

The custom of toasting goes back almost as far as history itself. Ancient warriors drank to their pagan gods, Greeks and Romans to more gods, and early Norsemen drank to each other. Almost every culture practiced toasting in some form, and the custom gradually evolved into today's toasts to love, friendship, health, wealth and happiness.

At holiday gatherings and New Year's celebrations and gatherings glasses will be raised on more than one occasion. Here are some frequently asked questions about toasting:

### **Who goes first?**



The host or hostess offers the first toast at a formal occasion such as a dinner party, and always at a wedding or large function. Around a dinner table with friends, a guest can propose the first toast and often does so to thank the host for bringing everyone together.

### **Do I have to stand?**

Yes, unless you are at a small, informal occasion. Everyone else remains seated during the toast – including the person being toasted – unless you instruct them to “rise and raise your glass.”

### **I get really nervous speaking in front of people. What should I do?**

You are not alone! Prepare your toast ahead of time. Keep it short and to the point, focusing your remarks on the toastee or the event being celebrated. If necessary, write out what you wish to say and then practice it out loud. It will give you confidence.

**Can I tell a joke or story?**

Sure, if it is short and relevant. A touch of humor is rarely out of place, but keep it 'clean.'

**I don't drink alcohol—can I still make or participate in a toast?**

Yes! You can raise your glass whether it is filled with champagne, wine, vodka, soda, seltzer, fruit juice or plain old tap water!

**Now, can you give me a good New Year's toast?**

Here you go...

Here's to the year past and friends who have left us,  
Here's to the present and the friends who are here,  
Here's to the New Year and the new friends who will join us.