

Name: _____

恭喜发财

The Chinese New Year Traditions

Tuesday, 1 February, was the first day of the Chinese year. Chinese New Year (Lunar New Year) is celebrated not only in China, but all over the world. In China, the holiday (also called Spring Festival) lasts for 2 full weeks, and people take the time off from work to be with their families. Houses are decorated with red banners and lanterns, and friends get together to celebrate and have fun.



Chinese New Year is a time of hope and good cheer. Before the New Year, people clean their houses to sweep away all the bad luck of the old year. Men also get a haircut before the year starts. This is because cutting hair during the first month of the New Year is considered bad luck—all the good luck of the New Year gets cut away with the hair. People also try to pay off their debts and settle disputes before the end of the old year—a grudge or a debt carried over into the New Year is considered an evil omen (sign).

On New Year's Eve, families dress in bright new clothes and celebrate with a special feast of eight or nine traditional Chinese foods. Then at midnight, they open all the doors and windows to let the old year out and the new one in. It is also the custom to bang gongs and set off fireworks to frighten off evil spirits.

On New Year's Day, people exchange gifts of *Hong-Boa* (Red Packet). A *Hong-Boa* is red envelope with money inside. It is way of wishing someone good luck and prosperity in the coming year. It is also customary for people to greet each other by saying "*Gong Xi*" ("congratulations")—congratulating each other on surviving the previous year. .

According to legend, a monster called *Nian* (which is also the mandarin word for *year*) travels from house to house on New Year's Eve eating animals and people. However, if a house is protected with red banners above and on the sides of the door, the monster will pass it by. This why people exchange congratulations on New Year's Day—they are congratulating each other on escaping the monster the night before.

OVER→

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1. What is another name for the Chinese New Year celebration?

How long does it last?

2. What are some things people do before the start of the New Year?

3. Why do people clean house before the start of the New Year?

4. Why do men get a haircut?

5. What are some things people do on New Year's Eve?

6. What gifts do people exchange on New Year's Day?

How do they greet each other?

7. Why do people congratulate each other on New Year's Day?