

Chinese New Year: D.C. Style

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Courtesy of Julianna Guthrie

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The 15 day Chinese New Year Festival began on Saturday, January 25, as celebrations continued in Downtown D.C. on Sunday.

Chinese New Year commemorates the first day of the year according to the Chinese calendar. Lunar New Year is the first day of the first month according to the moon cycle calendar. The holiday concludes with Lantern Festival Day.

There are various traditions associated with the holiday such as wearing new clothes, cleaning the house, and giving children money in red envelopes. The underlying significance and connection between all the traditions is to bring good luck and get rid of all bad luck.

In Washington D.C., Chinatown celebrated with a parade. The procession was filled with red and gold, flying dragons, various representatives from Chinese American associations, and language schools. D.C. residents lined the streets in order to get a glimpse of the spectacle. As the procession passed, Chinese cookies were passed out and crackers were sold.

Throughout the entire day, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, an art gallery on Independence Avenue, hosted a series of events. Museum goers had the opportunity to attend dance shows, magic shows, and test their creativity at pop-up arts-and-craft tables.

One of the highlight events was the Chinese Ribbon Dance performance by the Xuejuan Dance Ensemble. The dancers performed in three styles of Chinese dance: ethnic, classical, and folk. They expressed these styles dance according to different regions in Asia such as the Tibetan region and the Mongolian region.

Following the ensemble, Jiaping Wang, a dance instructor and choreographer, invited audience members to learn how to Chinese ribbon dance. All ages joined the instructor to learn a quick ribbon routine and perform for their loved ones.

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Aside from the special events that took place on Sunday, there are many permanent exhibits to visit at the Gallery that explore the Chinese culture such as the "Resound Bells of Ancient China," and "Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice Across Asia."

Festivities will continue around D.C. throughout the entire Chinese New Year season. Later this week, you can catch events at the Kennedy Center, which will be hosting a Winter Lantern Viewing, and at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, which will be hosting a "Chinese New Year Family Celebration," in coordination with the Chinese Embassy.

The Chinese Club will be hosting its own celebration in honor of the New Year.

"We find it very important for our club to celebrate this festival on campus because it is a way for CUA students to experience Chinese culture," said organization president, sophomore Adeline Dygert.

"At our event, we will have lion dancers perform, trivia, traditional Chinese games, and many other things that will help CUA students learn more about Chinese customs," said Dygert. "It is essential for college students to participate in these kinds of events so they can develop a deeper sense of global awareness and respect for other cultures."

If you would like to attend, the festivities will take place in the Great Pryz Rooms on February 5 between 5 and 7pm.

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