New Year Celebrations Around the World

How did you celebrate the start of the new year 2006? Maybe you went to a party or watched on TV as the ball dropped in New York's Times Square. Maybe your family has a special food you eat on New Year's Day. People all over the world have different ways of welcoming the start of a new year.



New Year's Day, January 1, is a holiday in many countries. In Australia, since it is summer there at this time of year, people celebrate on January 1 with outdoor activities like picnics on the beach, rodeos, and surf carnivals.

In Spain, it is traditional to eat 12 grapes, one each time a clock chimes, at midnight on New Year's Day. Spanish people say eating grapes brings good luck.

Some people in the southern United States eat blackeyed peas and turnip greens on January 1 to bring good luck earning money in the new year. The peas represent coins and the greens stand for dollars.

NEWS WORD BOX

lunar calendar resolution

Other countries start the new year on a day other than January 1. Many Chinese people celebrate the new year between January 21 and February 20. Their celebration is based on the lunar calendar, which starts each new month on the day of the new moon. Big parades with huge floats of dancing dragons and lions mark the start of the new year. The dragon is a symbol of wealth and long life. Some Chinese people also set off firecrackers, because they believe loud noises scare away evil spirits.

MORE FACTS ABOUT NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

- People often make New Year's resolutions. A resolution is a promise to improve oneself or do something different in the new year.
- In the U.S., a baby wearing a banner with the year on it is a symbol of a new year.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Think about two resolutions you might make for the year 2006. Explain why you choose those two resolutions.