



Celebrate the Year of the Rooster with The Wing!



ANIMALS OF THE CHINESE ZODIAC

The Chinese lunar calendar is divided into 12-year cycles, with an animal representing each year in a cycle. Find the year you were born and the animal that matches that year.

Rat	1972, 1984, 1996, 2008 Charming, funny, clever and curious.
Ox	1973, 1985, 1997, 2009 Successful, reliable and a good listener.
Tiger	1974, 1986, 1998, 2010 Ambitious, warm-hearted and a caring friend.
Rabbit	1975, 1987, 1999, 2011 Lucky, popular, peaceful, and sociable.
Dragon	1976, 1988, 2000, 2012 Energetic, imaginative, and a good leader.
Snake	1977, 1989, 2001, 2013 Hard-working, smart and good with money.
Horse	1978, 1990, 2002, 2014 Cheerful, self-reliant and likes to travel.
Sheep	1979, 1991, 2003, 2015 Creative, thoughtful and helpful.
Monkey	1968, 1980, 1992, 2004 Fun-loving, active and has a good memory.
Rooster	1969, 1981, 1993, 2005 Practical, busy and a loyal friend.
Dog	1970, 1982, 1994, 2006 Trustworthy, lively and a natural leader.
Boar	1971, 1983, 1995, 2007 Strong, optimistic and likes to learn new things.

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

One of the most important holidays for Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans is the New Year. The Chinese New Year is based on the lunar calendar, which follows the phases of the moon. Chinese New Year falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice and typically occurs between mid-January to mid-February. This year the New Year is on Saturday, January 28, and will celebrate the Year of the Rooster according to the Chinese zodiac.

For many people that come down to the Chinatown-International District for Chinese New Year, Lion Dancers in their colorful lion costumes are a festive and fun highlight of the celebration. Learn about the Chinese New Year and the Lion Dance through the eyes of Royal Tan, a Chinese American Lion Dancers who trains under Master Mak Fai in Seattle's Chinatown-International District.

LION DANCE TRADITIONS

You might wonder how lions made their way into Chinese New Year traditions.

Royal Tan explains, "For Chinese New year, the Lion Dance is to bring good luck and to ward off evil spirits. The Chinese believe the lion is an auspicious creature and brings good luck... These stories have been passed down from generation to generation and the Lion Dance has been around for thousands of years."

One story takes place in a village in China where a monster called **Nian**, a word that means **year** in Chinese, causes problems for the village by eating all of the crops and damaging the buildings. The villagers came up with a solution to scare away the monster: they made a lion costume, played cymbals and drums, and lit firecrackers which saved their village.

The costumes are traditionally made from paper maché over a bamboo frame to make up the lion's head (complete with wagging ears and blinking eyes). A lion's body and tail are made from fur-lined fabric. But the lions really come to life through the partnership of two dancers, with one in charge of the head and the other in charge of the body.



Lion dancers bring to life this modern lion costume illuminated with LED lights. Photograph courtesy of Royal Tan

The last component of a Lion Dance is the drums and cymbals. Royal says, "The drums are like the lion's heartbeat, they match. When the lion does a different movement there is a different beat. It goes slow or fast, quiet or loud."

Keep your eyes open for a white lion with a rainbow body, a red lion with black hair and a black lion with a green nose. "Traditionally there are only three colors of the lion, as depicted in 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms,' a Chinese novel," Royal tells us. "They are Lui Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei," respectively. These heroic generals and their legends are remembered through the lion costumes. Today, you will see the traditional three colors of lions dancing along with lions of different vibrant colors—you may even see a lion aglow with LED lights. For Royal, the Lion Dance ties him to his Chinese American heritage and culture.

This article is geared for grades K-5. The Teacher's Guide includes extension plans for these articles and lesson plans.



A row of lion costumes and two dragons circle around the Mak Fai Kung Fu Club in the Chinatown-International District. Photograph courtesy of Royal Tan

**LUNAR NEW YEAR
OPENING CELEBRATION**
Wing Luke Museum
8th Ave S. and S. King St.
wingluke.org/2017newyear

Saturday, Jan. 28
11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Featuring Lion Dance (11 a.m.) and family-friendly activities including story-time, stuffed animal petting zoo, face painting, and kids' scavenger hunt with prizes! **Children and students (with ID) are free – sponsored by The Vietnamese-American Bar Association of Washington.**

**SEATTLE CHINATOWN – INTERNATIONAL
DISTRICT ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**
Hing Hay Park
Maynard Ave S. and S. King St.
cidbia.org/events

Sunday, Jan. 29
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Learn more about The Wing's current New Years All Year Round Exhibit featuring Hawaiian, Chinese American and Lao American New Year celebrations through an interactive tour for Pre-K through 3rd grade. For more information, including other tour options for all ages, email tours@wingluke.org.