

Dear All,

You will be celebrating yet another new year in under 33 hours. Here are my learnings from the idea of the day:

1. New year is the most celebrated day in the world there are few countries that doesn't celebrate it. There are 11 countries that don't celebrate New Year's Day. Israel uses the Gregorian calendar but does not formally celebrate New Year's Day on December 31/ January 1.
2. Every day has some association, Valentine's Day is about romance, July 1 is independence for the US people, August 15 is Independence Day in India, Thanksgiving is about productivity, Christmas about goodwill, what is new year about?
3. New Year is an active minded holiday it's about revaluation.
4. Babylon celebrated EQUINOX. This is the day when the lengths of the day and night are roughly the same. This happens typically in spring on March 31st and in fall on September 22. The earliest known celebrations were around the spring EQUINOX.
5. In Pre-Christ Rome, the day was dedicated to Janus the god of gateways and beginnings, after whom January is named.
6. In 46 BC Julius Caesar added 90 days to the roman calendar to align it with the movement and position of the sun.
7. Julius Caesar then instituted January 1 as the first day of the year to honour Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back and to look forward.
8. Christian leaders in medieval Europe temporarily replaced January 1 with days having more religious significance like December 25. However, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII re-established January 1 as New Year's Day.
9. China celebrates new year but has their own Chinese New Year. This is the year of the rabbit. They clean the house a week ahead to wipe out any bad luck from the old year.
10. In Germany, New Year's Day is called "Silvester" after the 4th century Pope Sylvester whose feast is observed on December 31.
11. In Japan, the Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times to symbolically remove the 108 human sins in Buddhist belief.
12. In Netherlands, New Year's Day is celebrated by families with board games and watching popular Dutch comedians shredding the previous year to bits on TV.
13. In Scotland, they have a superstition called 'first footing' where good luck comes if the first person to set foot in the house on New Year's Day is a tall dark-haired man and he brings a gift of food or coal.
14. So, look back, look ahead, make your promises, make your resolutions. That's what New Year's Day is about!!

The first city and country to celebrate New Year's Day is Kiritimati, New Zealand.

So, happy new year. May you have a great year ahead and may all your wishes come true, and you stay resolute with your resolutions.

Shiv