

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN TURKEY



New Year's Eve is one of the most popular holidays in Turkey. The New Year's Eve traditions in our country include a family dinner, a national lottery drawing and a countdown to midnight. New Year's Eve falls on December 31 in the Gregorian calendar.

WHAT DO PEOPLE DO?

Many people in Turkey start celebrating New Year's Eve with a large family dinner. The main course is traditionally a roasted turkey. Variety shows on television begin in late afternoon and continue until early morning of the next day. Many people play games while waiting for the clock to strike midnight. State TV channels announce the winning numbers of a New Year's national lottery just before midnight. Many people in Turkey try to buy a New Year's lottery ticket because it promises a large sum of money to the winner. Many people also congratulate each other and exchange small gifts at midnight between New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Hotels, restaurants and nightclubs offer special entertainment programs on New Year's Eve. Most places require early reservations. Some people go to city centers late on December 31 to watch the traditional fireworks. New Year's Eve ends with a countdown to announce the arrival of a new year, and celebrations continue until the morning of January 1.



PUBLIC LIFE

New Year's Eve is not an official holiday. Many people celebrate New Year's Eve in city centers, so traffic may be intense in the evening of December 31.



BACKGROUND

December 31 became the last day of a calendar year in Turkey in 1926 when this country started using the Gregorian calendar. Turkey and the Ottoman Empire used a solar-based Islamic calendar (Rumi takvim) prior to 1926. New Year's Eve became a popular holiday in Turkey after the Turkish parliament made January 1 (New Year's Day) an official holiday in 1935.