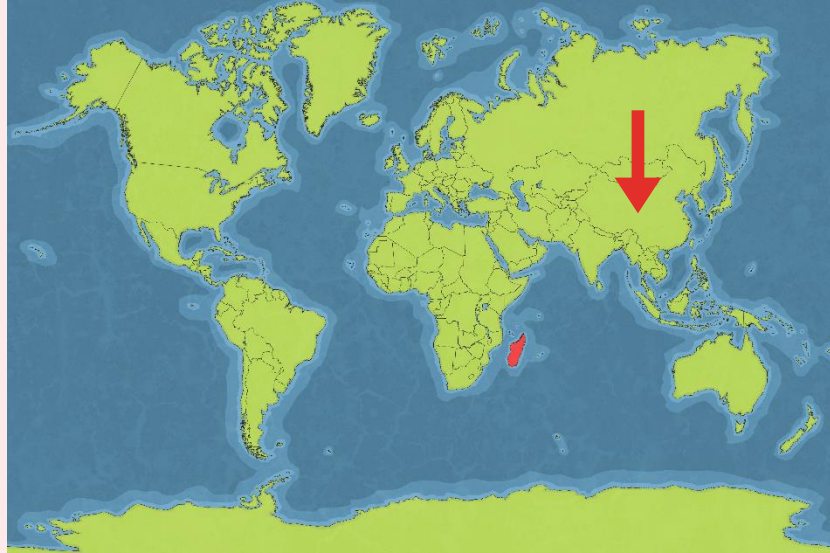


All About Chinese New Year



Where Is China?



The country of China is in north-east 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 mountainous – it is home to the Himalayas.
- Rivers are very important to China, both for transportation and for irrigation.
- Rivers are very important because many 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 country in the world.



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When Is Chinese New Year?

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.



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Preparing for the New Year

Chinese people spring clean their homes and gardens to sweep away any bad luck.

Homes 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 dijiaozi – a steamed dumpling.

In the South, people eat nian gao – a sticky sweet rice pudding.

People stay up until midnight, setting off fireworks to scare away evil spirits.



New Year's Day

Children wake up to find red envelopes filled with money and sweets under their pillow, left by their parents or grandparents.

Each family member starts the day with brand new clothes from head to toe. Red is a very popular color for clothing as it is considered lucky.

The first stop of the day is the temple to worship the gods and to 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

The birthday of the Chinese God of Wealth, Cai Shen, is celebrated.

Chinese people 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 departments dinners or social events for their employees.



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

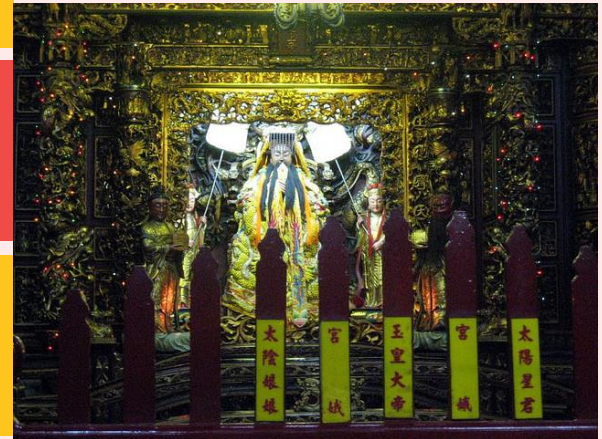
The 5th Day – Dumplings are eaten for good luck and some people shoot firecrackers to worship the God of War.

The 6th Day – Firecrackers are thrown to keep away bad spirits to worship the God of War.

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 continue towards the Jade Emperor.

The 11th/12th Day – Family dinners.

The 13th Day – Everyone eats vegetarian food 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 Chinese New Year.



The 15th Day

The 15th Day is also known as the Lantern Festival.

Crowds of people watch dragon dancing and lion dancing parades.

Families walk the streets with their glowing lanterns.

Candles are lit outside homes to guide wayward spirits home.

In Malaysia and Singapore, single women write their 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.



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