

# New Year Celebration in the Philippines

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New Year's eve celebration in the Philippines is quite different compared to other countries. Filipinos literally start the year with a bang. Just a few days before New Year's eve, you will see lots of side walk vendors selling different kinds of firecrackers. In spite of the yearly ban on firecrackers, because of a number of accidents caused by firecrackers and pyrotechnic devices that have resulted in the loss of lives, limbs and properties, still many Filipinos see lighting of firecrackers as the traditional means to greet and celebrate the New Year eve.



## Firecrackers and Noisemakers

Firecrackers are called ***paputok...*** and there is an array of firecrackers available in the marketsuch as : *Rebentador, Super Lolo, Super Pla Pla, Triangulo( triangularly shaped firecrackers), Bawang, Sinturon ni Judas (Judas Belt), Jumbo Fountain, Whiste Bomb, best selling firecrackers like Baby Rockets (Kuwitis), Luisis ,Watusi, Bulalakaw (Comets)* just to name a few.

Bocaue and Santa Maria Bulacan are the home of firecracker industry in the Philippines, which supplies most of the country's demand for firecrackers. In recent years, local manufacturers have begun producing impressive aerial fireworks displays.

Though the Filipino fireworks industry is about a century old, it is a newcomer in aerial displays. With the new introduction of modern aerial fireworks displays in the country and the recent first World Pro Olympics which took place in The Esplanade at the back of SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City from December 26 to 30, this event has raised fireworks to an art form.

December 31 is usually an unofficial public holiday in the Philippines, so people can prepare for the New Year eve celebration, it is a busy day for all families, preparing the food for the media noche, people are rushing in to buy firecrackers in preparation for the night celebration.

This is the time of the year when children have a good time blowing their plastic toy trumpets called "Torotot". It comes in different shapes and sizes, colors and designs, it is a replica of a trumpet, Pinoy style.

Children also enjoy stamping on their watusi - a kind of small firecracker that when rubbed against a rough surface and released, crackles into a little sparkwork dance.



## **Filipinos New Year's Beliefs and Practices**

Aside from lighting firecrackers and having firework displays, Filipinos have other beliefs and practices which are associated and believed to bring good luck, fortune, and prosperity in the New Year.

- ***The noise and the firecrackers is believe to drive the evil spirit away and make the New Year bountiful and blessed.***
- ***You should put coins/money in your pocket so that next year will be prosperous.***
- ***You should open all the windows, doors lights so that all the graces will come to your home as you welcome the New Year.***

- ***Some believe that you have to wear polka dots shirts or dress because it symbolise money, and it must have a deep pocket and filled with money bills and coins and jingled it at the stroke of midnight for good luck .***
- ***Some people pay off their debts in the hope that they will not be saddled with debt throughout the year.***

The countdown of New year varies from family to family or from region to region. At the strike of 12:00 midnight, the noise becomes deafening, churchbells rings , firecrackers rules the sky, kids gaping in awe as they see the different firecrackers, blooming in the sky. The banging and booming rise to a climax which includes clanging of old pots and pans, blowing jeep, car or tricycle horns, ambulance sirens for full one minute as the countdown to New Year.

It is also a favorite thing to do with children, is to jump twelve times so they will get taller next year the higher you jump the taller you grow. The loud noises and sounds of merrymaking are not only meant to celebrate the coming of the New Year but are also supposed to drive away bad spirits.

Around 12:15 am, the noise stops and the air is filled with human voice and the family starts to eat a thanksgiving feast called ***Media Noche***, it is believe that we should put as much food on the table so that next year you will have food all year round. Twelve round fruits should be on the table as it is a sign of prosperity for the next twelve months. There is also a midnight mass celebration to welcome the New Year and to thank God for all His blessings.

***Manigo at Masaganang Bagong Taon Sa Inyong Lahat !!!***

***A Happy and Prosperous New Year To All !!!***



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