



How to...

DID YOU KNOW?
The oldest Lunar New Year parade in the US, dating back to 1851, takes place in San Francisco, California.



Celebrate Lunar New Year

Enjoy the traditions and culture of this special holiday that begins on January 29.

Lunar New Year, a celebration that dates back more than 3,000 years, marks the start of spring and a new year. It is observed in many Asian countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. "It's a lucky time of year and a time to celebrate traditions with family and friends," Danielle Chang, host of the culinary series *Lucky Chow*, told *The Week Junior*. Here are some ways to celebrate.

Know the history

Lunar New Year is celebrated on a different date each year and observed for 15 days. This year, Lunar New Year begins on January 29. The year 2025 is the Year of the Snake (see sidebar at right). Different regions have their own traditions. For example, in South Korea, Lunar New Year is called Seollal. It lasts three days, and children wear colorful *hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing). In Vietnam, Lunar New Year is called Tet, and people decorate their homes with flowers.

Get in the holiday spirit

The new year often starts with a deep cleaning to clear away the old and make way for a fresh start. Celebrations kick off with different generations reuniting for dinner. In another tradition, relatives

often give children in their families *hong bao*, which are red envelopes with money inside.

Decorate with symbolic touches

You can prepare for the holiday by making decorations with two colors associated with Lunar New Year: red (which symbolizes luck and happiness) and gold (which represents wealth). You can also incorporate the year's zodiac animal into your decorations. "You can draw pictures of a snake or make a snake garland out of colorful paper to hang," says Chang. Lanterns are a significant part of the celebration, and you can make your own (see the craft instructions on the next page).

Feast on traditional foods

Foods traditionally eaten for Lunar New Year have special symbolism. Many families stay up late the night before to make dumplings, which are believed to bring prosperity for the coming year. "Longevity noodles," which are unbroken lo mein noodles, symbolize a long life (see recipe on next page). Citrus fruits like oranges, tangerines, and pomelos are thought to bring good luck and abundance. Sweet glutinous rice balls, treats enjoyed by many celebrants at the end of the holiday, symbolize family unity and togetherness.



Red envelopes symbolize good wishes.

The Year of the Snake



The Chinese zodiac is a 12-year cycle of animals that represent each year. This year, 2025, is the Year of the Snake. The Year of the Snake also occurred in 2013, 2001, and every 12 years counting backward before that.

People born in the year of a particular animal are believed to possess the personality traits of that animal. The Year of the Snake is associated with being mysterious, wise, and eager to learn new things.

The other zodiac animals—each with their own personality traits—are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. Last year's animal was the dragon, and the animal for 2026 will be the horse.

GETTY IMAGES; ON RIGHT PAGE: JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMARKET; ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE



How to...

LOOK TO THE LIGHT

Lunar New Year lanterns symbolize driving out darkness and ushering in hope for the new year.



Create your own festive paper lanterns

What you'll need

- Recycled paper (such as maps, newspaper, sheet music, gift wrap), construction paper, or cardstock
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Optional: battery-operated tealight

Instructions

1. Cut a rectangle of paper about 8 inches wide and 5 to 7 inches tall. Fold it in half lengthwise (along the long side).
2. Use a ruler and pencil to draw a line $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in from the edge of the long side. Mark dots $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart along that line. Repeat on the folded edge, aligning dots with the first set of marks. Use the ruler to draw lines connecting each dot on the open side to the corresponding dot on the folded edge.
3. With scissors, cut along the lines, stopping at the first drawn line. (Do not cut all the way through.) Unfold the paper.
4. Cut two strips of paper for the edging. Each should be $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide and the length of the rectangle's long side plus $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
5. Use the glue stick generously to adhere paper strips to the long sides of the rectangle, leaving the extra $\frac{1}{2}$ inch off at one end (which you'll use as a tab to glue the lantern closed). Roll rectangle into a cylinder. Re-press strips down if needed.
6. Use the glue stick to adhere the overhanging ends of the paper strips, closing the cylinder. Hold seams for 1 to 2 minutes until the glue dries.
7. Optional step: Add a handle to the lantern. Cut a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch strip of paper as long as you'd like the handle to be plus 1 inch. Glue the ends to the lantern top. Place a battery-operated tealight inside if you wish.

Stir up "longevity" noodles

Ingredients

For the sauce

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice cooking wine
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

For the lo mein

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced, with white, light green, and green parts separated
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup julienned carrots
- 1 cup julienned bell pepper
- Big handful baby spinach
- 14 to 16 ounces cooked lo mein noodles

Instructions

1. Make the sauce: Combine the cornstarch and all the sauce ingredients. Whisk them smooth to combine. Set aside.
2. Make the lo mein: Heat the oil in a large pan or wok over high heat. Add the garlic, white and light green scallions, carrots, and red pepper. Cook, stirring constantly, for about 2 minutes.
3. Add the prepared sauce, spinach, and noodles. Cook, tossing to coat, until the spinach is wilted and the vegetables are crisp-tender, about 3 more minutes. You can add a splash more water to the pan to loosen the sauce if necessary.
4. Divide the lo mein noodles among bowls and top with the dark green parts of the scallions. Makes about 4 servings.



WARNING!

Ask an adult's permission before using a knife or the stove.