

POST- CHRISTMAS SEASON / NACHWEIHNACHTZEIT

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

New Year Eve belief: Silvesterabendglaube

lead-pouring: das Bleigießen

New Year's Night marks the high-point of this time for looking into the future. This starts with casting lead towards midnight. This lead oracle is particularly productive for marriageable young women since the hissing lumps of lead thrown into cold water often provide indications of the job and name of the husband-to-be. The lead's powers of prediction are even greater if the lumps of metal are held in front of a candle and the shadow thrown on the wall studied in detail. In the region between the rivers Sieg and Wupper, girls used to gaze into the flickering firelight and espy the face of the man they were to marry. If the first person you met on New Year's Day was an old woman, you would be out of luck for that day and possibly for the entire year.

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.

In some areas, people take part in a form of fortune telling known as *Bleigessen*. They melt small quantities of lead on a silver spoon above a candle. The molten lead is then tipped into a bowl of cold water where it solidifies. The shape that the lead takes on is a symbol for the fortunes of the coming year.

"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. See this Web page for more about the possible meanings (in German): [Silvesterbräuche - Bleigießen](#)



Strange figures emerge after the molten lead is poured into cold water. Their interpretations vary greatly, too.

Some Germans also enjoy a bit of fortune telling amusement with *Bleigießen* (lead pouring). To do this, one melts a small amount of lead over a little flame and then pours the molten metal into cold water. The metal hardens, and the shape that emerges can then be interpreted with the help of a book to determine what the year ahead holds in store. Fortune cookies are another popular alternative.

- Anker – Hilfe in der Not,
- Ball – Glück rollt heran,
- Beil – Enttäuschung in der Liebe,
- Blume, Blumen – neue Freundschaft,
- Bock – Erwartung einer Erbschaft,
- Brille – Weisheit, hohes Alter,
- Dreieck – finanzielle Verbesserung,
- Fisch – Glück,
- Flasche – fröhliche Zeit,
- Glocke, Glocken oder Ei – frohe Nachricht, Ankündigung einer Geburt,
- Herz – sich verlieben,
- Hut – gute Nachrichten,
- Kreuz, Kreuze – Tod,
- Kuchen – ein Fest steht bevor,
- Kuh – Heilung,
- Leiter – Beförderung,
- Maus – heimliche Liebe, sparsam sein,
- Ringe und Kränze – Hochzeit,
- Schere – eine wichtige Entscheidung steht an,
- Schiff, Schiffe, Flugzeug, Flugzeuge oder Rakete, Raketen – Urlaubsreise, Reise ins Ungewisse,
- Schlange – andere sind neidisch auf dich,
- Spinne – das Glück hängt am seidenen Faden
- Stern, Sterne – Glück,
- zerbrochene Ringe – Trennung