



Gong Xi Fa Cai!*

* Happy New Year!



Mini Fact:

This year is the Year of the Rooster. Chinese Years are named for animals; last year was the Year of the Monkey.



Some dragons can be 100 feet long!

Do you celebrate the new year? For centuries, people throughout the world have held special celebrations during the first days of the new year.

But different cultures use different calendars, and the new year does not come at the same time for everyone.

In many places, such as China, the new year comes at a different time each year. When it comes depends on the calendar in that culture. Many areas, such as Thailand and Cambodia, celebrate New Year's in the spring.

This year, Chinese New Year began on Saturday, Jan. 28. The Mini Page learns more about this winter festival.

A long holiday

The Chinese follow a lunar calendar for their traditional events. On the new moon between Jan. 21 and Feb. 20, or the second new moon after the winter solstice, the new year begins. (The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. This winter, it fell on Dec. 21.) The celebration lasts for one or two weeks!

Chinese families prepare for the new year by cleaning and decorating their houses with bright colors and flowers. They write verses on red paper and post them around their doorways to greet the new year.



photo by Doumal/Wikimedia Commons

Getting ready

Before the festival, gifts and food are bought. Different foods mean different things:

- Long noodles signify a long life.
- A whole fish means there will be plenty to eat.
- Fruits and candy ensure that the future will be sweet.

The fun begins on New Year's Eve, when people gather for big family dinners. They wear brightly colored clothes as they sing and play.

At midnight, people open their doors and windows to let the old year out and welcome the new one. They also light firecrackers and bang on drums to scare away the old year.

New Year's Day

The next day, Chinese communities hold festivals where they dress in costumes and parade through the streets.

Dancers and other artists perform for the crowds.

Some may celebrate with a Lion Dance.



Visiting family

Look at China on a globe. It is a huge country with more than a billion people. During the Chinese New Year, many people travel to other parts of the country to see family and friends.



On the last day

The Lantern Festival marks the end of the Chinese New Year. This is the night the moon is full in the sky. Lanterns come in all sizes and shapes, such as birds, animals, butterflies and dragons.



Dragons twist through the streets, carried by 10 or more dancers holding poles to support them. The dragons are made of plastic, bamboo, paper and linen.

Fireworks light up the sky and make loud booms.

People say "Gong Xi Fa Cai!" (gong zye fah kye) to each other. It literally means "Congratulations on making a big fortune!" But it's their way of saying "Happy New Year!"

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/2htHAIS
- youtu.be/XiFeXRxA1vM

At the library:

- "Celebrate Chinese New Year" by Carolyn Otto
- "Chinese New Year" by David F. Marx

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Chinese New Year are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



- CALENDAR,
- CELEBRATION, CHINESE,
- COLORS, DANCE,
- DRAGON, FAMILY,
- FESTIVAL, FLOWERS,
- FOOD, HOLIDAY, HOME,
- LANTERN, LION, LUNAR,
- MOON, NEW, PARADE,
- SOLSTICE, TRAVEL, YEAR.

C L O I C G R A N U L B C D Y
 A S L A N T E R N P L H I N D
 L E V A R T Y C A M I N O O M
 E D F L O W E R S N W E N I Y
 N R H O M E A W E R A E Y L A
 D A E D M D H S C O L O R S D
 A G C A E F E S T I V A L O I
 R O N C E L E B R A T I O N L
 Q N A R F A M I L Y H F D N O
 I Z D Y E D S O L S T I C E H

Cook's Corner

Chinese Beef

You'll need:

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (4-ounce) can mushrooms, drained
- 1 (8-ounce) can water chestnuts, drained

- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 cups rice, cooked



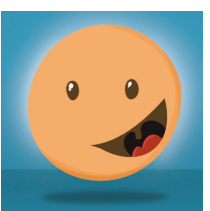
* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Cook ground beef in a skillet over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes or until brown. Drain well.
2. Add onion. Cover and cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Stir often.
3. Add remaining ingredients except rice. Cook on low for 15 minutes. Stir occasionally.
5. Serve over rice. Serves 4 to 6.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. breakfast drink (5) _____
2. where crops are grown (5) _____
3. insects (4) _____
4. grove of fruit trees (7) _____
5. group of cows (4) _____
6. spicy pizza topping (9) _____
7. stinging insect (6) _____

OR	BU	JUI	PER
RD	CE	HE	ET
ONI	CH	LD	PEP
HORN	GS	ARD	FIE

Answers: juice, field, bugs, orchard, herd, pepperoni, hornet.

Mini Jokes



- Stewart:** Why did they call the mermaid average in school?
Sue: Because she was a "sea" student!

Eco Note



Litter isn't just ugly; it can also hurt animals. Deer and other animals cut their tongues on sharp, half-opened cans. Six-pack rings can trap and strangle birds and fish. Make sure you throw garbage in cans, not on the ground. Pick up trash you see lying around. Snip your six-pack rings so no animals can get stuck in them. Ask adults not to throw out cigarette butts. Animals eat them, which can be deadly.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for notices about Chinese New Year's events.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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