

## POST CHRISTMAS SEASON / NACHWEIHNACHTZEIT

New Year's Eve: Silvesterabend (der 31. Dezember)

New Year Eve belief: Silvesterabendglaube

lead-pouring: das Bleigießen

**Bleigießen:** It consists of pouring melted lead into cold water and making predictions on the form assumed by the metal.

**Bleigießen** (pron. BLYE-ghee-sen)

"Lead pouring" (*das Bleigießen*) is an old practice using molten lead like tea leaves. A small amount of lead is melted in a tablespoon (by holding a flame under the spoon) and then poured into a bowl or bucket of water. The resulting pattern is interpreted to predict the coming year. For instance, if the lead forms a ball (*der Ball*), that means luck will roll your way. The shape of an anchor (*der Anker*) means help in need. But a cross (*das Kreuz*) signifies death.



Pour some lead - Bleigießen in German involves heating some lead and pouring the melted contents into cold water. The shape the lead forms will tell you what might happen in the New Year. A cross, for example could signify death.

The *Rauhnächte* were also a time when the future for the New Year could be divined. *Silvester* in Germany still calls for oracle traditions, which often take the form of party games. *Bleigießen* (lead pouring) is the most popular *Silvester* fortune-telling tradition. Party-goers melt small lead forms with a candle in an old spoon and pour them into cold water. The lead hardens into a shape that supposedly bears a certain meaning for the New Year. An eagle, for example, indicates [career success](#) ☑, while a flower foretells that new friendships will develop.

The practice of dropping molten lead into cold water in order to interpret the resulting figures and tell a person's fortune may at one time have had its origins in superstitious beliefs; but today it is just a popular pastime for the New Year's party — at least nobody will admit that he takes such things seriously anymore!

To the sizzling noise of the burning rum-sugar, some like to do some "Bleigießen", another German tradition on Silvester. This tradition is practiced by people melting lead on a spoon with the heat of a candle and then dropping the lead into cold water. The shape made by the molten lead is supposed to tell one's fortune. Of course many foresee a lot of money, new cars, love, or the blessing of a newly born child. Teenagers usually prefer to celebrate with their peers as partying with their parents on Silvester is out and may lead to ridicule.