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Happy Chinese New Year!

The Chinese New Year, or Lunar New Year, began on February 8, 2016. It is traditionally celebrated in much of Asia, and is a time of celebration to be with family, with food at its center. It is celebrated for a period of roughly two weeks, until the first full moon of the new year.

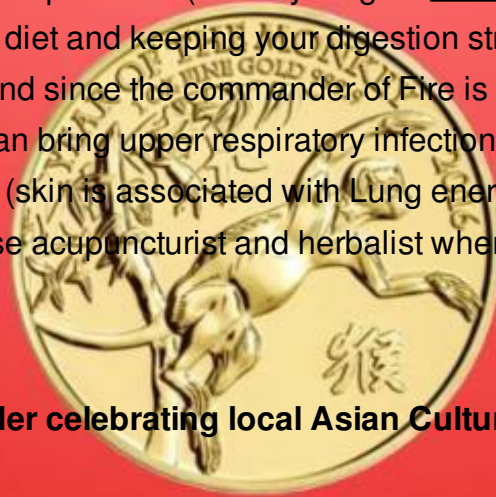
In the Chinese culture, lucky foods are consumed. Lucky foods are those that may have symbolism, such as long rice or mung bean noodles representing long life, or their Chinese names (in either Mandarin or Cantonese) are homonyms for positive expressions, goals or wishes. For example, tangerines, oranges or kumquats represent wealth and abundance, since they have a color like gold. For example, a dish called "Lo Han Jai" is traditionally consumed by Buddhists ([recipe](#)). It is a noodle dish with mushrooms (especially shiitake), both of which represent longevity, and is vegetarian to represent cleansing. Other Chinese may prepare a whole chicken (including head and feet) to represent togetherness and completeness.

It is the Year of the Monkey, with a Fire aspect (from the Five-element model). The

Year of the Fire Monkey is expected to be a time of rapid changes, like the rapid movements of a monkey swinging from tree to tree. The symbolism of the "monkey mind", a term used in meditation circles, also fits the demeanor of the year. However, the Monkey has quick wits and a clever mind, and is an excellent problem solver. So it is predicted that this can be an optimistic year since things will progress quickly.

It is also predicted that a new respect for natural medicine, with its focus on health maintenance and disease prevention, will occur. In terms of individual health, it is a good year to find original ways to remain healthy. Get ready to start yoga or Tai Chi! Fire rules the Heart and Small Intestine in TCM, so be diligent about taking care of your blood pressure and cardiovascular health, since Heart also governs the blood vessels and capillaries. (See my blog for [heart health post](#)).

Maintaining a healthy diet and keeping your digestion strong is also especially important this year. And since the commander of Fire is Metal, which represent the Lungs, this year can bring upper respiratory infections, breathing problems, or external inflammation (skin is associated with Lung energy). Remember to call or visit your local Chinese acupuncturist and herbalist when such health concerns arise.



Consider celebrating local Asian Culture and Art!

[Tibetan Monks coming to Paradise this month \(February 20 - 27\)](#)

[Bok Kai parade and festivities in Marysville in March](#)

[Oroville Chinese Temple and Museum Complex](#)

[Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco](#)

[Current exhibits at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco](#)





References

Chinese Food Symbolism

Fire Monkey Predictions, Taosharon's Blog

Susan Levitt Astrology

(includes predictions for individual signs)

AstroStyle Chinese Horoscopes



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