



The Lunar New Year isn't only observed in China, it's celebrated across several countries and other territories in Asia, including South Korea, Vietnam, Tibet and Singapore. In the U.S., it is most commonly associated with what is often called Chinese New Year, an American version of China's 15-day-long festivities.

It's called the Lunar New Year because it marks the first new moon of the lunisolar calendars traditional to many east Asian countries which are regulated by the cycles of the moon and sun.

**Spring Festival, Lunar New Year or Chinese New Year?**

**Chinese New Year**

Spring Festival  
chunjie (春节)

**Korean New Year**

Seolla

**Vietnamese New Year**

Tết nguyên Đán

**Taiwanese New Year**

Spring Festival

**Tibetan New Year**

Losar

**Mongolian New Year**

Tsagaan Sar

**Traditional Food**

The Lunar New Years Eve meal is the most important meal for the year. Families gather together.

- **Eight Treasures Rice:** (rice, walnuts, different colored dry fruit, raisins, sweet red bean paste, jujube dates & almonds)
- **"Tang Yuan"** black sesame rice ball soup; or a won ton soup
- Chicken, duck, fish and pork dishes
- **"Song Gao,"** made of coarsely ground rice formed into a small, sweet round cake

- **"Jiu Niang Tang"** – sweet wine-rice soup
- Dumplings symbolize wealth
- Long Noodles represent longevity

**Things to Do and Not Do**

**Do:**

- Only talk about good, happy things
- Pay back your debts before the new year starts or it is bad luck.
- Wear red, it attracts luck!

**Don't:**

- Cry or Argue
- Cut your hair & stay away from scissors. In a time of family togetherness it is taboo as it is believed you'll be severing connections.
- Avoid wearing black or white as those colors are associated with mourning.
- Don't wash your hair or do laundry on day 1 or 2
- Don't sweep or take out the garbage or you will take away accrued wealth and luck.
- Don't visit hospitals and avoid taking meds.
- Avoid borrowing or lending money
- Avoid killing anything including livestock. Blood is a bad omen and brings misfortune.

**Traditions of Lunar New Years**

Attracting and carrying over good fortune into the next year is a major theme of the holiday, and so is protecting against bad fortune.

- **Dances:** The **Dragon Dance** features visible puppeteers holding poles as they make the dragon move in a flowing motion. A **Lion Dance** typically features two performers inside the costume, operating as the creature's front and back legs. It's supposed to send away any evil spirits. It's an opportunity to feed the lion with red envelopes. While these two dances are among the best known, Maasbach says they're just a few examples native to specific regions. China is a very diverse country, with many different practices, the Fan Dance, the Phoenix Dance, the Lion Dance, they are all provincial expert pieces.
- **Red Envelopes Filled with Money:** They are traditionally gifted from an elder or parent to children, or really anyone who's unmarried. If your brother is 40 and he's unmarried he still gets red envelopes. The custom arose out of a tradition of using coins as a gift to ward off evil spirits.
- **Firecrackers:** Firecrackers and fireworks are often set off throughout Lunar New Year, both to ward off an ancient monster called Nian, and because it's become a raucous way to celebrate.



- **Upside-down fu characters:** On Lunar New Year, you'll commonly see a calligraphy character on a square of red paper, hung in a diamond shape. The character, 福 [fú], which means good luck, happiness or fortune, is hung upside down for Lunar New Year.