

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Chinese New Year, known in modern Chinese as the "Spring Festival" (simplified Chinese 春节; traditional Chinese 春節; Pinyin: Chūn jié), is an important Chinese festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar.

Celebrations traditionally run from the evening preceding the first day, to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first calendar month. The first day of the New Year falls on the new moon between 21 January and 20 February. In 2016, the first day of the Chinese New Year is on Monday, 8 February.

The New Year festival is centuries old and gains significance because of several myths and traditions. Traditionally, the festival was a time to honour deities as well as ancestors. Chinese New Year is celebrated in countries and territories with significant Chinese populations, including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, and the Philippines. Chinese New Year is considered a major holiday for the Chinese and has had influence on the lunar new year celebrations of its geographic neighbours.



Within China, regional customs and traditions concerning the celebration of the Chinese New Year vary widely. Often, the evening preceding Chinese New Year's Day is an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the annual reunion dinner. It is also traditional for every family to thoroughly cleanse the house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for good incoming luck. Windows and doors will be decorated with red color paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness", "wealth", and "longevity". Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red paper envelopes.

Although the Chinese calendar traditionally does not use continuously numbered years, outside China its years are often numbered from the reign of the 3rd millennium BCE Yellow Emperor. But at least three different years numbered 1 are now used by various scholars, making the year beginning CE 2015 the "Chinese year" 4713, 4712, or 4652.