



恭贺新春

2025



Lunar New Year





Lunar New Year Spotlight

Lunar New Year is a new year celebration based on the lunar calendar and is celebrated worldwide, but particularly in many Asian countries. Variations of Lunar New Year are celebrated in China, Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Mauritius, and the Philippines. While these celebrations differ in certain respects, when speaking of the celebration collectively, it is often referred to as Lunar New Year. This year, one of the most well-known Lunar New Year celebrations, Chinese New Year (also known as “Spring Festival”), begins on January 29. Other Lunar New Year celebrations may start or end on different days.

Chinese New Year marks the beginning of the lunar calendar, which is a repeating cycle of 12 years. Although China has adopted the Gregorian calendar for civil and business purposes, the country still utilizes the lunar calendar for observation of public holidays, such as Chinese New Year. Corresponding with the lunar calendar, the Chinese zodiac consists of a cycle of 12 animals in the following order: the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. The traditional lunar calendar cycles through this repeating twelve-year cycle, with each year corresponding to one of the listed animals. Each lunar year is also associated with an element: Earth, Metal, Water, Wood, or Fire. Per the Chinese zodiac, 2025 is the year of the Wood Snake. The Snake symbolizes wisdom and transformation, as well as calmness and introspection. The element of Wood is associated with imagination and creativity.

Some common Chinese New Year traditions and celebrations include cleaning the home prior to the beginning of the new year, having a reunion dinner with extended family, or gifting red envelopes with money to children. Chinese New Year concludes with the Lantern Festival, filled with lanterns, parades and fireworks. Many lanterns are red as the color symbolizes good fortune in Chinese culture.



Korean Lunar New Year

Other countries have their own traditions for their celebrations of Lunar New Year. This year, the DEI Committee would like to highlight Korea’s Lunar New Year celebration and traditions. In Korea, Lunar New Year, or Seollal, is the biggest public holiday of the year. It is one of the few holidays celebrated by both North and South Korea, as well as by the Korean diaspora in other countries. Celebrations typically last three days, beginning the day before the new moon and ending the day after. Korean Lunar New Year is often observed with a large feast. It is customary to serve food to the ancestors first, in a practice called charye. Traditional foods include japchae (stir-fried glass noodles), mandu (dumplings) and ddeokguk (rice cake soup).

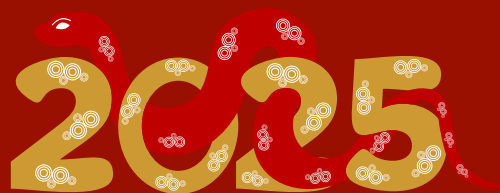


During Korean Lunar New Year, families gather at the home of their oldest male relative, often wearing traditional garments called hanbok. One of the most important new year traditions is a form of elder reverence called sebae. Younger members of the family take turns performing a deep bow to their older relatives, wishing them happy new year and asking them for wisdom. Elders respond by giving gifts of money and fruit, bestowing a blessing for the coming year.

Many folk games are played on Korean Lunar New Year, the two most popular being Go-Stop and Yutnori. Go-Stop is a simple gambling game played with hand-painted hwatu cards, which are separated into twelve suits – one for each month of the year. Yutnori is an ancient board game where players cast sticks and move tokens around the board in a race to the finish.

An interesting fact about Korean Lunar New Year is that Seollal means “day of age” in Korean and was an important part of the unique “Korean age” system. Historically, Korean people collectively grew a year older on the date of Lunar New Year, rather than marking their age on their birthdays. In 2023, the National Assembly of South Korea officially switched to the international standard of age-counting, which made South Koreans spontaneously grow younger that June. While not legally relevant anymore, is still common social practice to mark your “lunar birthday” on Seollal.

Lunar New Year Events in Chicago:



- Chinatown's Lunar New Year Parade on Sunday, February 9, 2025. The parade will begin at 1:00 p.m. at the intersection of 24th Street and Wentworth Avenue and travel north on Wentworth towards the viewing stand at Cermak and Wentworth.
<https://ccc-foundation.org/lunar-new-year-parade/>
- Chinese New Year Dumpling Making Dinner at Hing Kee Restaurant on January 25, 26 and February 1, 2 sponsored by the Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chinese-new-year-dumpling-making-dinner-our-20th-year-celebration-tickets-1034802601437>
- Global Connections Lunar New Year Celebration at Navy Pier on February 1, 2025. (FREE)
<https://navypier.org/lunar-new-year/>
- Lunar New Year Celebration Concert presented by the Chinese Fine Arts Society & Old Town School of Folk Music at the Gary and Laura Maurer Concert Hall on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. (FREE)
<https://www.oldtownschool.org/concerts/2025/01-15-2025-wmw-andy-rubal/>



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