

Chinese New Year



Where is China?

- The country of China is in northeast Asia.
- China is the fourth biggest country in the world.
- China has the largest population in the world with over 1.3 billion people!
- China is divided into provinces.
- The capital city of China is Beijing.



What is China like?

- China has very diverse geography including deserts, mountains and fertile river basins.
- In the north of China, there are mountains where it snows much of the year.
- The south of China is filled with jungles and it is very hot and humid. Central China consists mostly of mountainous regions.
- Most of Western China is Mountains, including the Himalayas.
- Rivers are very important in China, both for transportation and for irrigation.
- Rivers are very important because much of the wheat and rice fields in China rely on irrigation.



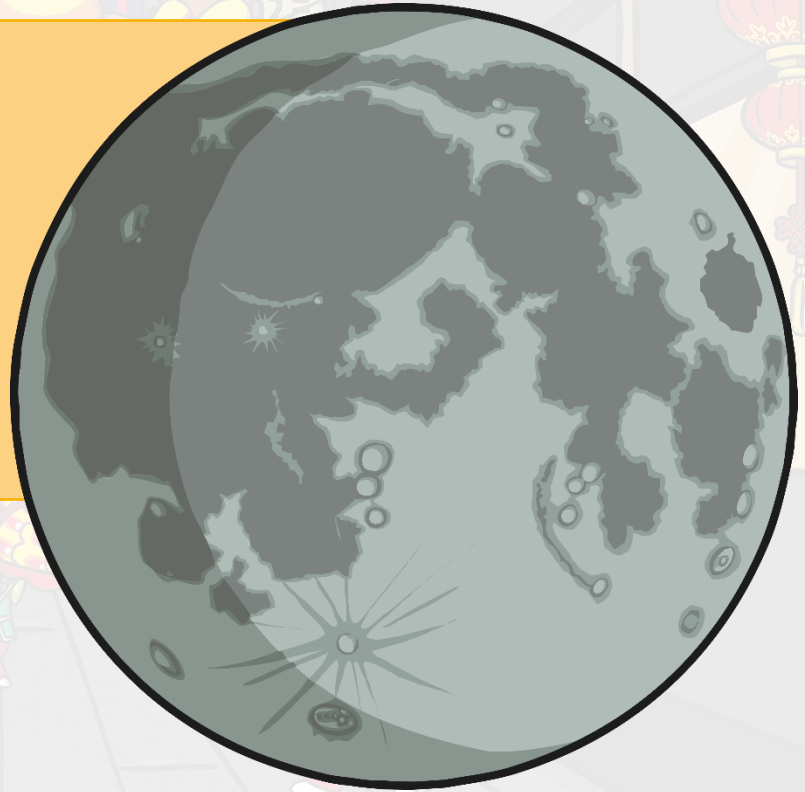
What are Chinese People Like?

- China is home to people from lots of different ethnicities and cultures.
- Chinese culture is very unique.
- The Chinese calendar, architecture, food, handicrafts, dance, festivals and martial arts are very popular across the world.
- Chinese people mainly speak Mandarin, but some also speak Cantonese, Hakka or Swatow, depending on which part of the country they are from.
- The staple food in China is rice and it is eaten with nearly every meal.
- In the last 20 years China has changed more than any other country in the world.



When is Chinese New Year?

- The Chinese New Year starts somewhere between late January and Early February.
- The date changes from year to year because it follows an ancient farmer calendar which is based on phases of the moon.



Preparing for the New Year

- Chinese people spring clean their houses and gardens to sweep away any bad luck.
- Houses are decorated with paper scrolls and lanterns with good luck phrases such as 'happiness' and 'wealth' on them.
- All unfinished business is settled so there is a fresh start for the new year. Debts are paid, quarrels are resolved and any work is brought up to date.



New Year's Eve

- Families gather together and have a large, traditional feast of fish and chicken.
- In the North people eat jiaozi - a steamed dumpling.
- 'In the South people eat nian gao - a sticky sweet rice pudding.
- People stay up till midnight setting off fireworks to scare evil spirits away.



New Year's Day

- Children receive red envelopes filled with money and sweets from their parents and grandparents.
- Every family member starts the day with brand new clothes from head to toe. Red is a very popular colour for clothing as it is considered lucky.
- The first stop of the day is the temple to worship Gods and welcome the New Year.
- Most Chinese families gather together for a New Year's Banquet. Each family has their own special dish they prepare for this time.



The Second Day

- Cai Shen, the Chinese God of Wealth's birthday is celebrated. The Chinese pray to their ancestors as well as the Gods.
- It is believed to be the birthday of all dogs so dogs are treated with special foods.
- It is also a time for visiting families.



The Third and Fourth Day

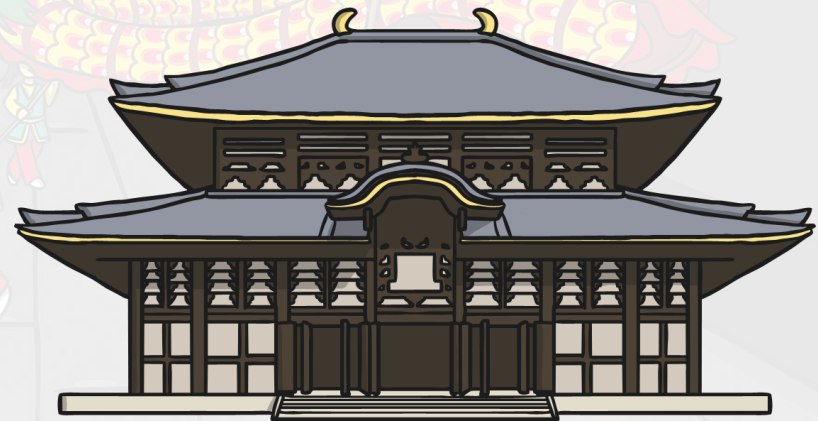
The Third Day

- Chinese people believe they should not visit friends and relatives on this day.
- Instead, they visit the Temple of Wealth and have their futures told.



The Fourth Day

- Most people go back to work.
- It is also the day of Spring Dinners. Businesses have department dinners or social events for their employees.



The 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Day

- The 5th Day - Dumplings are eaten for good luck and some people shoot firecrackers to worship the God of War.
- The 6th Day - families usually send away the ghost of poverty and welcome the beautiful days in the new year.
- The 7th Day - Day 7 is considered everyone's birthday.
- The 8th Day - This is the eve of the Jade Emperor's birthday. Special family dinners are held.
- The 9th Day - The Jade Emperor's birthday. The Emperor is worshipped by lighting incense and offering prayers.



The 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th day

- The 10th Day - Recognition and offerings towards the Jade Emperor.
- The 11th/12th Day - Family Dinners
- The 13th Day - everyone converts to vegetarian on the thirteenth day to give their stomachs a rest!
- The 14th Day - This day is spent resting and preparing for the lantern festival, the last day of the Chinese New Year.



The 15th Day!

- The 15th day is also known as the Lantern Festival.
- There are dragon and lion dancing parades in the streets, and all the streets are crowded with people.
- Families walk the streets carrying lit lanterns.
- Candles are lit outside homes to guide wayward spirits home.
- Rice dumplings are eaten on this day.
- In Malaysia and Singapore, single women write their phone numbers on oranges and throw them into a river or lake. Single men eat the oranges and the taste of the orange (sweet or sour) represents good or bad fate.



