

3 billion journeys: World's biggest human migration begins in China

China is bracing itself for an annual homecoming of epic proportions.

Considered the largest human migration on the planet, Chunyun — the 40-day period when Chinese people head home to celebrate the Lunar New Year Spring Festival with their families — officially began on January 10 and will end on February 18.

Lunar New Year falls on January 25 this year — the earliest LNY since 2012. This means that the beginning of Spring Festival rush, when workers begin their journey home, will overlap with the peak time when college students begin winter holidays, putting an even bigger strain on the nation's infrastructure.

Some 3 billion trips are expected to be made during the 2020 Chunyun period, a slight increase from last year's figure (2.99 billion trips). These figures are indeed *staggering*. But fret not, China has planned ahead.

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Already boasting the world's largest rail network, China has built 8,489 kilometers of new railway lines in 2019, including 5,474 kilometers of high-speed rail.

Some 5,275 pairs of train services will operate per day before the Lunar New Year holiday and 5,410 after. More high-speed trains, with a total of 157.5 pairs of trains per night, will be deployed at night during the peak period.

"Comparing to Chunyun last year, ticket shortage problems for some of the most popular routes have been alleviated," said Li Wenxin, vice general manager of the China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. "It's easier to get tickets [this year]."