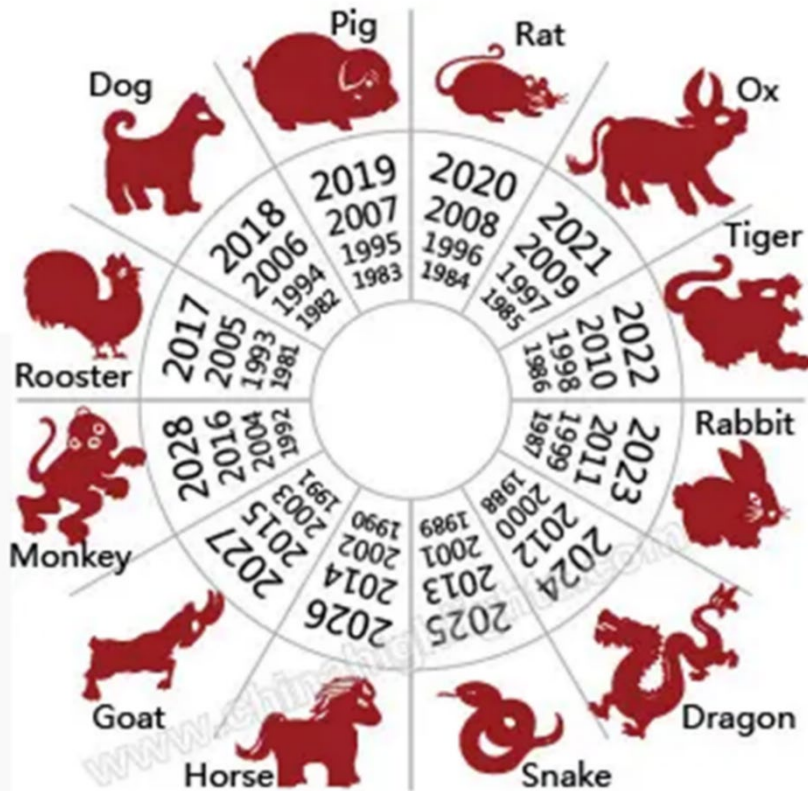




# Chinese New Year 2024

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is one of the most important and widely celebrated festivals in Chinese culture. It marks the beginning of the Lunar New Year and is a time for family reunions, cultural festivities, and the welcoming of a new year with hope and optimism. 2024 marks the year of the Dragon according to the Chinese Zodiac, or Shengxiao. This refers to the circle of 12 animals that measure the cycles of time. Signs or animals are determined by the Lunar Year in which you were born.



Legend has it that a god beckoned all animals to bid him farewell before his departure from Earth. Only 12 of them, namely the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig arrived, with each given a place of honour in a year based on the order of arrival. This year's creature, the Dragon, is thought to be a symbol of strength, courage,

and good fortune.

The year of the dragon commences February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and will last until January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The celebration, as in every year, will last for eight days.



新年快乐

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2024

Happy Chinese New Year

The Dragon is the fifth creature in the order and people born in the years specified tend to get on well with others who are born in the year of the Rat or Monkey.

Characteristics of the Dragon are that they are lucky, flexible, eccentric, imaginative, artistic, spiritual, and charismatic. Dragons present themselves as strong and independent figures, but they yearn for support and love. The dragon's confidence is robust as they hold lofty ideals that they strive towards, but this tends to be for the good of the community and others. Independent thinkers, they never yield their highest convictions. Alternatively, they can be seen as domineering, temperamental, self-centred, and gullible. They can also be viewed as overbearing when they are just trying to show they care.



The Chinese Five Elements Theory assigns one of the five elements - Metal, Water, Wood, Fire, and Earth to each year in addition to the zodiacs. Dragons born in different years will have different personalities.

Metal Dragons 1940, 2000

Water Dragons 1952, 2012

Wood Dragons 1964, **2024**

Fire Dragons 1976, 2036

Earth Dragons 1928, 1988



Lucky things for Dragons- numbers 6 and 8

Lucky colours- cyan blue and purple

Lucky plants – bamboo and cyclamen.

Best careers for Dragons- artists, politicians, academic researchers, architects, entrepreneurs.

It might be expected that the mighty Dragon would be in the prime position on the zodiac instead of 5<sup>th</sup>. There is an Origin Story that explains why this is.

Legend has it that the Jade Emperor held a race across the heavenly river to decide which animals should have the honour of being included in the zodiacs. Everyone was convinced that the mighty Dragon would win the grand prize.

On the way to the race, Dragon encountered a village suffering from drought. Taking pity on them and stopping to give them rain, Dragon was late for the race, and lost the top prize.

Famous people born in the year of the Dragon

Reese Witherspoon 1976, Michelle Obama 1964, Adele 1988, John Lennon 1940, Martin Luther King Jr. 1929, Vladimir Putin 1952, Lizzo 1988.



The Chinese New Year is an opportunity to eat delicious treats and hope for a prosperous and happy year ahead. In the run up to the celebrations people prepare their homes by cleaning, decluttering, and redecorating with red couplets, lanterns, plant pots and new furniture. The New Year is very focused on family and reuniting with loved ones, those living far away return home prior to the festivities, this is known as Chun Yun (moving in the spring). Food and drink are a crucial part of these celebrations and family members sit round a large table to have a New Years Eve dinner, this is known as Nian Ye Fan. Families burn incense sticks to worship and remember



ancestors. Older family members give younger one's good luck money known as Ya Sui Qian in red envelopes (Hong Bao).



In preparation for the New Year, focus is put on all to thoroughly cleanse themselves to wash away any bad luck before the end of the year and all change into new shoes and outfits for the festive period. At midnight on New Years Eve, noisy firecrackers are set off to welcome the new year. On the days that follow friends visit each other's homes and offer good luck wishes and exchange seasonal greetings. This, when done traditionally, is where people make a bow with hands folded in front.

In Northern China, it is common to say 'Xinnian Kuaile' (Happy New Year in Mandarin) alternatively in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the Cantonese version is 'Gong Hey Fat Choi' (wishing you a prosperous year).

There are different practices for cleaning over the New Year Period. Generally, people would not sweep the floor on New Years Day, or if they do, they do not dump rubbish or throw water outside the house. Anything collected from the broom should be kept inside the house as throwing anything away would mean losing wealth for the coming year. When sweeping, one must not sweep into someone's feet, this will bring bad luck to them in the future.

Other superstitions include

- Not using negative words such as death, sickness.
- Not taking medicines or visiting the hospital
- Never break a bowl glass etc
- Do not wash clothes for the first two days of the celebration
- No crying
- No lending or borrowing

- Do not do any needlework, use scissors, or get a haircut
- No porridge on the first morning
- Don't let the rice jar become empty
- Do not awaken others who are sleeping on the first day or take an afternoon nap
- Don't wear old, dirty, or black and white clothes
- Do not exit the house via the back door on New Years Day
- Adults should not reprimand naughty children, even if they are not behaving as they should.



