

Trivia Whiz:

Polar Personalities

Love or hate winter, the season makes its presence known. These cool characters personify the frigid, frosty time of year.

- *Old Man Winter.* The face of winter, this wild-haired fellow puffs his cheeks and blows out icy breath, causing temperatures to plummet.
- *Jack Frost.* Credit or blame Jack Frost's frozen fingers for the icy glaze that patterns windows in winter. The nose-nipper of holiday song is a "happy little sprite" in nursery rhyme, but he also has a dark side. He's a wicked snowman in the 1997 horror film "Jack Frost" and an evil schemer in 2006's "The Santa Clause 3."
- *The Snow Maiden.* In one Russian fable, a childless couple creates a girl of snow who magically comes to life. But when she falls in love with a farm boy, the warmth of her heart causes her to melt and perish. In another tale, she's the beautiful daughter of Spring and Frost who is destroyed by a ray of sun on her wedding day.
- *The Abominable Snowman.* Also called Yeti, this mythical beast has been described as a large, apelike creature that treks upright through the Himalayas, leaving humanlike footprints in the snow. Scientific consensus says the tracks were left by animals, but that hasn't destroyed Yeti's mighty legend. His pop culture persona ranges from creepy to cuddly.

Savor the Season

"In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy."—William Blake

Tips on Tipping

Good service deserves to be rewarded, but when and how much to tip can be confusing. Here are a few guidelines:

Waitstaff at sit-down restaurants typically get a 15 to 20 percent tip on the pretax amount of the check. For wait service at a buffet, give 10 percent. If you've ordered delivery, tip that person 5 to 10 percent.

Taxi drivers get a 15 percent tip and a few extra bucks if they helped with any bags.

Skycaps should receive \$2 for the first bag and \$1 more for each additional bag.

Tip hotel housekeepers \$2 to \$5 a day, or more if you're messy. It's proper to tip the room service delivery person 10 to 15 percent.

Manicurists, waxers and masseuses expect a 15 to 20 percent tip, while shampoo techs should get

\$1 to \$2.

It's customary to tip furniture delivery people \$5 per item, but keep in mind how much lifting and maneuvering were required. Also, give an extra tip if they must assemble your delivery.

Don't avoid giving a tip because you don't know if it's the proper etiquette. It's better to err on the generous side and offer a tip in the 10 to 15 percent range. If the person doesn't normally get tips, this will register in his face and you'll know not to tip next time. If your tip is below average, you'll usually be able to tell that as well. Just use your best judgment.



Portion Distortion

All-you-can-eat buffets, supersized value meals and restaurant platters of enormous proportions have seriously distorted Americans' view of a healthy-sized meal. Large portions not only lead to overeating, weight problems and other health concerns, but tons of food waste as well. People might be surprised to learn the appropriate portions of particular foods. Before you pile your next plateful, learn the correct-sized meals to consume.

Beware at breakfast. Pancakes and waffles should be the size of a CD. Have only one, made of whole grains, and one egg plus fruit for a healthier breakfast. Muffins should be the size of a tennis ball.

Perilous pizza pies. Ordering the extra-large pizza means the slices tend to be larger, and there are more pieces to go around. Limit yourself to

one large piece or two smaller pieces and have a salad.

Meet mini meat. A steak should be the size of a deck of cards. Chicken breasts should be the size of your palm, not your hand.

Costly free refills. Soft drinks are full of calories and sugar. If you're going to drink soda, limit yourself to a 12-ounce serving, then skip the free refill.

Make an effort this year to control your portion sizes. Once your portions shrink, your waistline might follow.





Saving Your Digital Life

Remember the days when photos were in albums, music was on CDs and books were on the shelf? Now all those things are often stored on our personal computers, making it essential that those files be backed up. The simplest way to back up files is to copy them to a CD or DVD. Simply insert a blank CD or DVD into your computer and then transfer copies of your important files to the disc. This is as simple as clicking and dragging the file from one folder to another. Experts recommend backing up your important files at least once a month.

If you need to manage a great number of files—such as a music library or lots of home videos—consider getting an external hard drive. It's best to buy one with as much memory as possible. To back up your files, just plug the hard drive into the computer and copy your files onto the device. Copying the files can take anywhere from minutes to a few hours, so it's best to do this at a time when the computer isn't needed.

A "cloud" system is the least mechanical way to back up your files, but it takes a leap of faith. A professional service backs up your computer's files and copies them into an online environment, all through a web-based browser. If your computer crashes, the service can automatically provide all your saved files. There are several reputable services, including Carbonite, Dropbox and Box. With these services, you can manually upload files or set your account for automatic updating.



One Minute Chef

Blonde Brownies

Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 3/4 cups packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter or margarine, softened
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups (12-ounce package) Nestlé Toll House semi-sweet chocolate morsels

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease 15 x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in small bowl. Beat sugar and butter in large mixing bowl until creamy. Beat in eggs and vanilla extract, then gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in morsels. Spread into prepared pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until top is golden brown. Cool in pan on wire rack. Cut into bars.

For more recipes, visit VeryBestBaking.com.



Finger Food

Brownies are thought to have been invented in 1893, in the kitchen of Chicago's Palmer House Hotel, as a more portable, lunchbox-friendly version of cake.

Wit & Wisdom

"With self-discipline most anything is possible."
—Theodore Roosevelt

"Seek freedom and become captive of your desires. Seek discipline and find your liberty."
—Frank Herbert

"It's all right letting yourself go, as long as you can get yourself back."
—Mick Jagger

"Some people regard discipline as a chore. For me, it is a kind of order that sets me free to fly."
—Julie Andrews

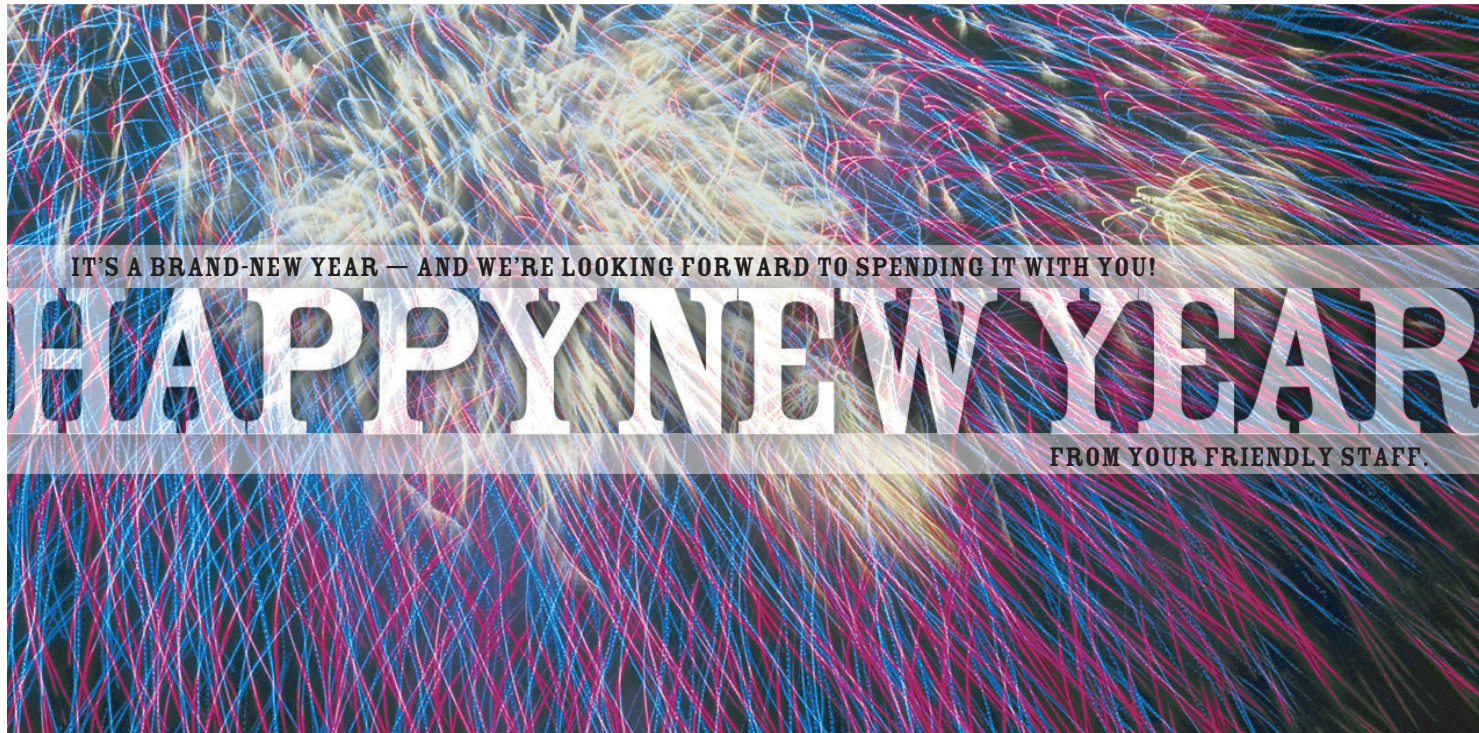
"I don't wait for moods. You accomplish nothing if you do that. Your mind must know it has got to get down to work."
—Pearl S. Buck

"I generally avoid temptation unless I can't resist it."
—Mae West

"Each day, and the living of it, has to be a conscious creation in which discipline and order are relieved with some play and pure foolishness."
—May Sarton

"Respect your efforts; respect yourself. Self-respect leads to self-discipline. When you have both firmly under your belt, that's real power."
—Clint Eastwood

"Success isn't measured by money or power or social rank. Success is measured by your discipline and inner peace."
—Mike Ditka



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