

# culture

## 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 open champagne and wait for the clock to strike twelve. Then they make a toast for the New Year. 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 bowties 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 holiday a couple goes on 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 presents to stop them.

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

### 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 twelve grapes **before / after** 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**.

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### 3 Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions.

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

### 4 Writing

Write about how people celebrate New Year, weddings and birthdays in your country. Do you do some of the things in the text as well?