Fun New Year Facts and Trivia

- For prosperity and good luck, eat foods like black eyed peas or ham and cabbage but avoid lobster or chicken (since they move backwards.)
- A kiss on New Year's Eve is about strengthening ties with someone you wish to maintain a good relationship with in the future.
- Wearing red underwear on New Year's is said to bring good luck throughout the new year.

How to make better new year's resolutions

With every New Year comes new resolutions and an exciting urge to make positive changes in your life. However, the majority of New Year's resolutions—anywhere from 75% to a shocking 92%, in fact—aren't kept, and around 80% of resolutions are already broken by the end of January.

Nobody wants to fail at their resolutions, but how do you defy the trend? Here are a few easy tips to make sure your resolutions will last you all year long.

First, make sure your resolution is a want or a need, not a *should.* Sometimes we look around at others' goals, and decide that those goals should be our's as well—without actually thinking about why. Do you actually want to go skydiving or lose weight or are you just saying that because those are popular goals? Dig down deep, and see what *your* feelings tell you.

Think about how you want to feel in the new year. What simple actions can you do on a daily basis to make you feel that way? Want to feel creative? Draw something every day. Want to feel kind and generous? Give a genuine compliment every day (or at least once a week). These aren't the typical goals, but by deciding your end point and then working backwards, you're more likely to feel the way you want to feel. (After all, feelings are what most people are after when they set goals, they just don't realize it.)

Choose something quantifiable. Don't say "read more", say "I want to finish at least twelve books this year". A vague resolution can make you feel overwhelmed and uneasy, with no idea of where to start. With the second resolution, you've already got a place to start. Twelve books. That's one book a month so start by making a list of books. Another vague resolution, "I want to feel kind" gets turned into a quantifiable one: "I want to give a genuine compliment ever day".

Keep in mind that when you're choosing goals, a year-long goal can seem huge and intimidating, but if you break that into monthly and weekly goals it becomes more attainable and easier to get started.

Last but not least, be gentle and kind to yourself. Don't guilt trip yourself if you don't meet all of your resolutions, or find yourself slipping. Changing habits can be an incredibly difficult process. If you fall off the wagon, simply pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start again. ◆

The New Year has not always been celebrated on January 1st. Starting around the year 2000 B.C., the Babylonians observed the beginning of spring as the start of a new year.

Julius Caesar established January 1st as the start of a New Year when he created the Julian calendar.

Auld Lang Syne, the traditional new year's song, was written by Robert Burns in the 1700s, and means "times gone by" in Scottish.

The most popular New Year's resolution in the United States today is "To lose weight."

Sydney, Australia hosts the first major New Year's Eve celebration every year.

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Manage Your Time in the New Year

If you don't know how long it will take you to do something, or where all of your free time is going, you're not very likely to meet your goals. Start managing your time easily by doing a simple time inventory.

For one week, take notes of how you're spending time as your day progresses. How long did you spend in traffic? How long at lunch? How long watching television or surfing the internet? How long on projects related to your work?

Once you know how you're spending your time, you can decide what to change or where you can make a small difference. If you know that you spend several hours a week in traffic, make that time more enjoyable and useful by listening to audiobooks.

A big benefit of doing a time inventory is that you'll be able to see where you are wasting time.

Many people might not realize how much time they spend on mindless activities until that total is in front of their face and in black and white. Identify why these activities are currently taking up so much of your time, and then see if there are other activities that might serve you better.

Once you do an initial time inventory and get a good feel for how you spend your time, you'll likely find more time for doing the things you love and the things that make you feel great. ◆

Just start over

- **Recognize how far you've come.** It might be taking longer than you'd hoped but you're still making progress.
- **Understand what you've learned.** You'll feel less guilt over giving up and get back on track quicker.
- **Develop the motivation to move forward.** Recognize where you may be stuck and write down the next steps to help you move forward. Promise yourself a worthy reward when you hit major milestones. ◆

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