CELEBRATE CHINESE NEW YEAR FROM HOME WITH THIS COLLECTION OF ACTIVITIES.

- ALL ABOUT CHINESE NEW YEAR
- PAPER CUTTING: THREE-PETAL FLOWER
- CALLIGRAPHY: HOW TO WRITE THE CHARACTER 福
- COOKING: NEW YEAR CAKE
- COLORING: DOOR GODS
- CHINESE NEW YEAR FUN FACTS QUIZ
All About Chinese New Year

春节快乐
chūn jiē kuài lè
Happy Spring Festival!

Chinese New Year, also called the Spring Festival, is the most important holiday and festival in China. It celebrates the start of the Lunar New Year with food, colorful lanterns and other decorations, fireworks, and a variety of festivities. This holiday has been celebrated in China for over 2000 years!

The Lunar New Year season lasts 15 days. This year the Lunar New Year starts on February 12 and ends on February 26 with the Lantern Festival.

This coming year will be the Year of the Ox. The traditional Chinese calendar is a lunar calendar based on the cycles of the moon. The Chinese zodiac runs on a twelve-year cycle and each of the twelve years has a different zodiac animal to represent it. Each animal has different personality traits associated with that year. The ox is thought to be serious, reliable, stubborn, and hard working. The other zodiac animals are rat, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.

Though we are not able to hold our traditional festival on site at China Institute this year, you can celebrate at home with these fun activities and a recipe for New Year cake!

恭贺新禧
gōng hè xīn xǐ
Wishing you a happy and auspicious New Year!
Paper Cutting Activity
Three-Petal Flower

Paper-cutting artwork, called jianzhi (剪紙), is a folk art that originated from cutting patterns for rich Chinese embroideries. Paper-cut pieces are popular decorations and gifts at celebrations and big events including the Lunar New Year. They are often placed in windows and a term for paper-cutting artworks, chuānghuā (窗花), means “window flower.” Here you can make your own flower!

1. Fold a square paper in half, corner to corner. (Origami paper is ideal.)

2. Draw two dotted lines from the center of the long side, as shown in the photo.

3. Fold the left side over to the right side on the dotted line.

4. Then, fold the right side under to the left side on the dotted line.
Draw a half flower design on the folder paper. (You can use the design here as a template or draw your own.)

Shade the areas outside of the flower design.

Cut out the shaded areas of the paper.

You now have the half flower cut-out.

Unfold the paper flower design.

You have finished the three-petal flower!
Learn How to Write the Character 福

The character 福 (福), meaning fortune or good luck, is often pasted on doors for Lunar New Year festivities. It is usually displayed upside-down on diagonal red squares. Why upside down? In Mandarin the word for "upside-down" (倒, dào) sounds the same as the word for "to arrive" (到, dào). So an upside-down 福 is a fun way of saying "good luck arrives"!

Follow the instructions below to learn how to write 福. Write it on a piece of red paper and hang it upside down on your door to bring fortune to your home for the New Year!
Cooking: New Year Cake

Food at Chinese New Year

As with any holiday, people love to eat delicious food at Chinese New Year. Popular specialties include dumplings (饺, jiǎozǐ), spring rolls (春, chūnjuǎn), glutinous rice balls (汤圆, tāngyuán), and New Year rice cake (年糕, niángāo). Certain foods have special meanings. For example, eating long noodles are thought to bring you a long life and dumplings will bring you wealth because they look like an old form of gold and silver pieces. Oranges symbolize sweetness and luck.

Here you can make your very own New Year cake. The word for “cake” (gāo) sounds the same as the word for “high,” so eating this cake will make sure you rise taller in the coming year!

New Year Rice Cake
年糕 (niángāo)

INGREDIENTS
• 3 cups, 2 Tablespoons of glutinous rice flour
• 2 cups, 3 Tablespoons of dark brown sugar
• about 2 cups of water

INSTRUCTIONS
1) Bring water to a boil and stir in brown sugar until it is completely dissolved.
2) Add in rice flour and stir until smooth.
3) Grease an 8-inch round cakepan. Fill with batter.
4) Steam about 1 hour or until sides begin to pull away from the cake and the cake becomes solid and sets. You can eat the cake as is.
5) To store, place in an airtight container in your refrigerator. To reheat, slice into squares and pan fry with some oil or dip in egg and flour and deep fry.

Coloring: Door Gods

Protection for the New Year

Door Gods are legendary, mythical, sometimes historical figures that keep evil spirits from entering a home. The paintings of these gods are pasted onto the main door of a home. There are always two gods and they should be facing each other. Their expressions are fierce and they hold weapons in order to protect the home and ward off evil.

Color in the drawings of the Door Gods on the next two pages and paste them on either side of your door to protect your home for the New Year!
Chinese New Year Fun Facts Quiz

1. In 2021, Chinese New Year falls on February 12. What is the other name for this important holiday?

2. Chinese New Year isn't just a one-day affair! How many days does the Chinese New Year celebration traditionally last?

3. Each Chinese New Year is defined by an animal sign, in a cycle of 12. What is the animal sign for 2021?

4. 2021 is the Year of the Ox! Are you a lucky cow? What about your friends and family members?

5. It’s the Year of the Ox! In Chinese culture, what are some of the celebrated qualities of Ox?

6. Chinese New Year day changes every year because it follows a lunar calendar. Is Chinese the only culture that celebrates the lunar New Year?

7. There are 12 animal signs that incorporate the Chinese New Year cycle. Which of the following animals is NOT included?
   A. rabbit
   B. sheep
   C. fish
   D. rooster

8. What are some popular foods for Chinese New Year?

9. When did the Chinese start to celebrate Chinese New Year?

10. Which of the following is a traditional Chinese New Year tradition?
    A. Eating moon cakes
    B. Giving out red envelopes
    C. Having a dragon boat competition
    D. Displaying floating river lanterns

11. Why are oranges a special part of Chinese New Year celebrations?

12. A traditional (Mandarin) greeting for Chinese New Year is:
1. Spring Festival, 春节(chūnjié)
2. for 15 days, until the Lantern Festival (元宵节, yuánxiāo jié) -- that's February 26 this year!
3. It is the Year of the Ox 牛 (niú)!
5. Due to the role of the Ox in Chinese agriculture, the Ox is seen as hardworking, reliable, modest, and trustworthy.
7. C. fish
8. dumplings, 饺子(jiǎo zi); spring rolls, 春卷 (chūn juǎn); glutinous rice ball, 汤圆 (tāngyuán); New Year rice cake, 年糕 (niángāo)
9. We don't know the exact year, but surely before the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD). That's more than 2,000 years ago!
10. B. Giving out red envelopes
11. The sound and look of the word “orange” in Chinese, 柑桔 (gān jú), symbolizes sweetness and luck! Who doesn't want a sweet and lucky new year?
12. 恭贺新禧 (gōng hè xīn xǐ): Wishing you a happy and auspicious new year.