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OSHOGATSU

Japanese New Year

The **Japanese New Year** (正月, *Shōgatsu*) is an annual [festival](#) with its own customs. Since 1873, the official Japanese New Year has been celebrated according to the [Gregorian calendar](#), on January 1 of each year, [New](#)

[Year's Day](#) (元日, *Ganjitsu*).

However, some traditional events of the Japanese New Year are partially celebrated on the first day of the year on the modern [Tenpō calendar](#), the last official lunisolar calendar which was used until 1872 in Japan

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HISTORY

Prior to the [Meiji period](#), the date of the Japanese New Year had been based on Japanese versions of lunisolar calendar (the last of which was the [Tenpō calendar](#)) and, prior to [Jōkyō calendar](#), the Chinese version. However, in 1873, five years after the [Meiji Restoration](#), [Japan](#) adopted the [Gregorian calendar](#) and the first day of January became the official and cultural New Year's Day in Japan.

TRADITIONAL FOODS

The Japanese eat a selection of dishes during the New Year celebration called [osechi-ryōri](#), typically shortened to *osechi*. Many of these dishes are sweet, sour, or dried, so they can keep without refrigeration: the culinary traditions date to a time before households had refrigerators and when most stores closed for the holidays. There are many variations of *osechi*, and some foods eaten in one region are not eaten in other places (or are even considered inauspicious or banned) on New Year's Day. Another popular dish is [ozōni](#), a soup with [mochi](#) rice cake and other ingredients, which differ in various regions of Japan. It is also very common to eat [buckwheat noodles](#) called [toshikoshi soba](#) on [ōmisoka](#) ([New Year's Eve](#)). Today, [sashimi](#) and [sushi](#) are often eaten, as well as non-Japanese foods. To let the overworked stomach rest, seven-[herb](#) rice soup (七草粥, *nanakusa-gayu*) is prepared on the seventh day of January, a day known as [jinjitsu](#).