

## = Times Square Ball =

The Times Square Ball is an LED geodesic sphere located in New York City 's Times Square . Located on the roof of One Times Square , the ball is a prominent part of a New Year 's Eve celebration in Times Square Commonly known as the ball drop , where the ball descends 141 feet ( 43 m ) in 60 seconds down a specially designed flagpole , beginning at 11 : 59 : 00 p.m. ET , and resting at midnight to signal the start of the new year . In recent years , the festivities have been preceded by live entertainment , including performances by musicians .

The event was first organized by Adolph Ochs , owner of The New York Times newspaper , as a successor to a series of New Year 's Eve fireworks displays he held at the building to promote its status as the new headquarters of the Times , while the ball itself was designed by Artkraft Strauss . First held on December 31 , 1907 , to welcome 1908 , the ball drop has been held annually since , except in 1942 and 1943 in observance of wartime blackouts .

The ball 's design has also been updated over the years to reflect improvements in lighting technology ; the original design was made from wood and iron and lit with 100 incandescent light bulbs , while its current incarnation features a computerized LED lighting system and an outer surface consisting of triangle @-@ shaped crystal panels . Since 2009 , the current ball has been displayed atop the building year @-@ round , while the original , smaller version of the current ball that was used in 2008 is on display at Times Square 's visitor center .

The event is organized by the Times Square Alliance and Countdown Entertainment , a company led by Jeff Strauss , and is among the most notable New Year 's celebrations internationally : it is attended by at least 2 million spectators yearly , and is nationally televised as part of New Year 's Eve specials broadcast by a number of networks and cable channels . The prevalence of the Times Square ball drop has inspired similar " drops " at other local New Year 's Eve events across the country ; while some use balls , some instead drop objects that represent local culture or history .

## = = Events = =

### = = = Event organization = = =

To facilitate the arrival of attendees , Times Square is closed to traffic on beginning in the late afternoon on New Year 's Eve . The square is then divided into different viewing sections referred to as " pens " , into which attendees are directed sequentially upon arrival . Security is strictly enforced by the New York City Police Department ( NYPD ) , even more so since the 2001 @-@ 02 edition in the wake of the September 11 attacks . Attendees are required to pass through security checkpoints before they are assigned a pen , and are prohibited from bringing backpacks or alcohol to the event .

### = = = Event Music = = =

Imagine - John Lennon ( rendition )  
Auld Lang Syne - Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians  
New York New York - Frank Sinatra  
What A Wonderful World - Louis Armstrong  
America the Beautiful - Ray Charles  
God Bless the U.S.A - Lee Greenwood  
Somewhere Over the Rainbow - Israel Kamakawiwo 'Ole

### = = = Festivities = = =

Festivities formally begin in the early evening with the raising of the ball at around 6 : 00 p.m. ET . Party favors are also distributed to attendees , which have historically included large balloons , hats ,

and other items branded with the event 's corporate sponsors . The hours before the drop are preceded by hourly countdowns for the arrival of the new year in other countries , along with live music performances by popular musicians . Some of these performances are organized by , and aired on New Year 's Eve television specials which are broadcast from Times Square .

The drop itself occurs at 11 : 59 p.m. ? the last minute of the year , and is ceremonially " activated " by a dignitary or celebrity joined on @-@ stage by the current Mayor of New York City . The conclusion of the drop is followed by fireworks shot from the roof of One Times Square , along with the playing of " Auld Lang Syne " by Guy Lombardo , " Theme from New York , New York " by Frank Sinatra , " America the Beautiful " by Ray Charles , " What a Wonderful World " by Louis Armstrong , and " Over the Rainbow " by IZ .

Since the 1996 New Year 's Eve celebration , the current Mayor of New York City has been joined by a special guest , selected yearly to recognize their community involvement or significance , in ceremonially " activating " the ball drop by pressing a button , resembling a smaller version of the ball itself , at exactly one minute to midnight . The button itself does not actually trigger the drop ; that is done from a control room , synchronized using a government time signal . Special guests who have activated the ball drop have included :

1996 ? 1997 : Oseola McCarty

1997 ? 1998 : A group of five winners from a school essay contest honoring New York City 's centennial

1998 ? 1999 : Chinese gymnast Sang Lan ( who was injured during the 1998 Goodwill Games and was being rehabilitated in New York City )

1999 ? 2000 : Dr. Mary Ann Hopkins from Doctors Without Borders

2000 ? 2001 : Muhammad Ali

2001 ? 2002 : Rudy Giuliani and Judith Nathan ; activating the drop was also Giuliani 's final act as mayor . Michael Bloomberg officially became the new Mayor of New York City upon the beginning of 2002 , and took his oath of office shortly after midnight

2002 ? 2003 : Christopher and Dana Reeve

2003 ? 2004 : Cyndi Lauper , along with Shoshana Johnson , the first female American prisoner of war belonging to an ethnic minority

2004 ? 2005 : Secretary of State Colin Powell

2005 ? 2006 : Jazz musician Wynton Marsalis

2006 ? 2007 : A group of eight United States Armed Forces members

2007 ? 2008 : Karolina Wierzchowska , a valedictorian of the NYPD 's academy who also served in the Iraq War

2008 ? 2009 : Bill and Hillary Clinton

2009 ? 2010 : Twelve students from New York City high schools on the U.S. News & World Report " America 's Best High Schools Top 100 ' Gold Medal ' List "

2010 ? 2011 : Former Staff sergeant Salvatore Giunta

2011 ? 2012 : Lady Gaga

2012 ? 2013 : The Rockettes

2013 ? 2014 : U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor .

2014 ? 2015 : Cuban @-@ American musician Jencarlos Canela and a group of refugees who emigrated to New York City , in partnership with the International Rescue Committee

2015 ? 2016 : Hugh Evans

= = = = " Imagine " performance = = = =

Since the 2005 ? 06 edition of the event , the drop has also been directly preceded by the playing of John Lennon 's song " Imagine " ; the original recording was previously used . It was replaced by a live performance by a pop musician for 2011 .

2010 ? 2011 : Taio Cruz

2011 ? 2012 : Cee @-@ Lo Green

2012 ? 2013 : Train

2013 ? 2014 : Melissa Etheridge  
2014 ? 2015 : O.A.R.  
2015 ? 2016 : Jessie J

== Cleanup ==

After the conclusion of the festivities and the dispersal of attendees , cleanup is performed overnight to remove confetti and other debris from Times Square before it is re @-@ opened to the public the following morning . Few traces of the previous night 's celebration remain after the cleanup process is completed : following the 2013 @-@ 14 drop , the New York City Department of Sanitation estimated that by 8 : 00 a.m. , it had cleared over 50 tons of refuse from Times Square , using 190 workers from their own crews and the Times Square Alliance .

== History ==

== Beginnings ( 1907 ? 19 ) ==

The first New Year 's Eve celebration in Times Square was held on December 31 , 1904 ; The New York Times ' owner , Adolph Ochs , decided to celebrate the opening of the newspaper 's new headquarters , One Times Square , with a New Year 's fireworks show on the roof of the building to welcome 1905 . Close to 200 @, @ 000 people attended the event , displacing traditional celebrations that had normally been held at Trinity Church . However , following several years of fireworks shows , Ochs wanted a bigger spectacle at the building to draw more attention to the area . The newspaper 's chief electrician , Walter F. Palmer , suggested using a time ball , after seeing one used on the nearby Western Union Building .

Ochs hired sign designer Artkraft Strauss to construct a ball for the celebration ; it was built from iron and wood , electrically lit with one hundred incandescent light bulbs , weighed 700 pounds ( 320 kg ) , and measured 5 feet ( 1 @. @ 5 m ) in diameter . The ball was hoisted on the building 's flagpole with rope by a team of six men . Once it hit the roof of the building , the ball was designed to complete an electric circuit to light a 5 @-@ foot tall sign indicating the new year , and trigger a fireworks show . The first ever " ball drop " was held on December 31 , 1907 , welcoming the year 1908 .

In 1913 , only eight years after it moved to One Times Square , the Times moved its corporate headquarters to 229 West 43rd Street . The Times still maintained ownership of the tower , however , and Strauss continued to organize future editions of the drop .

== The second and third balls ( 1920 ? 98 ) ==

The original ball was retired in 1920 in favor of a new design ; the second ball remained 5 feet ( 1 @. @ 5 m ) in diameter , but was now constructed from iron , weighing 400 pounds ( 180 kg ) . The ball drop was placed on hiatus for New Year 's Eve 1942 and 1943 due to wartime lighting restrictions during World War II . Instead , a moment of silence was observed at midnight in Times Square , accompanied by the sound of chimes played from sound trucks .

The second ball was retired in favor of a third design in 1955 ; again , it maintained the same diameter of its predecessors , but was now constructed from aluminium , and weighed 150 pounds ( 68 kg ) . In 1981 , the third ball was revamped in honor of the I Love New York campaign , with red lightbulbs and a green stem to give it the appearance of an apple . For 1988 , organizers acknowledged the addition of a leap second earlier that day ( leap seconds are appended at midnight UTC , which is five hours before midnight in New York ) by extending the drop to 61 seconds , and by including a special one @-@ second light show during the extra second . The original white lightbulbs returned to the ball for 1989 , but were replaced by red , white , and blue bulbs in 1991 to salute the troops of Operation Desert Shield .

The third ball was revamped again in 1995 for 1996 , adding a computerized lighting system with 180 halogen bulbs and 144 strobe lights , and over 12 @, @ 000 rhinestones . Lighting designer Barry Arnold stated that the changes were " something [ that ] had to be done to make this event more spectacular as we approach the millennium . "

The drop itself also became computerized through the use of an electric winch synced with the National Institute of Standards and Technology 's time signal ; the new system was not without issues , however , as a glitch caused the ball to pause for a short moment halfway through its descent . After its 44th use in 1999 , the third ball was retired and placed on display at the Atlanta headquarters of Jamestown Group , owners of One Times Square .

= = = Into the new millennium ( 1999 ? 2007 ) = = =

On December 28 , 1998 , during a press conference attended by New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani , organizers announced that the third ball would be retired for the arrival of the new millennium , and replaced by a new design constructed by Waterford Crystal . The year 2000 celebrations would also introduce more prominent sponsorship to the drop ; companies such as Discover Card , Korbel Champagne , and Panasonic were announced as official sponsors of the festivities in Times Square . The city also announced that Ron Silver would lead a committee known as " NYC 2000 " , to be in charge of organizing events across New York City for the year 2000 celebrations , particularly outside of Times Square .

A full day of festivities was held at Times Square to celebrate the arrival of the year 2000 , which included concerts and hourly cultural presentations with parades of puppets designed by Michael Curry , representing countries entering the new year at that hour . Organizers expected a total attendance exceeding 2 million spectators .

The fourth ball , measuring 6 feet ( 1 @. @ 8 m ) in diameter and weighing 1 @, @ 070 pounds ( 490 kg ) , incorporated a total of over 600 halogen bulbs , 504 triangle @-@ shaped crystal panels provided by Waterford , 96 strobe lights , and spinning , pyramid @-@ shaped mirrors . The ball was constructed at Waterford 's factory in Ireland , and was then shipped to New York City , where the lighting system and motorized mirrors were installed . Many of the triangles were inscribed with " Hope " -themed designs changing yearly , such as " Hope for Fellowship " , " Hope for Wisdom " , " Hope for Unity " , " Hope for Courage " , " Hope for Healing " , and " Hope for Abundance " .

For 2002 , the ball 's crystals were engraved with the names of nations and organizations who were affected by the September 11 attacks .

= = = Present day ( 2008 ? present ) = = =

In honor of the ball drop 's centennial anniversary , a brand new fifth design debuted for New Year 's Eve 2008 . Once again manufactured by Waterford Crystal with a diameter of 6 feet ( 1 @. @ 8 m ) , but weighing 1 @, @ 212 pounds ( 550 kg ) , it used LED lamps provided by Philips ( which can produce 16 @, @ 777 @, @ 216 or 224 colors ) , with computerized lighting patterns developed by the New York City @-@ based lighting firm Focus Lighting . The ball featured 9 @, @ 576 energy @-@ efficient bulbs that consumed the same amount of electricity as only 10 toasters . The 2008 ball was only used once , and was placed on display at the Times Square Visitors Center following the event .

For 2009 , a larger version of the fifth ball was introduced ? an icosahedral geodesic sphere lit by 32 @, @ 256 LED lamps . Its diameter is twice as wide as 2008 ball , at 12 feet ( 3 @. @ 7 m ) , and contains 2 @, @ 688 Waterford Crystal panels , with a weight of 11 @, @ 875 pounds ( 5 @, @ 386 kg ) . It was also designed to be weatherproof , as the ball would now be displayed atop One Times Square nearly year @-@ round following the celebrations .

Yearly themes for the ball 's crystal panels continued ; from 2008 to 2013 , the ball contained crystal patterns that were part of a Waterford series known as " World of Celebration " , including themes such as " Let There Be Light " and " Let There Be Peace " . For 2014 , all the ball 's panels were replaced , marking a new theme series known as " Greatest Gifts " , beginning with " Gift of

Imagination " .

The numerical sign indicating the year ( which remains atop the tower along with the ball itself ) also uses Philips LED lamps . For 2014 , the final two digits of the sign used bulbs from the company 's " Hue " line of multi @-@ color LED lamps , allowing them to also have computerized lighting cues .

= = = Weather at midnight = = =

According to the National Weather Service , from 1907 to 2011 , the average temperature at midnight in New York City was 33 @. @ 7 ° F ( 0 @. @ 9 ° C ) . The coldest event was in 1917 when the temperature was 1 ° F ( ? 17 ° C ) ( ? 18 ° F ( ? 28 ° C ) after wind chill ) , the second coldest was 11 ° F ( ? 12 ° C ) in 1962 . The warmest ball drop was 58 ° F ( 14 ° C ) in both 1965 and 1972 . It has snowed during the ball drop just seven times out of 109 events ( one being light snow ) ? 1926 , 1934 , 1948 , 1952 , 1961 , 1967 , and 2009 ? and it has rained multiple times .

= = Broadcasting = =

As a public event , the festivities and ball drop are broadcast as part of New Year 's Eve television specials originating from Times Square on several major U.S. television networks and cable channels . By far the most notable of these is Dick Clark 's New Year 's Rockin ' Eve ; created , produced , and originally hosted by the entertainer Dick Clark until his death in 2012 , and currently hosted by Ryan Seacrest , Jenny McCarthy , and Fergie , the program first aired on NBC in 1972 before moving to ABC , where it has been broadcast ever since . New Year 's Rockin ' Eve has consistently been the most @-@ watched New Year 's Eve special in the U.S. , peaking at 22 @. @ 6 million viewers for its 40th edition in 2012 . Following the death of Dick Clark in April 2012 , a crystal engraved with his name was added to the 2013 ball in tribute .

Across the remaining networks , NBC broadcasts New Year 's Eve with Carson Daly , hosted from Times Square by Carson Daly of The Voice and Last Call , and Spanish @-@ language network Univision broadcasts ; Feliz ! , hosted from Times Square by Raúl de Molina of El Gordo y La Flaca . On cable , CNN carries coverage of the festivities , known as New Year 's Eve Live , which has been hosted by Anderson Cooper and Kathy Griffin from Times Square . Fellow news channel Fox News Channel carries All @-@ American New Year , most recently hosted by Elisabeth Hasselbeck and Bill Hemmer from Times Square .

MTV has also broadcast coverage originating from the network 's Times Square studios at One Astor Plaza . For 2011 , MTV also held its own ball drop in Seaside Heights , New Jersey , the setting of its popular reality series Jersey Shore , featuring cast member Snooki lowered inside a giant " hamster ball " . Originally , MTV planned to hold the drop within its studio in Times Square , but the network was asked by city officials to conduct the drop elsewhere .

Since 2009 , organizers have produced an official webcast of the ball drop and its associated festivities .

= = = Past broadcasts = = =

Beginning in the 1940s , NBC broadcast coverage from Times Square anchored by Ben Grauer on both radio and television . Its coverage was later incorporated into special episodes of The Tonight Show , continuing through Johnny Carson and Jay Leno 's tenures on the program . NBC would introduce a dedicated special , New Year 's Eve with Carson Daly , beginning in 2003 .

From 1956 to 1976 , CBS was well known for its television coverage of the festivities hosted by bandleader Guy Lombardo from the ballroom of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria Hotel in New York City , featuring his band 's famous rendition of " Auld Lang Syne " at midnight . After Lombardo 's death in 1977 , CBS and the Royal Canadians , now led by Victor Lombardo , attempted to continue the special . However , Guy 's absence and the growing popularity of ABC 's New Year ? s Rockin ? Eve prompted CBS to eventually drop the band entirely . The Royal Canadians were replaced by a new special , Happy New Year , America , which ran in various formats with different hosts ( such as

Paul Anka , Donny Osmond , Andy Williams , Paul Shaffer , and Montel Williams ) until it was discontinued after 1996 . CBS , barring a special America 's Millenium broadcast for 2000 , no longer provides any national coverage from Times Square .

For 2000 , in lieu of New Year 's Rockin ' Eve , ABC News covered the festivities as part of its day @-@ long telecast , ABC 2000 Today . Hosted by Peter Jennings , the broadcast featured coverage of millennium festivities from around the world , including those in New York City . Jennings was joined by Dick Clark as a special correspondent for coverage from Times Square .

Fox previously aired New Year 's specials covering Times Square with rotating hosts and themes , primarily under the title New Year 's Eve Live . For 2015 , New Year 's Eve Live was replaced by Pitbull 's New Year 's Revolution , which is broadcast from Miami instead .

= = Major Sponsor = =

Discover Card 2000 @-@ 2007

Nivea 2008 @-@ 2014

Cosmopolitan and CoverGirl 2015

Planet Fitness 2016 @-@ Present