

Lunar New Year: The Year Of The Dragon

From ASIATOWN CLEVELAND

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The Lunar New Year or Spring Festival is commonly referred to as Chinese New Year, Têt in Vietnamese, Seollal (설날) in Korean, Losar ལོ་གསར་ in Tibet, and Tsagaan Sar in Mongolian. It begins on February 10, 2024. Families begin preparing weeks before, and celebrations last for two weeks until the Lantern Festival.

According to the zodiac calendar, this year will begin the Year of the Wood Dragon, which is known for growth, power, and abundance. Also the dragon symbolizes authority, nobility and luck. Traditions vary across geography and religion, but *read on for a few ways to celebrate in AsiaTown!*



LUNAR NEAR YEAR EVENTS IN NORTHEAST OHIO

CLICK HERE FOR A LIST OF 2024 LUNAR NEW YEAR EVENT CELEBRATIONS AROUND NORTHEAST OHIO!

We will ring in the Year of the Dragon in AsiaTown at **Asia Plaza** (2999 Payne Avenue) **February 10 and 11, 2024, 10am-3pm!** Join us for the Kwan Family Lion Dance, lots of performances, crafts, and more.

PREPARING FOR THE NEW YEAR

- **Oranges and mandarins** represent luck and success. Bring pairs of oranges with leaves as gifts for visiting elders and family.
- **Kumquat plants** are a key New Year decoration in Southern China, as the yellow fruits represent wealth and luck with harvests. Families also decorate with fresh flowers, like **daffodils** and **butterfly orchids**.
- **Candy** symbolizes happiness and sweetness, so purchase sweets to usher in a happy life in the new year. Dried fruits and candy plates are very popular in the southern parts of China. In Northern China, many families gather over **melon seeds** or nut snacks. Find a wide variety at any of the Asian grocery stores.
- **Money trees** appear in weeks leading up to the New Year, representing the generation of more good luck and money in the new year. Businesses place red envelopes on a kumquat tree or branches to bring prosperity.
- Decorate with **fresh flowers**. Some parts of China have held Flower Markets before the Lunar New Year for hundreds of years. The pussy willow is a particularly lucky flower, because its name in Chinese (yin liu) sounds like the word for "money flowing."
- Purchase **new clothes** to wear on New Year's Day.
- **Red** is considered a lucky color, representing happiness, beauty, good luck, and good fortune. Wear red and decorate with red during this festive season!
- **Clean** the whole house. Sweeping and cleaning in preparation for the New Year symbolizes sweeping away bad luck from the last year. This must be done before the New Year begins, or it symbolizes sweeping away the good luck for the new year!
- **Cut your hair**. It's bad luck to cut your hair during the first month of the lunar calendar, so it is common practice to cut it in advance! In some regions, it's very good luck to cut it on the second day of the second lunar month. Book an appointment with **A9 Salon** or **Sun Hair Salon!**
- **Celebration calendar**. Starting with the Little New Year 小年 (February 2) and leading up to New Year's Day (February 10), each day carries traditional activities to prepare for New Year's Day. For example, it is traditional to **buy tofu** six days before or a **whole chicken** four days before. In preparation for New Year's Day, families may celebrate by decorating and preparing food for new year's feasts. This includes hanging **couplets and signs (hua)** on doorways or making **dumplings** and **mantou** 馒头. On New Year's Eve, families gather to eat and exchange gifts.



CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR

- A traditional celebration welcomes in the new year with loud **firecrackers** and a **lion dance**.
- Wear **new clothes** on Lunar New Year's Eve and Day.
- Give out **red envelopes** (hong bao) with money, especially to children.
- Gather with family to **eat** a New Year's meal!



NEW YEAR'S BANQUETS AND FEASTS

- **Nian gao** 年糕. A vegan sticky rice cake symbolizing prosperity. **Koko Bakery** and **LJ Shanghai**.
- **Banh tet**. A savory Vietnamese sticky rice cake. Cut and steam or deep fry slices.
- **Fish**. Symbolizes abundance, often eaten whole and steamed. Try the spicy steamed fish head at **Sichuan Hot Pot** or whole steamed fish at **Siam Cafe**.
- **Dumplings**. Symbolize wealth or good luck. Some regions add coins to the stuffing – whoever receives the coin is the luckiest for the year! For Korean New Year, mandu is lucky, too. **LJ Shanghai**, **Han Kabob**, **YY Time** (opening soon!), or **Miega**.
- **Noodles**. Long noodles represent longevity. Get spicy beef noodle soup at **Sichuan Hot Pot**, or bowl of ramen from **Alpha Ramen**, or pho from **Superior Pho**, **Number 1 Pho**, or **Pho Sunshine**.
- **Lobster**. A staple in new year's banquets, try the sautéed lobster with ginger and scallion 姜葱吉祥虾 at **Siam Cafe**. Whole lobster signifies unity and marriage.
- **Nuts and seeds**. Families sit around tables and crack open trays of seeds (such as peanuts or melon seeds). Find them at any of the Asian grocery stores. **Tink Holl**, **Good Harvest**, **Asia Food Co**, **Park to Shop**.
- **Lamb**. This is a cherished meal in inner Mongolia and parts of Eastern and Northern China. Lamb dumplings are popular for Muslim communities in Northwest China. Order the Xinjian style lamb or lamb kabobs at **Han Kabob** or cumin lamb at **Wen's Kitchen**.
- **Duck**. Representing fidelity, duck is a must-have at Lunar New Year feasts. Try the roast duck at **Good Harvest Food Market**, Peking duck buns at **Siam Cafe**, or Peking duck at **Li Wah**.
- **Hot pot**. Many families celebrate the New Year with hot pot. Order to-go or dine in at **Sichuan Hot Pot** or make your own! Find all necessary equipment and ingredients at **Tink Holl**, **Park to Shop**, and **Good Harvest**. **Asia Food Co**. is a favorite for hot pot meats.
- **Chicken**. Chicken represents flying to reach greater heights in the new year. The Chinese word for chicken also sounds like "accumulate," symbolizing prosperity. Chicken soup is a beloved tradition. Try the Korean fried chicken at **Korea House**, chicken kaarage at **Ice or Rice**, or Szechuan chicken with Chinese eggplant 鱼香茄子鸡片 at **Wonton Gourmet**.
- **Pork**. In many families, New Year's feasts feature all of the meat! Try the pepper pork belly fortune soup at **Bo Loong**, Sichuan pork belly at **Wen's Kitchen**, or crispy sweet and sour pork 夫妻肺片 at **Szechuan Gourmet**.
- **Shrimp**. Walnut shrimp is another popular banquet dish. Shrimp represents happiness and laughter. **Bo Loong**, **Li Wah**, **Siam Cafe**, or mix it up with a shrimp dish at **Map of Thailand**.
- **Rice cakes**. Tteokguk is known as the Korean new year soup, bringing good fortune and prosperity, as the rice cake shapes resemble Korean coins. **Ha Ahn**, **Rising Grill**. Or find rice cakes to make at home at **Kim's Market**.



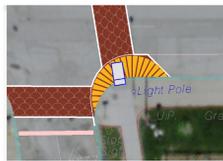
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