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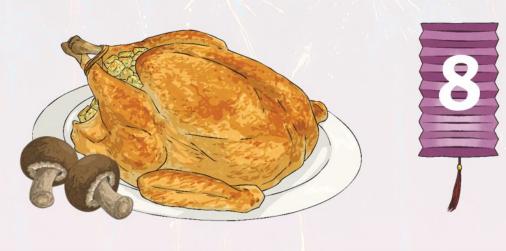
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The days and weeks leading up to the Chinese New Year are just as busy as the lead-up to Christmas. Shops and markets are filled with people buying food and gifts. Families frantically clean their houses, making sure that every surface is gleaming.



New Year's Eve is time for a big family get-together. Dinner on New Year's Eve is often a big feast with duck, fish, shrimp, mushrooms and other traditional ingredients. Dishes cover enormous tables, big enough for the whole extended family. Food is often served on octagonal plates.

Red, pink and orange are all lucky numbers, but black is considered very unlucky. Eight is the lucky number.





## The New Year

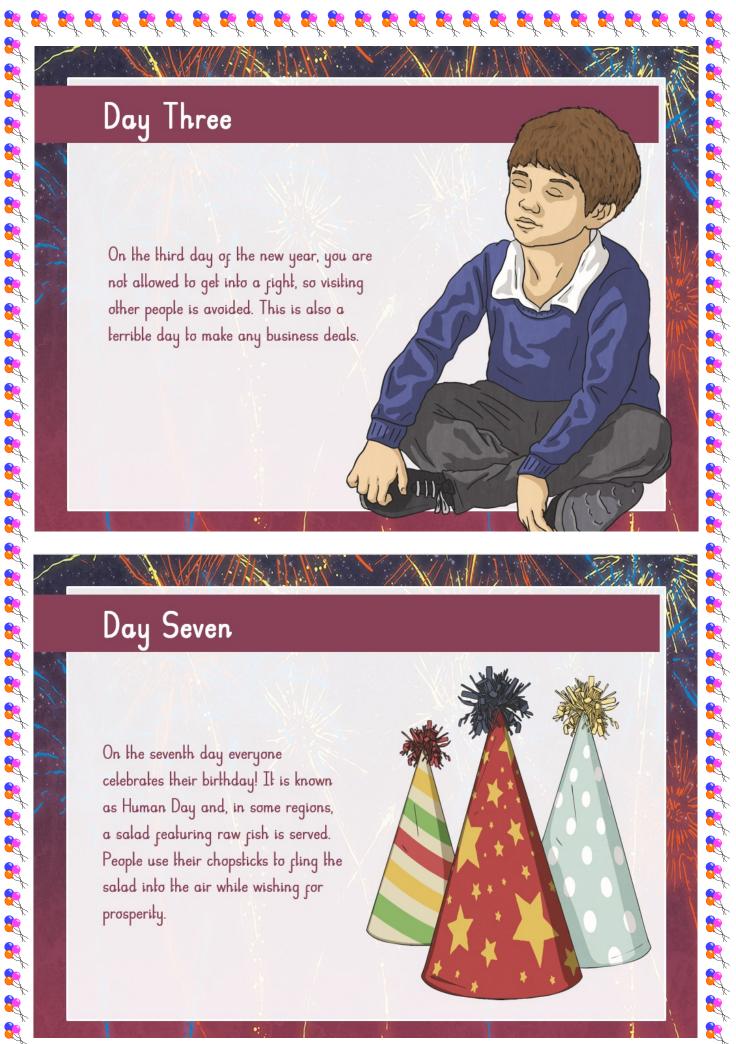
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Cleaning is strictly forbidden on New Year's Day, and you are not allowed to touch any sharp objects. This affects celebrations on New Year's Day. Since knives are not allowed, good is mostly prepared the day before. People are very careful not to drop or spill anything as they are not allowed to clean it up. Cleaning would sweep away all the good luck of the new year.





## Day Seven

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On the seventh day everyone celebrates their birthday! It is known as Human Day and, in some regions, a salad featuring raw fish is served. People use their chapsticks to fling the salad into the air while wishing for prosperity.



