

Times Square, New York City New Year's Eve

Every year as the clock nears midnight on December 31st, the eyes of the world turn to the dazzling lights and energy of Times Square. New Year's Eve at the symbolic center of New York City has become more than just a celebration - it's a global tradition. The world holds its breath...and cheers as the clock strikes twelve.

As the famous New Year's Eve Ball descends from the flagpole atop One Times Square, about one million people in Times Square, millions nationwide and over a billion watching throughout the world are united in bidding farewell to the departing year, and expressing our joy and hope for the year ahead.



The Evolution of the New Year's Eve Ball

The first New Year's Celebration occurred in 1904. It consisted of a large street party and a fireworks show at the end. Three years later in 1907, the first Ball was dropped from One Times Square. The ball weighed just less than 320 kilograms, measured 1.5 meters in diameter, was made of iron and wood, and was illuminated by 100 25-watt light bulbs.

In 1920, the ball was replaced by a ball that weighed 180 kilograms and made completely out of iron. This iron ball was dropped every year until 1955 except in 1942 and 1943. The iron ball was replaced by an aluminum ball that weighed only 68 kilograms. From 1981 until 1988, red lights



and a green stem were installed to convert the ball into an apple. In 1995, the aluminum ball was upgraded with rhinestones, strobes, and computer controls.

The year 2000 saw a major change for the New Year's Ball. The new ball was a geodesic sphere, measuring 1.8 meters in diameter, weighing 486 kilograms, and illuminated by 504 crystal triangles. For New Year's Eve 2007, 72 of the crystal triangles featured the new "Hope for Peace" design.



The 2008 New Year's Ball marks the 100th anniversary of the ball drop. This new state-of-the-art design features 672 crystal triangles and 9, 576 LEDs. The most surprising aspect about the new 2008 ball is how much electricity it uses. In fact, the new ball uses the same amount of electricity as ten toasters or one oven.

Interesting Facts about New Year's Eve in Times Square

- For New Year's Eve 2000, an estimated two million people were in Times Square.
- The flag pole measures almost 23.5 meters and the ball descends the pole in the last sixty seconds of the year.
- Over 450 kilograms of confetti is dropped onto Times Square at midnight.
- Over 3500 police officers patrol Times Square during the celebration. For New Year's Eve 2002, there were over 7000.

Questions:

1. What are the Spanish traditions for celebrating the New Year?

2. What are your personal traditions for celebrating the New Year? Answer and ask a partner.