

NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

Celebratory Fare to Welcome Good Fortune for the Year of the Ox

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Recumbent Ox, probably 1750–1795, Qing Dynasty, probably Qianlong Reign, Manasi spinach green jade (*biyù*), from the Tianshan mountains in Xinjiang Province, 4 5/8 x 11 3/8 x 6 3/8 in. (11.7 x 28.9 x 16.2 cm), Gift of R.H. Norton, 42.18, on view in March 2021

Certain dishes are eaten during the Chinese New Year for their symbolic meaning. Foods, which are believed to bring good luck for the coming year, are served during the festival season, especially at the Chinese New Year dinner on New Year's Eve. The symbolism of these traditional Chinese New Year foods is based on their pronunciations or appearance. See the video under Note on Chinese Tones for more on proper pronunciations.

Here I'll outline some of the most popular Chinese New Year foods and include a bit of information about why they are consumed for good fortune in the New Year.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39476934211532049/>

Mandarin Oranges

The word for mandarin orange or tangerine (橘 *jú*, see note about tones below) sounds like “auspicious” or “lucky” (吉 *jí*).

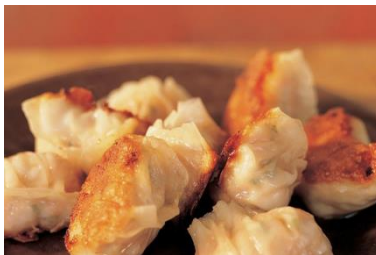


<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/349099408591418433/>

Eight Sweet Tray of Togetherness

An eight sweet Tray of Togetherness refers to the saying 甜甜蜜蜜 (*tián tián mì mì*) meaning sweet and happy. A traditional Tray of Togetherness is an assortment of auspicious treats to sweeten the year featuring: red fruits or candy (for happiness), melon (for vigor and good health), and nuts or seeds (for abundance). The Chinese number eight 八 is considered lucky, because its pronunciation *bā* sounds like 發 (*fā*, meaning to acquire wealth).

How to Make a Tray of Togetherness



<https://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/pot-stickers-357550>

Pan Fried Dumplings (鍋貼 *Guō Tiē*)

Dumplings in the shape of ancient Chinese golden ingots (錠 *dìng*) signify prosperity in the New Year.

Make Pan Fried Dumplings



<https://www.happyandblessedhome.com/free-Chinese-new-year-printables-for-kids-and-easy-Chinese-recipes/>

Spring Rolls (春捲 *Chūn Juǎn*)

Spring rolls resemble bars of gold. The lucky saying associated with spring rolls is: 黃金萬兩 (*huáng jīn wàn liǎng*) 10,000 taels of gold. The weight of 10,000 taels of gold is slightly over 1100 pounds. Therefore, a plate brimming with spring rolls is associated with the blessing of wealth. Chicken spring rolls are a Chinese New Year favorite because the Chinese word for chicken (雞 *jī*) is a homonym for good luck (吉 *jí*).

Make Spring Rolls



<https://omnivorescookbook.com/recipes/authentic-Chinese-steamed-fish/>

Steamed Fish

A whole fish (魚 *yú*) is the most popular dish served during Chinese New Year celebrations. The Chinese word for fish has the same sound as the Chinese word for surplus or abundance (余 *yú*). Fish is served whole because serving chopped up food is believed to reduce good luck in the New Year.

Make Steamed Fish



<https://www.serious eats.com/recipes/2014/05/crispy-pan-fried-noodle-cake-seafood-recipe.html>

Longevity Noodles

长寿面 *Cháng Shòu Miàn*

Noodles are traditionally served on the 7th day of the 15-day Chinese New Year celebration, which is known as everyone's birthday. Those who eat long noodles are considered to be a year older for the day. The tradition of eating noodles at birthday celebrations became popular during the Tang Dynasty (from 618 to 907). Long noodles symbolize long life, so don't cut the noodles before you eat them.

Recipe for Pan Fried Noodles



<http://kahama-town.blogspot.com/2017/02/black-sesame-sweet-rice-balls-tang-yuan.html>

Sesame Dumplings (湯圓 *Tāng Yuán*) in Rice Wine Soup

Dumplings, made of sticky rice flour rolled into balls and often stuffed with sweetened black sesame seeds, are traditionally eaten at the close of Lunar New Year festivities during the Yuan Xiao Festival also called the Lantern Festival, which occurs on February 26 in 2021. The dessert's other moniker 元宵 (*yuán xiāo*), translates to first evening, a reference to the first full moon after the Lunar New Year, with the round shape of the dessert representing the celestial body. The dumplings connote harmony and perfection, signify reunion, and are believed to ensure good luck for families. 酒釀 (*jiǔ niàng*) is sweet rice wine made by fermenting glutinous rice with a distiller's yeast known as 酒曲 (*jiǔ qū*) in Chinese.

Make Sesame Dumplings

How to Make Sweet Rice Wine

Note on Chinese Tones

Chinese is a tonal language. The Mandarin dialect has 4 tones as noted in the text above: 1 flat tone *pīng*, 2 rising tone *qí*, 3 falling and rising tone *jiǔ*, and 4 falling tone *xià*. If no tone is noted in the text above, it is neutral.

Hear Mandarin Dialect Tones

Where to Buy Chinese Foods in West Palm Beach

While Publix will have some Chinese food staples, many can be purchased at Asian or international grocery stores, such as Foodtown Supermarket.

Foodtown Supermarket, Palm Beach