

Chinese New Year Traditions

New Year preparations must begin well before the first event, a reunion dinner on New Year's Eve.

By then you should have cleaned your entire home to get rid of everything associated with the old year. Once that's done put away all your brooms, brushes and cleaning equipment until after the New Year.

You should also have paid all your debts, so that may take a lot of planning.

All arguments, differences and disagreements with your family, friends and even your neighbours should be resolved before New Years Eve. You should also resolve any business problems and make peace with business associates before the big day also.

Go to the bank and get nice new crisp bills for your lucky (little red) envelopes. Stock up on oranges and tangerines, and get flowers (plum or peach blossom and water lily will do nicely if you can get them).

Then on New Year's Eve get together with your closes family members. This traditionally excludes married daughters and their families. At the dinner you will pay your respect for your ancestors and open the house at midnight to let out the old year. This means open every winow and door in your home.

On New Year's Day itself you should decorate your home with red and gold. The red signifies happiness and gold signifies wealth. Orange goes with Gold and signifies happiness as well.

There's a whole range of food you can eat on New Year's Day including Jai which has ginkgo nut, black moss, dried bean curd, bamboo shoots, vermicelli and scallion.

But fish and chicken, which represent prosperity are good and should be served whole if possible. That means the head of the Chicken too, if you can get it. This represents completeness.

Noodles are another good food as the represent longevity and of course the oranges and tangerines as mentioned above.