because it will create a lining around the stomach that will prevent the alcohol from getting into the blood stream quickly. This will ensure that the drinker is not overly dehydrated.
- Lighting fireworks can create a nice

visual and psychological effect, but water must be kept on hand at all times. There is a temptation to ignore this when there is snow, but snow is not the same thing as water. Lighting fireworks for New Year's is not legal in the city limits of Goodland, nor is shooting a gun to ring in the new year.

- Pets can be scared by fireworks and large crowds. If there is sufficient planning, the pet can be desensitized to the sounds, and a pet can be reassured by the tone of the owner's voice. Make sure pets have ID tags with current information in case they get way, and that they are safely secured to the pet.
- Candles, kids and pets do not mix.
- Have your chimney checked each year.

Install a carbon monoxide detector. Fire-place ashes should be disposed of in a metal container with a tight fitting lid, not in paper sacks, cardboard boxes or plastic trash cans.

Install a smoke alarm or check existing alarms to be sure they work. Buy special smoke alarms for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Develop an exit plan with the whole family.

Have a safe new year!



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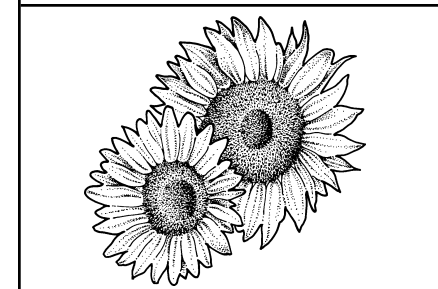
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