

# Celebrating Chinese New Year

Wishing you a good fortune

恭 gùng

喜 héi

發 faat

財 chòih



Many countries, cultures, and religions celebrate the first day of a New Year. How do we celebrate in America?

- Balloons, Parties, Music, Parades, Fireworks
- Greet people with “Happy New Year”
- Make a lot of news
- Celebrate with your family
- Make new year’s resolutions
- Clean out the old and make a fresh start

In Asian countries, like China and Cambodia, people celebrate the New Year in the same way. But there are some differences.

	Asia	America
<b>Calendar</b>	Moon	Sun
<b>Date</b>	Different every year	Always Jan. 1st
<b># of Days</b>	15 days	1 day



## The Animal Zodiac

In Asia, each New Year is named one of the 12 animals. The legend is that the Jade Emperor of Heaven invited all the animals of the land to have a race. He told them that the first 12 animals to win the race would have a year named after them.

The very tricky, yet smart Rat won the race. So Rat is the first animal in the cycle.

Rat  
Ox  
Tiger  
Rabbit  
Dragon  
Snake  
Horse  
Goat  
Monkey  
Rooster  
Dog  
Pig

Every 12 years, the zodiac starts over again with Rat first. People born in each year are supposed to possess the characteristic of that year's animal.



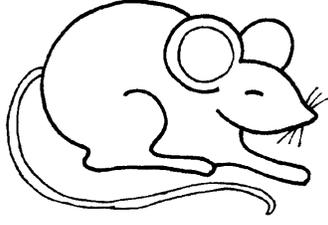
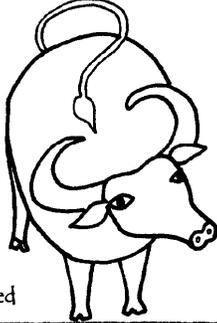
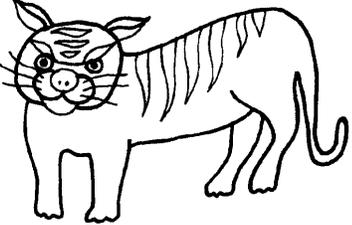
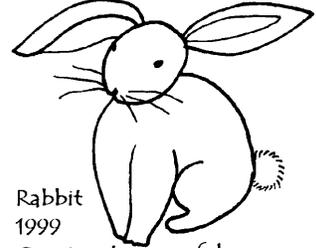
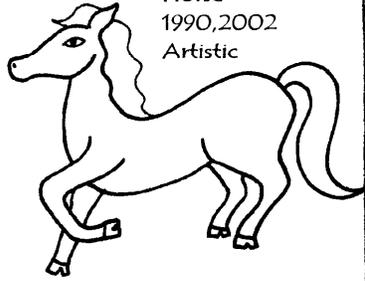
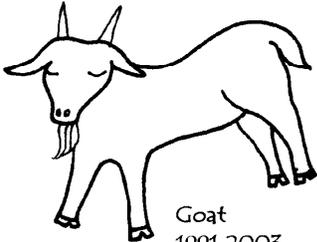
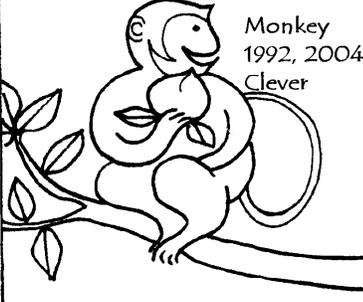
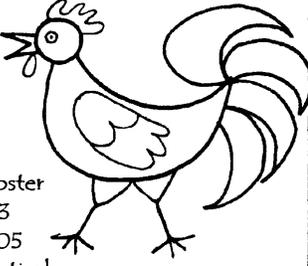
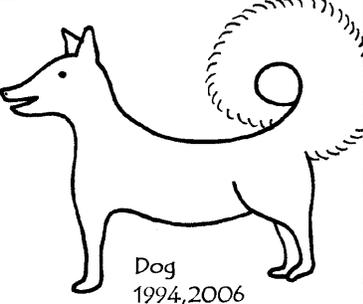
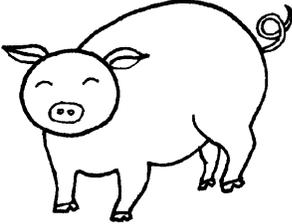
# 2006 is the Year of the Dog!

People born in the Year of the Dog possess the best traits of human nature. They have a deep sense of loyalty, are honest, and inspire other people's confidence because they know how to keep secrets. But Dog People are somewhat selfish, terribly stubborn, and eccentric. They care little for wealth, yet somehow always seem to have money. They can be cold emotionally and sometimes distant at parties. They can find fault with many things and are noted for their sharp tongues. Dog people make good leaders.



# What year were you born?

## The Twelve Zodiac Animals

<p>Rat 1996 Friendly and sociable</p> 	<p>Ox 1997 Serious and determined</p> 	<p>Tiger 1998 Brave and lucky</p> 
<p>Rabbit 1999 Quiet and successful</p> 	<p>Dragon 2000 Energetic</p> 	<p>Snake 1989, 2001 Wise and secretive</p> 
<p>Horse 1990, 2002 Artistic</p> 	<p>Goat 1991, 2003 Perfectionist</p> 	<p>Monkey 1992, 2004 Clever</p> 
<p>Rooster 1993, 2005 Practical</p> 	<p>Dog 1994, 2006 Loyal and kind</p> 	<p>Pig 1995, 2007 Popular and friendly</p> 

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# Getting Ready for the New Year

Families spend many days getting ready for the New Year. They begin by cleaning their houses. Everyone helps sweep all the dirt out of the door, along with the bad luck that hiding in the house. They decorate their houses and filled them with flowers and fruit. Families display pyramids of oranges and apples because they are red and gold, the colors of joy.

They also put out sweet cakes and sticky rice for the Kitchen God, Tsun Kwan. They believe that the Kitchen God watches their actions throughout the year. On the last night of the old year, he leaves Earth to visit the Jade Emperor in Heaven. There the gods talk about how family members have treated one another during the year. They burn his picture as symbol of departure.



*The Kitchen God*

竈君



## Good Luck Poems on Red Scrolls

They hang up red and gold banners called "Scrolls." On the scrolls they write good wishes that will bring them good fortune. The scrolls are hung on the both sides of the front door. The words "peaceful and safe" are popular for front doors.



Good Luck in Chinese



Painting new year couplets



## **The New Year's Foods**

Many of the foods served at New Year have symbolic meanings. Some foods have a name which sounds the same as a character with a lucky meaning and for some foods their shape and color are emblems of words special to the holiday such as happiness, prosperity fortune or luck.

**Oranges / Gold**

**Tangerines with leaves / Good Luck**

**Whole Fresh Fish / Surplus**

**Whole Fresh Chicken / Good Fortune**

**Lettuce / to grow or spread prosperity**



## A Time for Gift Giving and Showing Respect

Children will receive a special present, called “**lai see.**” It is a good luck money wrapped in red paper or a red envelope. When receiving the money, children must show respect to their parents, grandparents, or teacher or older person giving them the gift.

To show respect, bow and say “Thank you for being my parent.”



## Buddhist Prayer Money

This “Fake” money is used as an offering to ancestors. It is burned and when the wind moves the smoke, it is said they are receiving your gift. It says “Hell Bank”. It is trick to fool evil spirits into thinking it isn't good money.

## Firecrackers and Loud Noises

The tradition of using firecrackers at New Year's celebrations is based on legend about the origins of the holiday.

A monster named "Nian" or the Chinese word for year used to come out of the ocean and attack a village every year. At first the people were afraid, but they discovered the monster was afraid of the color red, loud noises, and bright lights. To keep their houses safe, they hung red scrolls, painted their houses red, and set off firecrackers. Today, these continue to be important parts of the Chinese New Year Celebration.



Chinese New Year fireworks in Hong Kong



## The Dragon Parade

Every Chinese New Year's parade ends with a dragon made of bamboo poles and paper or silk. With a shower of firecrackers and rapid banging of the drums, the dragon rears its head and moves its body through the streets. Its swift and elegant movements make it look real, even though people can tell it being carried by 20 or 30 people.

The Chinese dragon is a most sacred animal and is a symbol of strength. Once each year the dragon appears to wish everyone peace, prosperity, and good luck. Sometimes the dragon chases a round object. If it is white, the dragon is chasing a great pearl, which brings power.



# The Lion Dance

The Lion Dance or SHIH WOO is performed for New Year's celebrations. The Lion Dance is used to scare away evil spirits and bring good luck. Lion dancers perform in front of stores to bring good luck to shop owners.

It is a great honor to be chosen to do a lion dance. The dance is performed to drum and cymbal music that has a familiar beat.

The legend of the lion dance is that a long time ago villagers were being attacked by people from another village who were riding elephants. They had no way to protect themselves. So, they dressed up in colorful costumes like lions. When they danced, it scared the elephants away and spoiled the attack.



Chinese Lion

Color with markers or crayons.





Dog

