



# Food During Lunar New Year and Other Special Occasions

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The auspicious symbolism of traditional Lunar New Year foods is based on their pronunciations or appearance.

In addition to the Lunar New Year celebration that's also called the Spring Festival, there are other special foods eaten during other festivities that bring families together.



# Fish 鱼 | 魚

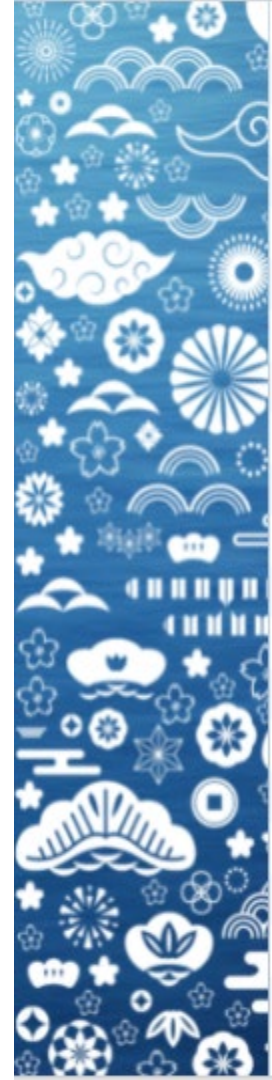
Mandarin: Yu

Cantonese: Jyu

A fish represents wealth and prosperity because the actual word in Chinese for fish, yú/yoo, 魚, also translates to “abundance” or “surplus.” To have a surplus at the end of the year means to have more in the new year.



Fish can be cooked in various ways such as boiling, steaming, and braising, although steamed fish is a preferred Lunar New Year recipe.



# Tangyuan (Sweet Rice Balls)

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*Tangyuan* is the main food for China's Lantern Festival, however, in south China, people eat them throughout the Spring Festival. The pronunciation and round shape of *tangyuan* are associated with reunion and being together. That's why they are favored by the Chinese during the New Year celebrations.

汤圆

湯圓

Mandarin: Tang-Yuan

Cantonese: Tong-Jyun



# Spring Rolls

Mandarin: Chun-Juan

Cantonese: Ceon-Gyun

春卷  
春捲



Spring rolls are filled with vegetables, meat, or something sweet. Fillings are wrapped in thin dough wrappers, then fried until the spring rolls are given their golden-yellow color.

Spring rolls are usually eaten during the Spring Festival. Eating spring rolls is a way to welcome the arrival of spring and originally made for Lunar New Year Banquets, because the new year marks the start of spring in the lunar calendar. The golden cylindrical-shaped rolls represent gold bars which symbolize wealth.



# Dumplings

Mandarin: Jiao-Zi

Cantonese: Gaau-Zi

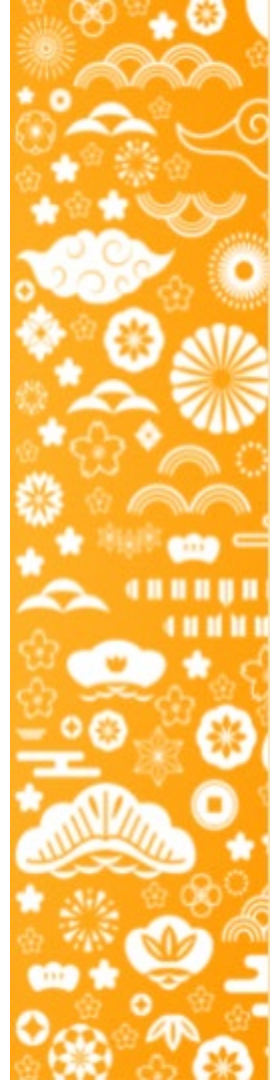


饺

餃子

Chinese dumplings can be made to look like Chinese silver ingots (which are not bars, but boat-shaped, oval, and turned up at the two ends).

Legend has it that the more dumplings you eat during the New Year celebrations, the more money you can make in the New Year.



# Tangerines

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Mandarin: Gan-Ju | Cheng-Zi

Cantonese: Gam-Gwat | Caang-Zi

## 柑橘 |

The Chinese word for tangerine is 橙 (chéng-zi), which sounds the same as a word that means luck and good fortune. They are often served at the end of the meal, exchanged when you go visit relatives, or used to decorate homes to bring more blessings.



# Rice Cakes

## 年糕

Mandarin: Nian-Gao

Cantonese: Nin-Gou

Nian gao 年糕 symbolizes progress, advancement, and growth. Nián (年) means “year,” and “gāo” (糕) is a homonym for “gāo” (高), which means, “tall,” “high,” or “expensive.”

Every family inevitably buys or makes this treat for their Lunar New Year celebration, in the hopes of having a better year ahead. It’s also a popular gift to give when visiting family and friends during the holiday.





# Longevity Noodles

## 长寿面 長壽麵

Mandarin: Chang-Shou-Mian

Cantonese: Coeng-Sau-Min

Longevity Noodles are often eaten during Birthdays or other festive seasons such as Lunar New Year. It is eaten to symbolise longevity together with a pair of hard-boiled eggs which represents fertility or life.



# Tea 茶

Mandarin: Cha

Cantonese: Cha

There are many different types of teas, but all embody the idea of clarity, respect, joy and truth. According to Chinese tradition, members of the younger generation should show their respect to members of the older generation by offering a cup of tea; this is to also to show gratitude, especially during special occasions like weddings. Tea is also consumed regularly, both on casual and formal occasions as they are known to have health benefits.



YELLOW TEA



WHITE TEA



GREEN TEA



OOLONG TEA



BLACK TEA



PU-ERH TEA



# Zhongzi 粽子

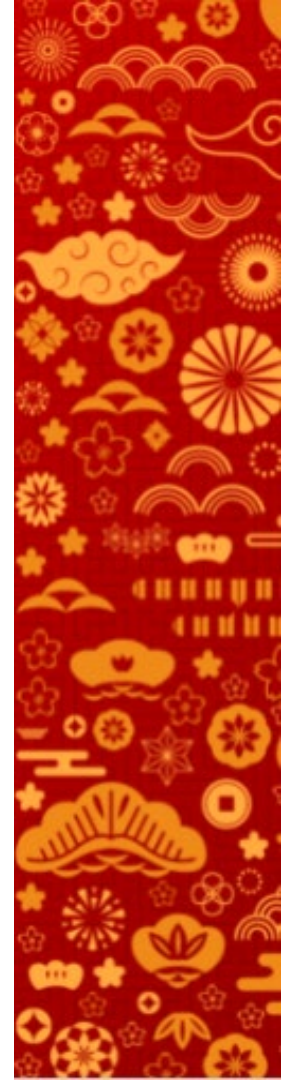
Mandarin: Zong-Zi

Cantonese: Zung-Zi

Zhongzi is sticky rice with fillings such as pork, mung beans, red beans, and/or a salted duck egg yolk wrapped inside bamboo leaves. Chinese people traditionally eat Zongzi during the Dragon Boat Festival, which is on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar to memorialize Qu Yuan, a famous Chinese poet who lived



2300 years ago and was highly esteemed for his wise counsel among the common people. Zhongzi is now also eaten during special occasions like Lunar New Year.



# Moon Cakes

月餅  
月餅

Mandarin: Yue-Bing

Cantonese: Jyut-Beng

In Chinese culture, roundness symbolizes completeness and unity. Moon cakes are like the full moon, symbolizing prosperity and reunion for the whole family. Round mooncakes filled with various ingredients like red bean paste or lotus bean paste complement the harvest moon in the night sky during the Mid-Autumn Festival.



# Family and Food



Family is the basis of the Chinese society, which is seen through the significance placed on the New Year's Eve dinner (年夜饭 / Nián yèfàn), also known as the Reunion dinner (团年饭 / tuán niánfàn).

Chinese cuisine emphasizes abundance, variety, and contrasting flavors. A lot of care and thought is put into the menu for the most important holiday of the year as dishes are created to give blessings for the next year. Both the names and looks are symbols of wishes for prosperity, happiness and auspiciousness.

# Resources 文献资料 文獻資料

- [Top 7 Chinese New Year Foods to Bring YOU Good Luck 2022](#)
- [Chinese New Year Dishes](#)
- [Mian Gao \(Chinese New Year Sweet Rice Cake\)](#)
- [Sweet and Savoury Longevity Noodles](#)
- [Traditional Tea Snack](#)
- [Traditional Chinese TeaCup with Lid](#)
- [What is Tea?](#)



# Resources

## 文献资料 文獻資料



- [Cantonese-Style Zongzi \(Rice Dumplings\)](#)
- [Making Zhongzi With Grandma | Pieces Of Life | February](#)
- [The Legend Behind Zongzi](#)
- [Mooncakes: Traditional Chinese Pastries full of Flavor](#)
- [These Are the Chinese New Year Traditional Dishes That Will Bring You Luck Throughout the Year](#)
- [14 Chinese New Year Flowers/Plants/Fruits to Bring You Luck](#)
- [Chinese New Year Greetings for Businesses and Individuals](#)

