

All about Chinese New Year



Chinese Lunar

Calendar

- The Chinese Lunar Calendar names each of the twelve years after an animal.
 - Legend has it that the Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he departed from earth. Only twelve came to bid him farewell and as a reward he named a year after each one in the order they arrived.
 - The Chinese believe the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality, saying: "This is the animal that hides in your heart."
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The Origin Of Chinese New Year

The Origin of the lunar New Year Festival can be traced back thousands years, involving a series of colorful legends and traditions. One of the famous legend is Nian, an extremely cruel and ferocious beast that the ancients believed would devour people on New Year's Eve.





To keep Nian away, red-paper couplets are pasted on doors, torches are lit and firecrackers are set off through the night, because Nian is said to fear the color red, the light of fire, and loud noises.

Early the next morning, as feelings of triumph and renewal fill the air at successfully keeping Nian away for another year, the most popular greeting heard is gong xi, or “congratulations”.



Chinese red

envelopes

- *Monetary gifts are usually presented in red envelopes during festive occasions, like weddings, birthdays, and the New Year. While their main task is to bear gifts, their second duty is to shower the recipient with luck, joy, and prosperity*



Big dinner on New Year's Eve--

fish

- Fish are considered lucky creatures. This is because the word “fish” in Chinese also sounds like the word meaning “surplus” or “something left over.”
- The owners believe it will help to bring in a surplus of money.
 - People hope these practices will bring extra wealth in the coming year.



couplets

- Spring couplets are paper scrolls and squares inscribed with blessings and auspicious words, such as “good fortune” and “springtime.”
- The paper squares are usually pasted upside down, because the Mandarin word for “upside down”, *dao*, is a homonym of the word “arrival”.
- Thus, the paper squares represent the “arrival” of spring and the “coming” of prosperous times.

春
滿
乾
坤
福
滿
堂

天
增
歲
月
人
增
壽

Taboos

It's unlucky to sweep the floor during the first five days of the Lunar New Year, because one might accidentally sweep one's good luck and wealth out of the house.

Bad language and talk of death are severely frowned upon.

If a dish is broken, it's vital to say "suei suei ping an", means every year will be safe and secure.

On the first day of the Lunar New year

- Offering ritual homage to one's ancestors. Reverence is then paid to the gods.
- new clothes are worn, and visits are made to friend, neighbor, and relatives to exchange good wishes of “gong xi fa cai”, which means “congratulations and prosperity”.



- All of Taiwan's temples are usually very busy during this time of year as large numbers of people crowd into them with elevated incense sticks to pray for good luck.
- The first day of the Lunar New Year is also "the welcoming of the gods of the heavens and earth." Many people abstain from meat on the first day of the new year because it is believed that this will ensure long and happy lives for them.



The Dragon And The Lion Dance

- One of the most spectacular sights during the Lunar New Year Festival is the dragon and lion dance. The heads of these fearsome beasts are supposed to ward off evil, and the nimble movements of the dancers provide a grand spectacle enjoyable to everyone.



What do we do on the ninth day of the Lunar New year?



- Finally, on the ninth day, numerous offerings are set out in the forecourt or central courtyard of temples to celebrate the birthday of the Jade Emperor, who was believed to have been born immediately after midnight on the ninth day.