

Cultural News

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New Year Traditions Around the World

How do you say “Happy New Year”?

Afrikaans:	Voorspoedige nuwe jaar	Basque:	Urte Berri on
Chinese:	Sun nien fai lok	Czech:	Stastny Novy Rok
Danish:	Godt NytÅ	German:	Ein gl¼ckliches neues Jahr
Greek:	Euty chismenos o kainourgios chronos	Hawaiian:	Hauoli Makahiki hou
Japanese:	Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu	Korean:	Sehe Bokmanee Bateuseyo
Romanian:	La Multi Ani si Un An Nou Fericit	Russian:	S novym godom
Samoan:	Ia manuia le Tausaga Fou	Spanish:	Feliz a±o nuevo
Ukrainian:	Z novym rokom	Lao:	Sabaidee Pi Mai
Vietnamese:	Chuc mung nam moi	Welsh:	Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Japan

The new year is the most important holiday in Japan, and is a symbol of renewal. In December, various Bonenkai or “forget-the-year parties” are held to bid farewell to the problems and concerns of the past year and prepare for a new beginning. Misunderstandings and grudges are forgiven and houses are scrubbed. At midnight on Dec. 31, Buddhist temples strike their gongs 108 times, in a effort to expel 108 types of human weakness. New Year’s day itself is a day of joy and no work is to be done. Children receive otoshidamas, small gifts with money inside. Sending New Year’s cards is a popular tradition—if postmarked by a certain date, the Japanese post office guarantees delivery of all New Year’s cards on Jan. 1.

Spain

The Spanish ritual on New Year’s eve is to eat twelve grapes at midnight. The tradition is meant to secure twelve happy months in the coming year.

The Netherlands

The Dutch burn bonfires of Christmas trees on the street and launch fireworks. The fires are meant to purge the old and welcome the new.

Greece

In Greece, New Year’s day is also the Festival of St. Basil, one of the founders of the Greek Orthodox Church. One of the traditional foods served is Vassilopitta, or St Basil’s cake. A silver or gold coin is baked inside the cake. Whoever finds the coin in their piece of cake will be especially lucky during the coming year.

Widely Observed New Year Symbols and Traditions

It is believed that the Babylonians were the first to make New Year’s resolutions, and people all over the world have been breaking them ever since. The early Christians believed the first day of the new year should be spent reflecting on past mistakes and resolving to improve oneself in the new year.

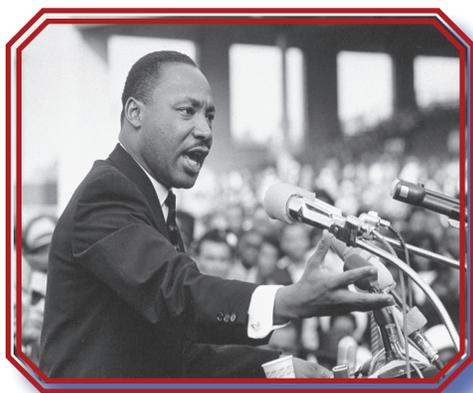
Fireworks: Noisemaking and fireworks on New Year’s eve is believed to have originated in ancient times, when noise and fire were thought to dispel evil spirits and bring good luck. The Chinese are credited with inventing fireworks and use them to spectacular effect in their New Year’s celebrations.



JANUARY 2017 CALENDAR

NATIONAL BRAILLE LITERACY MONTH
CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH
NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH

- 1- New Year’s Day (International)
- 5- Guru Gobindh Singh birthday (Sikh)
- 6- Three Kings Day (Christian)
- 7- Feast of the Nativity (Orthodox Christian)
- 8- Baptism of the Lord Jesus (Christian)
- 12-15- Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)
- 15- World Religion Day (Baha’i)
- 16- Martin Luther King Day (US)
- 18-25- Week of Christian Unity (Christian)
- 19- Timkat (Ethiopian Orthodox Christian)
- 20- Inauguration Day (US)
- 27- Auschwitz Liberation Day (International)
- 27- Vietnam Peace Day (US)
- 28- Lunar New Year (International)
- 29- World Leprosy Day



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1929-1968

American Clergyman & Civil Rights Leader

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., graduated from Morehouse College (B.A., 1948), Crozer Theological Seminary (B.D., 1951), and Boston

University (Ph.D., 1955). The son of the pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, King was ordained in 1947 and became (1954) minister of a Baptist church in Montgomery, Ala. He led the black boycott (1955–56) of segregated city bus lines and in 1956 gained a major victory and prestige as a civil-rights leader when Montgomery buses began to operate on a desegregated basis.

King organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which gave him a base to pursue further civil-rights activities, first in the South and later nationwide. His philosophy of nonviolent resistance led to his arrest on numerous occasions in the 1950s and 60s. His campaigns had mixed success, but the protest he led in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963 brought him worldwide attention. He spearheaded the Aug., 1963, March on Washington, which brought together more than 200,000 people. In 1964 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

King's leadership in the civil-rights movement was challenged in the mid-1960s as others grew more militant. His interests, however, widened from civil rights to include criticism of the Vietnam War and a deeper concern over poverty. His plans for a Poor People's March to Washington were interrupted (1968) for a trip to Memphis, Tenn., in support of striking sanitation workers. On Apr. 4, 1968, he was shot and killed as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel (since 1991 a civil-rights museum).

James Earl Ray, a career criminal, pleaded guilty to the murder and was convicted, but he soon recanted, claiming he was duped into his plea. Ray's conviction was subsequently upheld, but he eventually received support from members of King's family, who believed King to have been the victim of a conspiracy. Ray died in prison in 1998. In a jury trial in Memphis in 1999 the King family won a wrongful-death judgment against Loyd Jowers, who claimed (1993) that he had arranged the killing for a Mafia figure. Many experts, however, were unconvinced by the verdict, and in 2000, after an 18-month investigation, the Justice Dept. discredited Jowers and concluded that there was no evidence of an assassination plot.

King wrote *Stride toward Freedom* (1958), *Why We Can't Wait* (1964), and *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967). His birthday is a national holiday, celebrated on the third Monday in January. King's wife, Coretta Scott King, has carried on various aspects of his work. She also wrote *My Life with Martin Luther King* (1989).

<http://www.biography.com/people/martin-luther-king-jr-9365086#education-and-spiritual-growth>

New Staff Interpreter Profile: Ali Alazzawi

Ali is the latest addition to the Medical Interpreting Services team and is our first on-staff Arabic interpreter.

Ali is a medical school graduate from the University of Baghdad. He worked as a physician in Iraq and other countries from 2007 until he moved to the United States.

When he arrived to the United States, he decided to change his career path and pursue a profession in Medical Interpreting. He started working as a medical interpreter with Language World Services for a little over a year, assisting the growing Arabic community. He is also working on a master's degree in Public Health.

Ali enjoys judo and swimming as part of his hobbies. Ali received a silver medal from the California State Judo Championship. He also received medals in a 50 meters swimming competition.

One of Ali's greatest accomplishments and pride is his daughter.

We asked Ali how he feels about joining the MIS team? In his own words, "Joining MIS was one of the best things that happened in my life. People here are awesome. They are professional, but funny. I am really happy to work in such an environment."

Welcome aboard, Ali! We are pleased to have you as a part of the UC Davis Medical Center Interpreting Team.

