



Celebrate the Year
of the Sheep with
The Wing!

Journey with Newspapers In Education and Wing Luke Museum to learn how different Asian Americans celebrate the New Year.

One of the most important celebrations for Asian Americans is the New Year. Traditionally in Cambodia, New Year's (called Chaul Chnam Thmey) is celebrated April 13-15. In the United States, Cambodian (or Khmer) Americans celebrate Chaul Chnam Thmey on the weekend closest to this traditional date with temple visits, games, decorations of lights and flowers, and feasts of special foods.

The new year begins with the arrival of the tevoda, or angel, who is believed to take care of the family and stay for the year. A new and different tevoda comes each year, so the tevoda's favorite flower, foods and a beverage are set out as an offering to please him or her. The exact time that the tevoda arrives is calculated according to astrology (a belief of how the moon, sun, stars and planets affect people and events) and that is when incense and candles are lit. The family will also put out a tray of cooked food to honor family ancestors and may decorate the house with more candles, flowers and lanterns.

Because many Khmer Americans are Buddhist, they typically spend the mornings of Chaul Chnam Thmey bringing rice, dessert and other foods to the monks at the temple. The afternoon is spent gathering with friends and playing traditional games from Cambodia. One game called Teanh Proart, is like tug-of-war with girls on one side of the rope and boys on the other. Another game, called Angkunh, uses large seeds that are placed standing up. The goal of the game is to knock down all 10 of your opponents' seeds with seeds of your own. In Cambodia, it was customary for boys and girls to be separated, so these games were an exciting way for youth to meet one another.

The new year is also a time for feasts of special foods, entertainment with traditional dancing and music or a dance with modern music for the youth. In Cambodia, Chaul Chnam Thmey is celebrated for three days, but it is usually shortened to two days in the United States.

Make a Cambodian dish to celebrate Chaul Chnam Thmey!



The Khmer dance Robam Kane performed at the Khmer Student Association (University of Washington) New Year Show in 2008. Courtesy of Sophana Kong/Khmer Student Association at UW



Malene Sam and Chanvatey Yin in classical dance dress. Courtesy of Chanthan Yin

CAMBODIAN CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head green cabbage
- 6 oz. fine mung bean thread noodles
- 1 chicken breast, poached or roasted
- 1 cup chopped roasted peanuts
- Optional vegetables for color:
carrot, red bell pepper or red cabbage
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped

Combine for dressing:

- Equal portions of fish sauce, vinegar, sugar and water
- 4-5 garlic cloves, minced

DIRECTIONS

1. Soak noodles in hot water, test after 20 minutes. When noodles are soft but still crunchy, drain well. Cut noodles into short lengths.
2. Meanwhile, cut cabbage into quarters and shred 1/4 inch wide.
3. Shred chicken meat and optional vegetables.
4. Mix together the cabbage, noodles, chicken, peanuts, and vegetables. Toss with enough dressing to coat.
5. Spread onto large platter and sprinkle with basil.

Recipe courtesy of the Northwest Asian Weekly

Thank you to Phala Chea and Chanthan Yin, who contributed to this article.

This article is geared for grades K-5. The lessons in the Teacher's Guide will include lesson plans for grades 6-8.

What is Buddhism?

Buddhism is a religious practice that is based upon the teachings of Prince Siddhartha, who was called The Buddha (the enlightened one). He taught others how to free themselves from the sufferings of life.

UPCOMING FAMILY PROGRAMS

Wing Luke Museum
8th Ave S. and S. King St.
wingluke.org

Saturday, Feb. 21, 12-1 p.m.

STORY TIME

Follow the adventures of Sydney the sheep as she learns what makes the Year of the Sheep unique.

Saturday, Feb. 21, 1-3 p.m.

FAMILY FUN DAY Sponsored by 
Create a paper Plate of Celebration to begin the new year with artist Mizu Sugimura!

SEATTLE CHINATOWN – INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Hing Hay Park
Maynard Ave S. and S. King St.
cidbia.org/events

Saturday, Feb. 21

11 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Learn more about The Wing's current *New Years All Year Round Tour* featuring Chinese, Korean and Cambodia New Year celebrations; an interactive and fun experience for students in Pre-K through the 5th grade. For more information, including other tour options for all ages, email tours@wingluke.org.

