

Auspicious

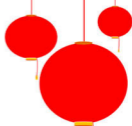
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A Chinese New Year Primer

The Spring Festival, or Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on February 16 this year marking the start of the Year of the Dog. The seven-day holiday marks the world's largest migration with 385 million expected travelers. Factories shut down and work grinds to a halt as families come together to celebrate. Picture this: Spring Break meets Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve.

The History

Chinese New Year – a.k.a Spring Festival or Lunar New Year – is rooted in China's ancient agrarian society dating back 3,800 years. The festival celebrates the beginning of spring farming, but today it is a holiday for family gathering and travel.



The Year of the Dog

The Chinese zodiac is a 12-year cycle each with its own animal mascot. If you were born in the Year of the Dog (the 11th year of the zodiac), you are considered loyal, honest, and just. Dogs are good at dispensing advice and helping friends.

The Mass Migration

About 385 million Chinese people – more than the U.S. population – are expected to take advantage of the seven-day "Golden Week" to travel domestically and see friends and family, or take the opportunity to vacation this year – it's the world's largest mass migration.



The Economic Boom

And, they are expected to spend more than \$75 billion – about the size of the economy of the Netherlands – in just one week. If turned into a country, it would be in the top 20 economies of the world.



The Flee Overseas

Internationally, about 6.5 million Chinese tourists are expected to fan out across the world with the most popular destinations being Thailand, Japan and France. That's like Chicago, Houston AND Philadelphia heading off to Mexico, Canada and, well, France!



Red Packets

The most iconic gift is a "red packet" – and a small red envelope. Traditionally, red envelopes were given to the kiddos from parents and grandparents, but nowadays digital red packets are transferred to friends, family, and colleagues. About 14.2 billion packets were distributed in 2017!



Decking the Halls

In addition to a good feast with the family, Chinese families do a deep spring cleaning and "deck the halls" with red posters of traditional Chinese poems, red lanterns, and Chinese New Year pictures.



Taboos

If you're in China for the festivities, you should know it is taboo to use "inauspicious words" like bad, dead, kill, ill, or poor. Bad things could happen if you utter these words during the most auspicious of times.