


What is Lunar New Year?

Did you know that Lunar New Year is one of the *most popular holidays* in Asian countries and communities **around the world**? It is celebrated in China, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Mongolia, and other countries of East and Southeast Asia. Many people of Asian descent who live in other parts of the world also celebrate Lunar New Year!



Do you know anyone who celebrates Lunar New Year? Ask them about their traditions and how they celebrate with their family!

But what is Lunar New Year? Lunar New Year is a 15-day celebration that marks the **beginning of another year on the lunar calendar**. It begins with the new moon and lasts until the full moon. Because it is based on the cycles of the moon, the first day of the Lunar New Year is not the same every year. It usually begins in late January or early February.



Check your calendar to find when Lunar New Year starts this year!

Chinese Zodiac Signs

What animal are you? According to the Chinese calendar, the year you were born is represented by an animal, called a **Chinese zodiac sign**. Each new year corresponds to an animal in the Chinese zodiac. Tradition says that you might have some characteristics of the animal of the year you were born!

Find out what animal you are with resources like [this](#).

How do you celebrate?

Red Envelopes

One Lunar New Year tradition is to give the gift of a red envelope, known as a *hóngbāo*, to your friends and family. **Red is the color of joy and good fortune** in Chinese cultures, and is a color used a lot in Lunar New Year celebrations. But these red envelopes aren't just envelopes. They are filled with money and symbolize **good luck** and **best wishes** for the new year ahead!



Food & Family

For many families, **spending time together around the table** is the most important Lunar New Year tradition of all. Families travel far and wide to spend the holiday together and celebrate over traditional New Year foods.

Some of these foods include longevity noodles, steamed fish for abundance, sticky rice balls for togetherness, and more! Another popular Lunar New Year food is **nian gao**, a sweet and sticky cake. Nian gao is sometimes called the "Chinese New Year cake!"



Do our Culture Sharing at Mealtime activity with your family at dinner to share your own family's traditions!

xin nian kuai le means Happy New Year!
(pronounced shin nee-an kwai le)

Learn to say it!

How do you celebrate?

Dragon and Lion Dance

Many people gather in the streets to celebrate Lunar New Year with parades and festivities. **The dragon dance** is a big part of these celebrations! In a dragon dance, a team of dancers carry a long and colorful dragon throughout the streets.

Lion dances are also a part of these festivities. Two dances work together to mimic the movements of a wild lion. These dances are believed to bring *good luck and fortune* for the new year.



During these dances, you will hear lots of loud drums. The loud noise is said to drive all of the bad luck and spirits away!

Festivals and Fireworks

Lunar New Year traditionally closes with the **Lantern Festival**, which welcomes the new year and good fortune for the community. People often hang glowing lanterns in temples or carry them during a nighttime parade. **Firecrackers** are also shot off and celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year!

Sources: National Geographic for Kids and Kids Britannica



Happy Lunar New Year!