

Chinese New Year

WALT: develop our understanding of the Chinese New Year.



Happy New Year!



Chinese New Year usually begins in late January or early February. The exact date is different every year because, like Easter, it is calculated from the phases of the moon. In China it is usually known as the Spring Festival, and it lasts for the first 15 days of the new year. Other countries celebrate Chinese New Year as well, which is why it's also known as Lunar New Year.

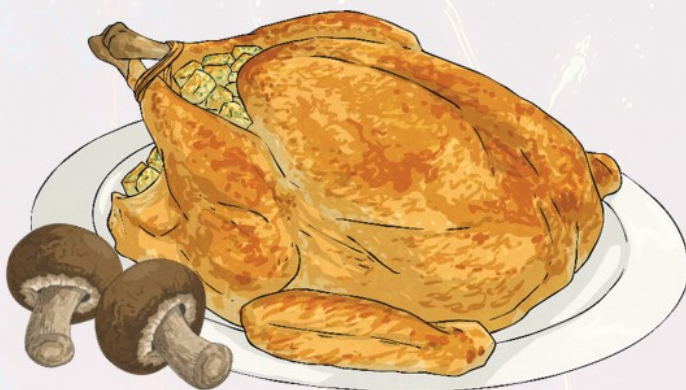
The Big Night

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.



Gifts are exchanged on New Year's Eve, but it is usually the young people who get the most. Children and unmarried young adults receive red envelopes with money inside. The envelopes are decorated in gold, with wishes for prosperity.



The New Year

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, food 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 Three

On the third day of the new year, you are not allowed to get into a fight, so visiting other people is avoided. This is also a terrible day to make any business deals.



Day Seven

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 chopsticks to fling the salad into the air while wishing for prosperity.



The End of Festivities

The fifteenth and final day of the new year festival is marked by the full moon. Traditionally, unmarried women would write their contact details on to an orange and throw it into a river, lake or the sea, hoping that an unmarried man would find it.

