

December 31<sup>st</sup>

BULGARIA



## NEW YEAR'S DINNER



The New Year's meal is an important element of the holiday of Sourvaki, which marks the coming of the new year. On New Year's Eve the housewife bakes a loaf with a silver coin in it.

According to custom, she goes out into the yard with her dough covered hands and strokes all the fruit - trees and beehives since the New Year's dough was believed to bring health and prosperity, fertility and honeycombs filled with honey throughout the year

The next on the New Year's list is cheese pastry, with placed inside it to bring symbolize the traditional health, fortune and the members of the mandatory dishes are wheat, dried fruit, garlic and onions. In Bulgaria it is customary (meat and rice wrapped leaves); or to cook a hen.



obligatory item the "banitsa", a cornel buds luck. These predictions of prosperity for family. Other "pacha", beans, walnuts, honey, some parts of to cook "sarmi" in cabbage

So on New Year's Eve, the whole family would sit down at the table. The eldest member of the family would cense wave incense over the table and through all the rooms of the house and the animal-sheds, making blessings for health, fortune and plenty during the new year. After that he would break the loaf, and give out the pieces – one for the house, one for the housewife, one each for the sons, daughters, their husbands and wives and the grandchildren.. Whoever got the silver coin would be blessed by extra good fortune in the coming year.

So we can see that most of the rituals of New Year's Eve were focused around the table. The variety of dishes symbolize the hard work with which farming families make the land give fruit. This way, the strength, prosperity and abundance that their work has brought is also symbolically carried over into the New Year.

### New Year's Eve

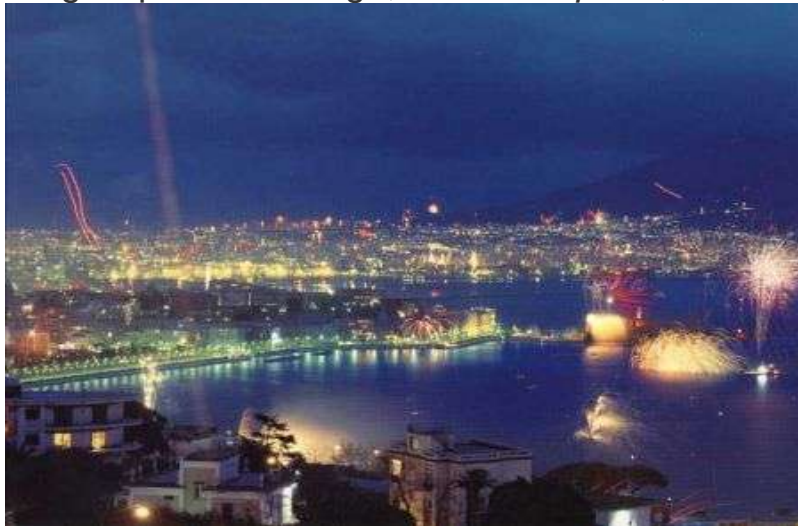
**New Year's Eve** or **Old Year's Night** is on 31 December, the final day of the Gregorian year, and the day before New Year's Day.

New Year's Eve is a separate observance from the observance of New Year's Day. In modern Western practice, New Year's Eve is celebrated with parties and social gatherings spanning the transition of the year at midnight.

Many cultures use fireworks and other forms of noise making in part of the celebration. New Year's Eve is observed universally on 31st December according to the year numbering of the Common Era, or A.D. Anno Domini convention, even in non-Christian nations. New Year's Eve is also the seventh day of Christmas in western Christianity. Traditional and religious celebrations for e.g. the Chinese, Muslim and Jewish new year, which occur on different dates, are still celebrated separately in the cultures that observe them, on the appropriate dates each year

#### **New Year's Eve in Italy - La Festa di San Silvestro**

*La Festa di San Silvestro* is celebrated December 31 on New Year's Eve. As with most Italian festivals, food plays a major role. Families and friends get together for a huge feast. The star of the dinner is lentils, symbolizing money and good fortune for the coming year. Traditionally, the dinner in many parts of Italy also includes a *cotechino*, a large spiced sausage, or a *zampone*, stuffed pig's trotter. The pork



symbolizes the richness of life in the coming year.

#### **Fireworks and Dancing**

Huge midnight fireworks displays celebrate the coming of the new year. Most towns have public displays in a central square but private parties will also

include firecrackers or sparklers, too, and will continue for a long time. Naples is known for having one of the best and biggest New Year's fireworks displays in Italy. Some smaller towns build a bonfire in the central square where villagers will congregate into the early morning. If you're near the coast, lake, or river you will hear boats and ships blowing their horns.

#### **More New Year's Eve Traditions in Italy**



Guests of private or public parties are sometimes entertained with a game called "Tombola", similar to Bingo.

The New Year is also celebrated with *spumante* or *prosecco*, Italian sparkling wine. New Years parties, whether public or private, will often last until sunrise in order to watch the first sunrise of the newborn year.

## *SPAIN*

New Year's Eve