

Happy Chinese New Year!

February 2005

Chinese New Year is the longest and most important celebration in the Chinese calendar, but it doesn't always fall on the same date each year. The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. Chinese New Year starts with the new moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. This year, on February 9, 2005, we welcome the Year of the Rooster. At the stroke of midnight families will light firecrackers to ward off evil spirits and doors and windows will be opened to let go of the old year and welcome the new.

Traditional Foods

Foods served during the Chinese New Year have special meaning. Almost every dish on the table and every ingredient is loaded with symbolism. Fish, served whole, represents togetherness and abundance. Uncut noodles represent a long life. Oranges and tangerines represent abundant happiness.

Feng Shui Your Diet

Feng shui (pronounced fung-shway) is the ancient Chinese art of decorating and placement based on the idea that everything in your outer surroundings affects you. "You subconsciously respond to signals in your environment that affect your mood and appetite," says Nancilee Wydra, founder of the Feng Shui Institute of America. The goal of feng shui is to control chi (pronounced chee)—life force energy. The best way to keep energy levels high is with a balanced diet that includes foods that are loaded with vitamins and minerals, regular exercise and an unstressed attitude. Junk food weakens chi. Check out these feng shui tips for weight loss:

- Do your exercises in bright colors. The warm colors of the rainbow stimulate activity while dark colors tire the body.
 - Food selection should be varied. Bright colors should dominate the plate and neutral colors should be less than a third (i.e. more broccoli and less potatoes).
- Set your table with a black runner or funky black plates. According to Jayme Barrett, author of "Feng Shui Your Life", black subdues your senses and your appetite. Avoid using red place settings—this stimulating color has been shown to turn on appetite.
- Hang a mirror in your dining room. Your eyes are attracted to the light that's reflected from the mirror and as everyone knows, looking at yourself in a mirror can spark weight-loss motivation.
- Straighten up a little by wiping down your kitchen counters. Since clutter represents another to-do, it drains your energy and determination to eat right.
- Make meal time an "event". Decorate the table with fresh flowers and use the best china for all your meals.

"Kung Hei Fat Choy"—Wishing You Peace and Prosperity.