

Food around the world

1 Reading

Read the texts about what people around the world eat to celebrate something special.
Do you eat any of these foods in your country?

New Year

In China, people eat eight, ten, or twelve dishes of food at New Year. This is because an even number means double the luck. A lot of the food at New Year has a special meaning. Seaweed means good luck and long noodles mean long life. They eat whole vegetables, and don't use knives to cut things, because this means the end of your good luck.

In Russia, there is lots of food on the table so the next year will be happy and plentiful. At 11:59, people wait for the clock to strike twelve. Then they wish everybody good luck and happiness.

In Spain, people eat twelve grapes – one with each chime of the clock at midnight. This brings good luck for the next twelve months. But it is difficult to eat twelve grapes in twelve seconds, so people usually have a mouth full of grapes at the end!

Weddings

Italians eat doughnuts in the shape of bow ties for good luck. They also eat sugared almonds when they hope for a baby.

Many years ago in Britain, the father of the bride gave the groom "honey mead" (a honey drink) for a whole month. In this way, the couple had a month of sweetness and happiness. We have now changed the word to "honeymoon" – the vacation a couple takes after their wedding.

Birthdays

When a child is born in China, the father gives red eggs to his friends and family – an even number for a girl, and an odd number for a boy.

The birthday party started in Europe in the Middle Ages. People were afraid of ghosts and bad spirits on their birthdays. Friends and family came to visit you with gifts to stop them.

In Mexico, people fill a paper animal with candy. Children close their eyes and hit the animal until the candy falls out. Then everybody eats the candy.



2 Comprehension

Choose the correct word.

- 1 In China, people eat an *even* / *odd* number of dishes of food.
- 2 In China, knives are *good* / *bad* luck.
- 3 In Spain, people eat *ten* / *twelve* grapes when the clock strikes midnight.
- 4 In Italy, sugared almonds are given *to* / *for* a baby at weddings.
- 5 In the Middle Ages, people *came* / *didn't come* to your house to stop bad spirits.
- 6 In Mexico, children hit a paper animal with their eyes *open* / *closed*.

3 Vocabulary

Match the words 1–6 with their definitions a–f.

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|------------|---|
| 1 dish | a the noise a clock makes to tell you what time it is |
| 2 seaweed | b the most important woman at a wedding |
| 3 chime | c 12 o'clock at night |
| 4 midnight | d the most important man at a wedding |
| 5 bride | e plate of food which people share |
| 6 groom | f a green plant that grows in the ocean |

4 Writing

Write about how people celebrate New Year, weddings, and birthdays in your country. What food do you eat? Do you do some of the things in the texts?