

NEW YEAR IN GREAT BRITAIN

New Year celebrations in Britain is a colorful affair and is celebrated with great enthusiasm. Midnight parties, lavish meals, champagnes, music, dance and fireworks are the important parts of New Year in Britain. It is the biggest night-out of the year.



Another important part of New Year celebrations in Britain is the biggest New Year parade. The parade starts at noon walking down the streets via Whitehall, Pall Mall and finishing in Berkley square.



One of the most widely known symbols of New Year's Eve is the image of the Clock Tower at the Palace of Westminster, in London, counting down the last minutes of the old year. The first chimes of Big Ben, the bell housed in the Clock Tower, in the new year are broadcast live on radio and television.



This is followed by a spectacular fireworks performance, often centered on the London Eye, which is claimed to be the largest Ferris wheel in Europe.



A very old custom of “first footing” is still followed in Britain. “First foot” is the first person to cross the threshold of a home on New Year’s Day and a bringer of good fortune for the coming year. Preferably the male visitor would be a young, handsome, dark-haired, healthy male. A blonde, a red-haired or a woman are not allowed to enter the house first as they are supposed to bring bad luck.



The first-foot was supposed to bring gifts of money, bread or cake, coal or salt as these were considered lucky. The bread and cake was to ensure that the household did not go hungry during the coming year, the coal was to ensure that the house would be warm throughout the year and the salt was said to bestow wealth.



In Scotland the New Year celebrations are known as Hogmanay. Hogmanay is the Scot's word for the last day of the year, 31st December and the partying can last right through to January 2nd, which is a Bank Holiday in Scotland.



Christmas. English people like this holiday very much and prepare for it beforehand. They buy presents for each other, try to send Christmas cards for their relatives and friends.

