

Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is celebrated every year by millions of Chinese people. It has now become a popular event for people to celebrate all around the world. Many communities gather to witness the joyful festivities. It is the most important holiday for many Asian countries, such as China, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Chinese New Year doesn't happen on the same day as the Western New Year's Day. This is because it is worked out according to the first day of the Chinese lunar calendar. The year is determined by the movements of the sun and moon. The celebration falls between January 21st and February 19th.

Red Envelopes

The color red is very lucky in Chinese culture. It symbolizes fortune, good luck, and joy. People give each other money in small, decorated red envelopes. Older people usually give money to the younger people in even amounts. Chinese people think even numbers are luckier than odd numbers. However, number four is thought of as bad luck, even though it is an even number.



Firecrackers

Firecrackers are traditionally made of red paper rolls strung together. When lit, they explode very quickly, creating loud popping noises. Red shredded paper is flung into the air from the firecrackers. Since firecrackers are dangerous, they have been banned in many countries.

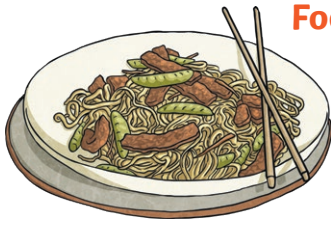
Dragon and Lion Dances

Dragon and lion dances are often performed by skilled acrobats underneath lion and dragon costumes. The dances are accompanied by loud music. Drums and cymbals chase away the evil spirits and bad luck. In Chinatowns, the dragon dance is often the highlight of the parade. People flock to see the magnificent show!



Spring Cleaning and Debt

It is believed that spring cleaning your home will sweep away the bad fortune of the old year and any debts should be settled before the new one.



Food and Family

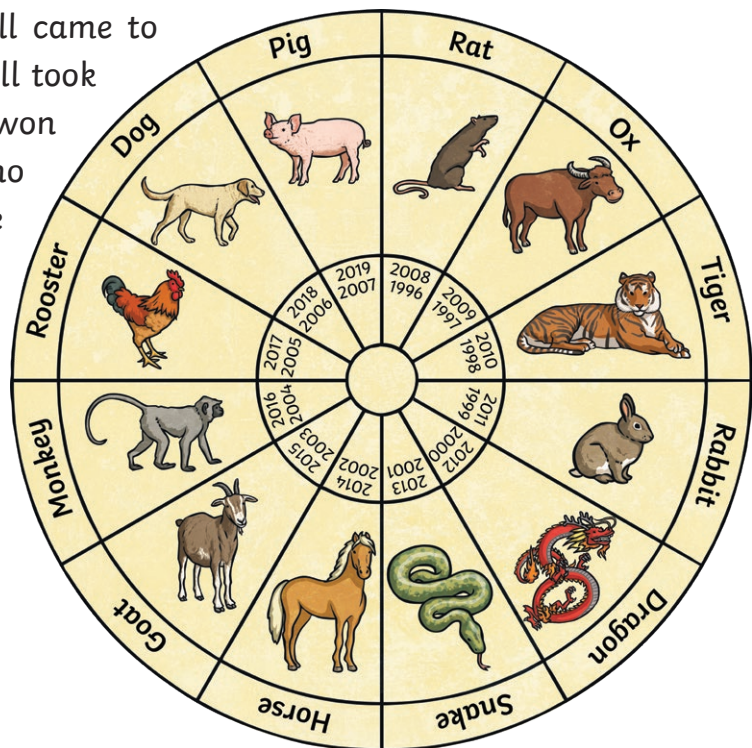
Food is symbolic at this time of year. Chicken and shrimp represent happiness while noodles represent long life. Dumplings are also eaten. Friends and family all gather together to eat and enjoy each other's company.

The Legend of Nian

It is said that Chinese New Year started in ancient times. Chinese people believed in a mythical beast named Nian. Nian would visit on the first day of the new year to gobble up all the livestock, crops, and even people! Scared and tormented, the villagers left food outside their houses for Nian. They hoped he would leave them alone once he was fed. One day, the villagers noticed that Nian was afraid of nothing but a small child wearing the color red. From that day on, red lanterns, firecrackers, and scrolls were used to frighten Nian away. He never came back!

Chinese Zodiac

There are twelve animals all linked to specific years of the lunar calendar. These animals all came to be ranked by a legendary race they all took part in by crossing a river. The rat won the race through trickery. People who are born in the Year of the Rat are said to be very cunning. From first to last, the animals finished in this order: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.



Questions

1. What color is used during Chinese New Year celebrations?
 - ☐ red
 - ☐ orange
 - ☐ yellow
 - ☐ green
2. What is Nian?
 - ☐ A mythical dragon
 - ☐ A mythical beast
 - ☐ A goat
 - ☐ A rat
3. What is a common practice during Chinese New Year preparations?
 - ☐ praying
 - ☐ cleaning
 - ☐ writing
 - ☐ singing
4. Why have firecrackers been banned in many countries?
 - ☐ They are too loud.
 - ☐ They leave too much of a mess.
 - ☐ They are dangerous.
 - ☐ They are too difficult to make.

5. How would you celebrate Chinese New Year?

6. Why isn't the Chinese New Year on the same day as the Western New Year?

Answers

1. What color is used during Chinese New Year celebrations?

- ☒ **red**
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2. What is Nian?

- ☐ A mythical dragon
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4. Why have firecrackers been banned in many countries?

- ☐ They are too loud.
- ☐ They leave too much of a mess.
- ☒ **They are dangerous.**
- ☐ They are too difficult to make.

5. How would you celebrate Chinese New Year?

Answers may vary. A possible answer is: I would celebrate by cleaning my house and doing a dragon dance.

6. Why isn't the Chinese New Year on the same day as the Western New Year?

Answers may vary. A possible answer is: The Chinese New Year is on a different date than the Western New Year because the Chinese New Year is based on the lunar calendar.