

English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week



The winter solstice is almost here, the Northern Hemisphere's darkest day



By The Associated Press undefined

The winter solstice is Saturday, bringing the shortest day and longest night of the year to the Northern Hemisphere — ideal **conditions** for holiday lights and warm blankets.

For those who would rather have more sunlight, you can try to make your way to the Southern Hemisphere, where it is summer. Or be patient: Starting Sunday, days will get a little bit longer in the Northern Hemisphere every single day until late June.

These annual changes in sunlight as the Earth revolves around the sun have been well known to humans for centuries. Monuments such as Stonehenge in England and the Torreón at Peru's Machu Picchu were designed in part to align with solstices.

Here's what to know about how the Earth's march around the sun splits up the year.

What is the solstice?

As the Earth travels around the sun, it does so at an angle. For most of the year, the Earth's axis is tilted either toward or away from the sun. That means the sun's warmth and light fall unequally on the northern and southern halves of the planet.

The solstices mark the times during the year when the Earth is at its most extreme tilt toward or away from the sun. This means the hemispheres are getting very different amounts of sunlight — and days and nights are at their most unequal.

During the Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice, the upper half of the Earth is tilted away from the sun, creating the shortest day and longest night of the year. The winter solstice falls between December 20 and 23..

Meanwhile, at the summer solstice, the Northern Hemisphere is toward the sun, leading to the longest day and shortest night of the year. This solstice falls between June 20 and 22.

What is the equinox?

During the spring and fall equinoxes, the Earth's axis and its orbit line up so that both hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight.

The word equinox comes from two Latin words meaning equal and night. That's because on the equinox, day and night last almost the same amount of time — though one may get a few extra minutes, depending on where you are on the planet.

The Northern Hemisphere's spring — or vernal — equinox can land between March 19 and 21, depending on the year. Its fall – or autumnal — equinox can land between Sept. 21 and 24.

What's the difference between meteorological and astronomical seasons?

These are just two different ways to carve up the year.

Meteorological seasons are defined by the weather. They break down the year into three-month seasons based on annual temperature cycles. By that calendar, spring starts on March 1, summer on June 1, fall on Sept. 1 and winter on Dec. 1.

Astronomical seasons depend on how the Earth moves around the sun.

Solstices kick off summer and winter. Equinoxes mark the start of spring and autumn.

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Will New Year's Eve be loud or quiet? What are the top 2025 resolutions? AP-NORC poll has answers



By MARK KENNEDY and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're planning on ringing in the new year quietly at home, you're not alone.

A majority of U.S. adults intend to celebrate New Year's Eve at home, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

“As I've gotten older over the last few years, it's like if I don't make it to midnight, it's not a big deal, you know?” says Carla Woods, 70, from Vinton, Iowa.

Nearly 2 in 10 will be celebrating at a friend or family member's home, and just 5% plan to go out to celebrate at a bar, restaurant or organized event, the poll found.

But many U.S. adults will celebrate the new year in a different way — by making a resolution. More than half say they'll make at least one resolution for 2025.

There's some optimism about the year ahead, although more than half aren't expecting a positive change. About 4 in 10 say 2025 will be a better year for them personally. About one-third don't expect much of a difference between 2024 and 2025, and about one-quarter think 2025 will be a worse year than 2024.

Relaxed New Year's Eve plans for many

Kourtney Kershaw, a 32-year-old bartender in Chicago, often fields questions from customers and friends about upcoming events for New Year's Eve. She said this year is trending toward low-key.

“A majority of who I've spoken to in my age range, they want to go out, but they don't know what they're going to do because they haven't found anything or things are just really expensive,” she said. “Party packages or an entry fee are like a turnoff, especially with the climate of the world and how much things cost.”

As expected, younger people are more interested in ringing in the new year at a bar or organized event — about 1 in 10 U.S. adults under 30 say they plan to do that. But about 3 in 10 older adults — 60 and above — say they won't celebrate the beginning of 2025 at all.

Anthony Tremblay, 35, from Pittsburgh, doesn't usually go out to toast the arrival of the new year, but

this year he's got something special cooked up: He and his wife will be traveling through Ireland.

"I don't do anything too crazy for New Year's, usually. So this is definitely a change," he said. "I wanted to do something unique this year, so I did."

Woods will be working New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. She answers calls on The Iowa Warmline, a confidential, noncrisis listening line for people struggling with mental health or substance use issues.

"Holidays are really hard for people, so I don't mind working," she said. "I'm passionate about it because I have mental health issues in the family and so being able to help people is rewarding to me."

Younger Americans are more likely to make a resolution

Every New Year's also triggers the eternal debate about resolutions. A majority of U.S. adults say they intend to make a New Year's resolution of some type, but millennials and Gen Z are especially likely to be on board — about two-thirds expect to do so, compared to about half of older adults. Women are also more likely than men to say they will set a goal for 2025.

Tremblay hopes to lose some weight and focus more on self-care — more sleep, meditation and breathing exercises. "It's probably a good year to focus on mental health," he said.

Many others agree. About 3 in 10 adults choose resolutions involving exercise or eating healthier. About one-quarter said they'll make a resolution involving losing weight and a similar number said they'll resolve to make changes about priorities of money or mental health.

Woods' resolutions are to stay social and active. As a mental health counselor, she knows those are key to a happy 2025 and beyond: "Probably one of my biggest resolutions is trying to make sure I stay social, try to get out at least once a week — get out and either have coffee or do something with a friend. That's not only for the physical but also for the mental health part."

Kershaw, the bartender, says weight loss and better health are the top resolutions she hears people make. "Mental health is the new one, but I think it's high up there as well as with regular health," she said.

She prefers more goal-oriented resolutions and, this time, it's to do more traveling and see more of the world: "I don't know if that's really a resolution, but that's a goal that I'm setting."

And how will she welcome the arrival of 2025? Usually, she takes the night off and stays home watching movies with plenty of snacks, but this year Kershaw has a different plan, maybe one of the most Chicago things you can do.

This die-hard sports fan will be at Wrigley Field on Tuesday watching the Chicago Blackhawks take on the St. Louis Blues. "Hockey's my favorite sport. So I will be watching hockey and bringing in the new year," she said.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,251 adults was conducted Dec. 5-9, 2024, using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for adults overall is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Sanders reported from Washington.

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