

Lunar New Year 2024: The Year of the Dragon

Source: <https://earthsky.org/human-world/chinese-new-year-lunar-new-year/>

Over a billion people in China and millions around the world will celebrate the Lunar New Year this weekend. In 2024, it falls on February 10. The start of the holiday coincides with the date of the new moon, which will fall at 22:59 UTC on February 9, 2024. So, the new moon will be 6:59 a.m. on February 10 in Beijing. And it'll be 5:59 p.m. on February 9 in New York City. The Lunar New Year is a time to honor deities and ancestors and to be with family. An animal represents each of the 12 years in the Chinese zodiac. In 2024, it's the Year of the Dragon.

The Year of the Rabbit will end on February 9, 2024. And then the Year of the Dragon will start on February 10, 2024. Next comes the year of the Green Wood Snake, starting on January 29, 2025.

The calendar and Lunar New Year

In China, the familiar Gregorian calendar is used for day-to-day life. But Chinese calendar dates continue to be used to mark traditional holidays such as the new year and the fall moon festival. And then Chinese astrology uses the lunar calendar to determine favorable dates for weddings and other special events.

In other words, the Chinese calendar is a lunisolar calendar, a combination of solar and lunar calendars. Plus, it has a long history spanning several Chinese dynastic periods from as far back as the Shang Dynasty around the 14th century BCE. Also, there are several different symbolic cycles within the calendar, used in Chinese astrology.

So, the Chinese calendar is an intricate and complex measure of time.

The Chinese calendar is based on a lunar cycle

A month in the Chinese calendar spans a single lunar cycle. In fact, the first day of the month begins during the new moon, when no sunlight falls on the lunar hemisphere that faces Earth. So, a lunar cycle, on average, lasts 29.5 days.

And a lunar month can last 29 or 30 days. As a result, there are usually 12 lunar months in a Chinese calendar year. In order to catch up with the solar calendar, which averages 365.25 days in a year, an extra month is added to the Chinese calendar every two or three years. As a result, Lunar New Year falls on different dates each year (in the Gregorian calendar) between January 21 and February 21.

2024 is the Year of the Dragon

One of 12 animal symbols of the Chinese zodiac (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep/Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar/Pig) represent each year of the Chinese lunar calendar. For 2024, it's the Year of the Dragon.

How to celebrate Lunar New Year

From the first day of the Lunar New Year (the day of the new moon) to the 15th day (next full moon), Lunar New Year celebrations abound. What's more, each day holds a special significance that varies according to local traditions. But first, before the arrival of the new year, homes are thoroughly cleaned to sweep away ill fortune and to welcome good luck. Then on New Year's Eve, families traditionally gather to celebrate and enjoy sumptuous traditional feasts. Finally, at midnight, they greet the new year with fireworks.

In the days that follow, celebrations include a variety of festivities. For example, there are dance parades featuring colorful dragons or lions. Or there are ceremonies to pay homage to deities and ancestors. Plus,



February 2024 Calendar

*African American Heritage Month
Ethnic Equality Month*

- 1 - World Hijab Day (International)
- 1-7 – Women's Heart Week (International)
- 4 – World Cancer Day (International)
- 8 – Lailat al Miraj (Islam)
- 7-13 – African Heritage and Health Week (US)
- 10 – Lunar New Year (International)
- 12 – International Epilepsy Day
- 12-18 – Cardiac Rehab Week (US)
- 15 – Parinirvana (Buddhism)
- 13 – Mardi Gras (Christianity)
- 14 – Ash Wednesday (Christianity)
- 20– World Day of Social Justice
- 26-29 – Intercalary / Ayyam-i-ha (Baha'i)

children receive money in red envelopes and gifts are exchanged. Extended family members travel long distances to visit each other.

The Lunar New Year celebration traditionally culminates on the 15th day with the Lantern Festival. On this night of the full moon, families mingle in the streets carrying lighted lanterns, often creating a beautiful light display.

Folklore and Lunar New Year

There are several variations on the mythology behind Lunar New Year celebrations. Most concern the story of an ugly, bloodthirsty monster named Nian. The monster would emerge on the last night of each year to destroy villages and eat people. A wise elder advised villagers to scare the monster away with loud noises. That night, they set fire to bamboo, lit fireworks, and banged their drums. So the monster, afraid of the loud noises and lights, ran away to hide in its cave.

In another version of the myth, an old man persuaded Nian to turn its wrath on other monsters, not the villagers. Before he was seen riding away on Nian, the old man, actually a god, advised the people to hang red paper decorations in their homes and set off firecrackers on the last night of the year to keep Nian away.

Then on the first day of the new year, the villagers celebrated, greeting each other with the words Guo Nian, which mean “survive the Nian.” That tradition has continued to this day, with Guo Nian now meaning “celebrate the new year.”

The world’s biggest New Year celebration

Historically, the Lunar New Year signals the arrival of the world’s largest annual human migration.



Interpreters in Health Care: A Concise Review for Clinicians

Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0002934320300127>

This What Should a Provider Do When a Patient Declines a Professional Interpreter?

Sometimes patients decline the offer to use health care interpreters. Reasons for refusal of an interpreter could include the discussion of a sensitive topic, that the patient may know the interpreter in the community setting, or that the interpreter does not speak the same dialect. The provider can choose a more anonymous method of interpretation such as a telephone interpreter, thereby providing adequate and anonymous interpretation.



Patients may insist that a family member or friend with adequate English proficiency act as their interpreter. This is highly discouraged, and children should not be used as interpreters except in emergency situations where there is no access to any other method of interpretation. Providers who allow a family member to interpret are highly encouraged to have a trained health care interpreter stay for the interview. The trained interpreter can support the provider in case clarification is needed and can ensure accuracy. The pitfalls of using family members or friends as medical interpreters are numerous, as family or friends may have their own agenda, they may be uncomfortable being honest in relaying bad news, and patients may be uncomfortable being honest about sensitive issues. Side conversations unrelated to the health care visit can make the visit less efficient. Most importantly, there is no guarantee that the information interpreted will be accurate or will remain confidential.

The use or refusal of a medical interpreter should always be clearly documented in the medical record. This documentation should also include who conducted and who interpreted the interview.

What Are the Alternatives to an “In-Person” Interpreter?

Phone medical interpreters are commonly used when an in-person interpreter is not available. Institutions can subscribe to a service or pay by the minute for phone interpretation. Many smaller clinics and hospitals with limited need for interpretation or without the resources for in-person interpretation can rely on large telephone interpreting services, which hire certified interpreters across a spectrum of languages. Large institutions also may have occasions when an in-person interpreter is not available for a particular language and a phone interpreter is necessary. In addition, as previously indicated, some patients may be more comfortable sharing information with their provider through a phone interpreter rather than with an in-person medical interpreter. Phone interpreters can provide excellent interpretation. However, it is often more challenging for the phone interpreter to act as a cultural liaison, compared with an in-person interpreter. Providers need to introduce the phone interpreter to all present and their relationship to the patient. The importance of transparency is especially important when working with a phone interpreter. An example is to state, “I am going to type some information about our discussion into your chart.” The provider must make an extra effort to check in with the patient, and if the patient or provider does not feel the interpretation is going well, a new phone interpreter should be requested.



Video Remote Interpreting via tablet, smart phone, or computer-based applications providing a link to professional interpretation services is becoming increasingly popular. When used, the device should be positioned so the interpreter can see the patient. A pre-visit between the medical interpreter and the provider prior to the provider entering the room can allow the remote medical interpreter to act as a cultural liaison like in a face-to-face visit. This technology can also be used for medical interpretation for the deaf, vs closed captioning (spoken word appearing on a screen), texting, writing, or typing when in-person sign language interpreters are not available.

New Staff Profile: Hind Markus

Hind is the newest Arabic interpreter joining the UC Davis Medical Interpreting team. She was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq. Her first language is Chaldean, her second language is Assyrian. She learned Arabic at school in Iraq since it is the formal language of the country. She attended university in Iraq studying Biotechnology sciences, however she was unable to obtain her B.S. degree because Hind and her family immigrated to Australia. Two years later Hind moved to the United States where she began attending junior college to learn English. After attending junior college, she transferred to California State University, where she graduated with a B.S. in Molecular biology and Bioinformatics. After obtaining her college degree, Hind attended UC Davis for a health professions post-baccalaureate program. While studying, Hind had an opportunity to work and volunteer as a part-time dental assistant which gave her experience in the healthcare field. She used her skills in Arabic to help patients who did not speak English.

During the pandemic, Hind used her language skills creatively: she began tutoring students in Arabic. She also started working as an interpreter through an independent interpreting agency. After getting some experience as an interpreter, Hind set a goal of putting her language skills to use on a larger scale – at a major healthcare facility such as UC Davis Health. She was thrilled to become a part of the staff interpreting team.

In her spare time, Hind enjoys spending time with her bird, Leo, and her goldfish, Kouji, reading books in different languages, and water coloring.

Welcome to the Medical Interpreting team, Hind! We are happy to have you onboard.

