



CHINESE NEW YEAR

Chinese families look forward to the New Year celebration all year. The fifteen-day period that makes up this festive holiday is an especially happy time for Chinese children. The New Year celebration occurs between January 20 and February 20 each year. As in days of old, the exact time of the celebration is determined according to the appearance of the second new moon.

People begin their preparations for the holiday long before New Year's Day. Homes, store fronts, public places and streets are cleaned and decorated. Brilliantly colored paper flowers, chains, streamers, fans and lanterns can be seen everywhere. Favors, presents and noisemakers are made ahead of time to be presented later to family and friends. Many people visit family and friends, join in parades, present gifts, and enjoy food, laughter, dancing and fireworks displays during the celebration.

The lion is considered to be a symbol of good fortune and is said to chase away "evil spirits." Other symbols of the celebration include the fish and the dragon. Because red is believed to be a lucky color, many red and gold scrolls, banners and lanterns are used as decorations.

The last holiday parade ends with the procession of the giant dragon followed by people of all ages carrying lighted paper lanterns. This is when Chinese girls and boys begin thinking about next year's celebration!

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