

LET'S EXPLORE!: LUNAR NEW YEAR

THANK YOU for taking part in Panda's Let's Explore!: Lunar New Year program! Our program is designed to bring one of the world's most vibrant celebrations to life in your classroom. This curriculum has everything you need to introduce the foundational elements of Lunar New Year to your students. Whether you are looking for a 30-minute lesson or a weeklong thematic unit on Lunar New Year, we have content for you to customize.

Thank you again for joining us in sparking cultural curiosity and fostering greater cultural awareness and appreciation. Happy Lunar New Year!

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CURRICULUM INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW – HOW TO INTRODUCE LUNAR NEW YEAR TO YOUR STUDENTS

Lunar New Year is one of the most celebrated holidays in the world! For thousands of years, Lunar New Year has been celebrated and observed in many Asian countries, including Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, China and more. While the holiday is widely celebrated in Asian countries, many cities around the world hold large celebrations too!

The Lunar New Year celebration is rooted in many colorful legends and traditions that have been passed down for many years. These stories and traditions may differ a bit based on the country.

Lunar New Year Day marks the *first new moon* of the lunar calendar and is celebrated for 15 days. The last celebration day (the 15th day) is the *first full moon* of the year. The lunar calendar is different from the calendar we are used to- the Western calendar — and is based on the cycles of the moon. This means Lunar New Year Day changes every year, but generally, it'll fall between January 21st and February 20th on the western calendar.

Lunar New Year and its traditions are celebrated by communities around the world. Let's explore, learn, and celebrate together today!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Internet access and your unique curriculum link to Panda's Lunar New Year online curriculum.

[Download Digital Activity Booklet](#)



TIPS & RESOURCES FOR FACILITATING

OVERVIEW

Learning about Lunar New Year is fun! This is a unique course that immerses students in a very special and vibrant holiday. Make it a celebration in the classroom!

New to the material? Make sure to click through the online curriculum and read through the packet once or twice, so you can familiarize yourself with the material.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY TIME FRAME

Our curriculum can be customized to your lesson plan. If you are teaching the program for just one day, we recommend picking 2 topic areas to focus on. If you are spreading out the curriculum over a few days or a week, consider teaching 1-2 topics a day. There are eight topics that range in time depending on group size and student engagement.

Trivia Dragon: 10–15 minutes

Global Traditions: 15 minutes

Animals of the Zodiac: 10–15 minutes

Red Envelope Luck: 15 minutes

Lucky Foods: 10–15 minutes

Lunar New Year Celebration Game: 20–30 minutes

Chinese Lunar New Year Phrases: 15–20 minutes

Lantern Festival: 15–20 minutes





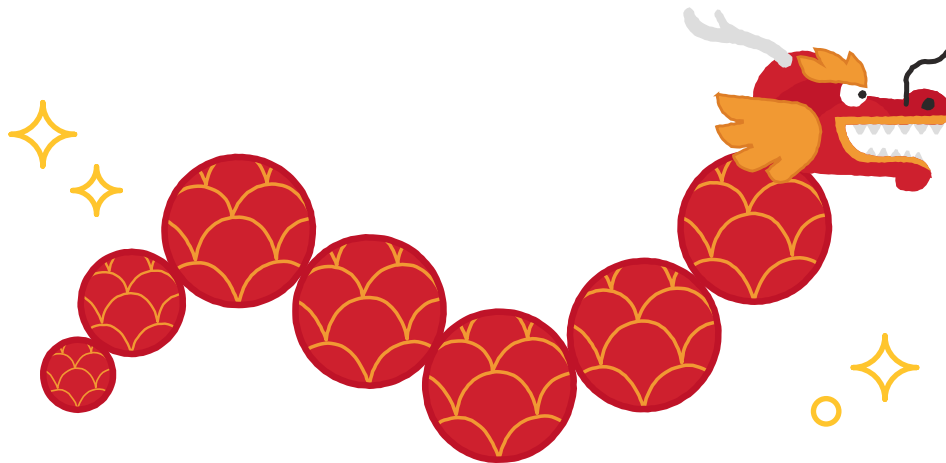
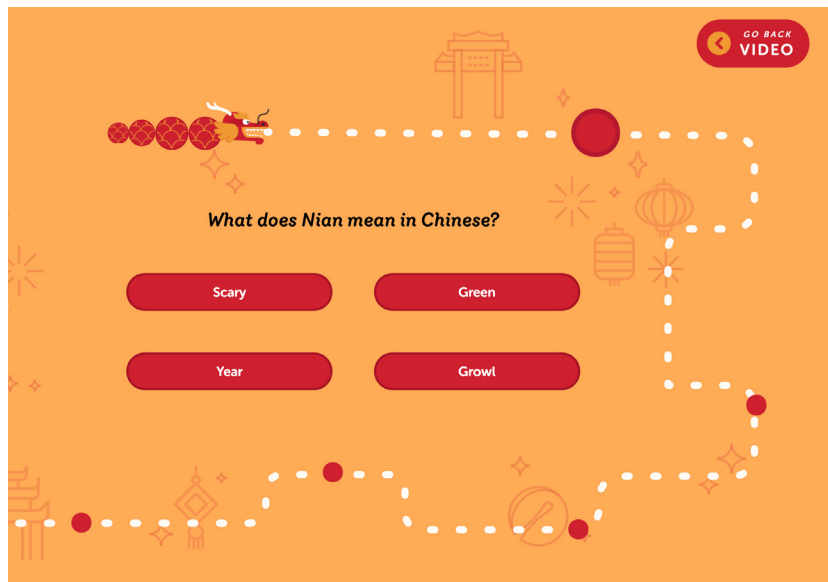
TRIVIA DRAGON

1. OVERVIEW

Before getting into this fun trivia game, watch the 2-part Fortune Tales video with your class. During the video, ask them to pay attention to the different stories and fun facts because there will be a fun trivia game at the end!

2. ACTIVITY

- a. Test your Lunar New Year knowledge by playing the Lunar New Year Trivia Dragon game with students. The dragon will dance his way to the end if you get the questions correct.
- b. If you are doing this as a group, consider calling on different students to answer each question.
- c. [Trivia Dragon Answer Key](#)



TRIVIA DRAGON ANSWER KEYS



K–2ND GRADE QUESTIONS (6 QUESTIONS WILL BE RANDOMLY SELECTED)

Q: What is given out as a symbol of good luck?	A: Red envelopes
Q: What does Nian mean in Chinese?	A: Year
Q: What color hurts Nian’s eyes?	A: Red
Q: What is something Nian is afraid of?	A: All of the above
Q: What is the name of the monster that scared the village?	A: Nian
Q: What did the Jade Emperor organize?	A: Great Race
Q: Who participated in the Great Race?	A: Animals
Q: Which zodiac animal finished first in the Great Race?	A: Rat
Q: Which foods have special meaning for Lunar New Year?	A: All of the above
Q: Which food is a symbol of wealth? (Hint: it looks like solid bars of gold!)	A: Egg Rolls

3RD–5TH GRADE QUESTIONS (6 QUESTIONS WILL BE RANDOMLY SELECTED)

Q: Hóng Bāo is a Chinese word for what?	A: Red Envelope
Q: What is the Chinese word for year?	A: Nian
Q: What is something Nian is NOT afraid of?	A: Water
Q: What color hurts Nian’s eyes?	A: Red
Q: What event determined the order of the zodiac calendar?	A: A Great Race
Q: What animal helped Rat across the river?	A: Ox
Q: How many animals make up the zodiac calendar?	A: 12
Q: Which of these foods is a symbol of happiness?	A: Shrimp
Q: What symbolizes a long and healthy life?	A: Noodles
Q: What happens on the last day of the Lunar New Year?	A: Lantern Festival



GLOBAL TRADITIONS

1. OVERVIEW

While our curriculum highlights Lunar New Year through Chinese traditions, the holiday has roots in many Asian countries and is celebrated around the world. Let's take a look at how people in almost every continent celebrate this exciting holiday.

2. ACTIVITY

- a. Click through the map to explore how different countries celebrate Lunar New Year. Start in China and zoom out to see the fun facts from around the world!
- b. Consider asking if any of your students have celebrated at home or know stories of people celebrating that they can share.





ANIMALS OF THE ZODIAC

1. OVERVIEW

If you had your class watch the video in the Lunar New Year Trivia activity, your students will already know all about the Zodiac Animals and their origin story. There are 12 Zodiac Animals and they each rotate to represent a year in the Lunar calendar.

2. ABOUT THE ZODIAC ANIMALS

The origin story of the Zodiac animals is usually linked to The Great Race legend where the Jade emperor called upon the animals and declared the first twelve animals to finish the race would earn a spot on the Zodiac Calendar.

3. ACTIVITY

Select a Zodiac Animal and follow it through The Great Race to learn fun facts, such as lucky colors, personality traits, and more!

Now what are the 12 animals of Chinese zodiac in order?

(continued on next page)





ZODIAC ANIMALS

1 RAT



Creative, Likeable, Giving

5 DRAGON



Energetic, Brave, Trusting

9 MONKEY



Smart, Sly, Good Memory

2 OX



Leader, Patient, Inspires

6 SNAKE



Smart, Charming, Kind

10 ROOSTER



Hardworking, Courageous, Sharp

3 TIGER



Respected, Brave, Caring

7 HORSE



Well-Liked, Happy, Thrifty, Funny

11 DOG



Honest, Loyal, Pays Attention

4 RABBIT



Talented, Driven, Trusted

8 RAM



Creative, Calm, Caring

12 BOAR



Brave, Sweet, Strong

Each zodiac animal represents unique personality traits. These traits and characteristics are still used today in various ways, such as building relationships with people and understanding them in a new way. Legend says the animal of your birth year can shape your personality and when it's your Zodiac Animal's year, you'll have a year full of surprises!

4. ACTIVITY BOOKLET

a. Get to know your family's zodiac! Have students ask their family members what zodiac animal they are and get to know them and their animals.

b. Find all the Zodiac Animals in the [Word Search!](#)

FIND YOUR ZODIAC SIGN

RAT	1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020
OX	1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021
TIGER	1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022
RABBIT	1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023
DRAGON	1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024
SNAKE	1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025
HORSE	1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026
RAM	1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027
MONKEY	1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028
ROOSTER	1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029
DOG	1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030
BOAR	1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031



RED ENVELOPE LUCK

1. OVERVIEW

Red Envelopes, pronounced *Hóng Bāo* in Mandarin Chinese, symbolize good luck and are given to children and unmarried adults. Watch our Red Envelope 101 video in the curriculum to show the proper way to accept the gift of a Red Envelope during Lunar New Year.



2. ACTIVITY

Watch the video in the curriculum to teach students about how to hand out and accept red envelopes.

3. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If your students enjoy arts and crafts, please share the [Make Your Own Red Envelope](#) activity with them!

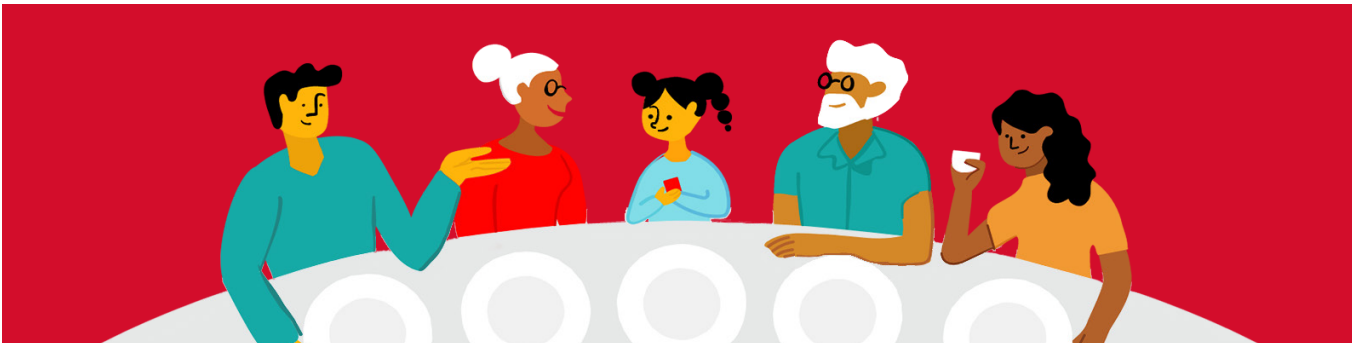




LUCKY FOODS

1. OVERVIEW

Food is an important part of culture, so it is no surprise that food plays an important role in the Lunar New Year holiday. In this activity students will learn about the different “lucky” foods prepared and shared during Lunar New Year.



2. SHARE YOUR FAMILY'S HOLIDAY FOODS

Start a conversation with your students and ask them about the food their families eat during the holidays. This can help provide context for why there are certain symbolic foods for Lunar New Year.

3. ACTIVITY

- a. Be the Lunar New Year chef and match the lucky food with each person's Lunar New Year wishes!
- b. [Lucky Foods Answer Key](#)

4. ACTIVITY BOOKLET

Test your lucky food knowledge and memory with Panda's Lucky Foods Matching Game. Have students cut out the food cards and group up to test each other's memory!



5. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

If your students enjoyed learning about these lucky foods, here are a few recipes to share with the students to make at home with their families.

- a. [Noodles with Gravy](#)
- b. [Orange Chicken](#)
- c. [Super Greens and Chicken Pot Stickers](#)

LUCKY FOODS ANSWER KEYS



K-2ND GRADE

Q: I want wealth and prosperity	A: Orange chicken, spring rolls, dumplings, lucky fruit, super greens, fish
Q: I want wealth and prosperity	A: Orange chicken, spring rolls, dumplings, lucky fruit, super greens, fish
Q: I want happiness and good fortune	A: Honey walnut shrimp
Q: I want a long life	A: Chow mein noodles
Q: I want good luck	A: Stir fried rice, lucky fruit

3RD-5TH GRADE

Q: I want wealth and prosperity	A: Orange chicken, spring rolls, dumplings, lucky fruit, super greens, fish
Q: I want happiness and good fortune	A: Honey walnut shrimp
Q: I want a long life	A: Chow mein noodles
Q: I want good health	A: Whole chicken
Q: I want good luck	A: Stir fried rice, lucky fruit
Q: I want to be together with family	A: Tangyuan



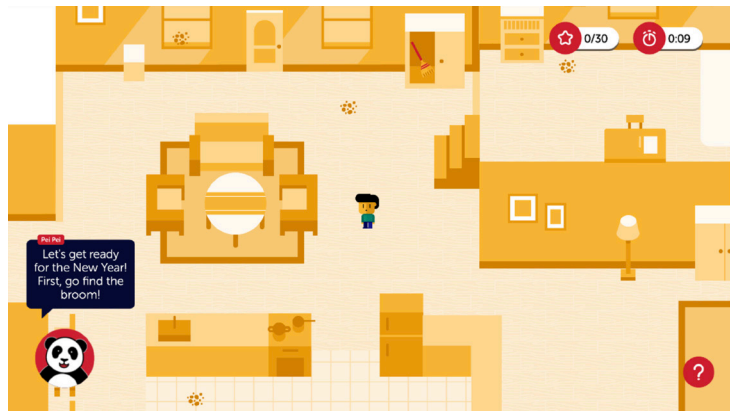
LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION GAME

1. OVERVIEW

The Lunar New Year holiday is unique because it extends over two weeks and is centered around the moon cycle. New Year's Day begins on the first new moon of the lunar calendar and celebrations take place for the next 15 days, until the first full moon of the year, which closes with the Lantern Festival. There are certain traditions that take place before the Lunar New Year begins to prepare for the celebrations and other traditions that take place during the celebration.

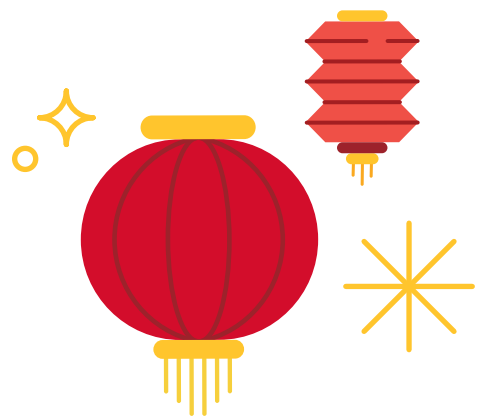
2. ACTIVITY

This interactive role-playing game allows students to learn about the different traditions of the holiday in a fun and engaging way. This game can be played together as a class or students can individually play if they have computer access in class.



The game introduces 8 activities that typically occur over the 15 days of the Lunar New Year celebration:

- **Clean the house** to get rid of the old, making room for the new
- **Decorate the house** with lucky red decorations, welcoming in the good fortune
- **Decorate the neighborhood** with lanterns to bring good luck
- **Buy new lucky clothes** for the Lunar New Year celebration
- **Greet neighbors at the Lunar New Year celebration** and receive red envelopes from elders
- **Join in a lion dance**
- **Help grandma cook a Lunar New Year feast** for the family
- **Release lanterns** at the end of the Lunar New Year celebration





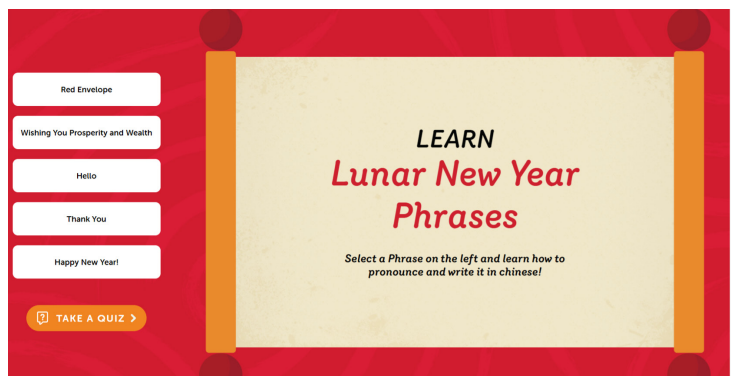
CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR PHRASES

1. OVERVIEW

What better way to spark cultural curiosity than through learning a new language? In this activity you will be able to teach students how to say a few key Lunar New Year phrases in Chinese, along with teaching them how to properly write out the phrases

2. ACTIVITY

- a. Listen to the voice overs and have your students repeat the phrases so they can learn and practice.
- b. Have your students grab a pen and paper to watch and practice the way to write these fun phrases on their own.
- c. Test your knowledge with the Chinese Lunar New Year Phrases quiz. Listen and read the Chinese phrases and match them up with their English meaning!





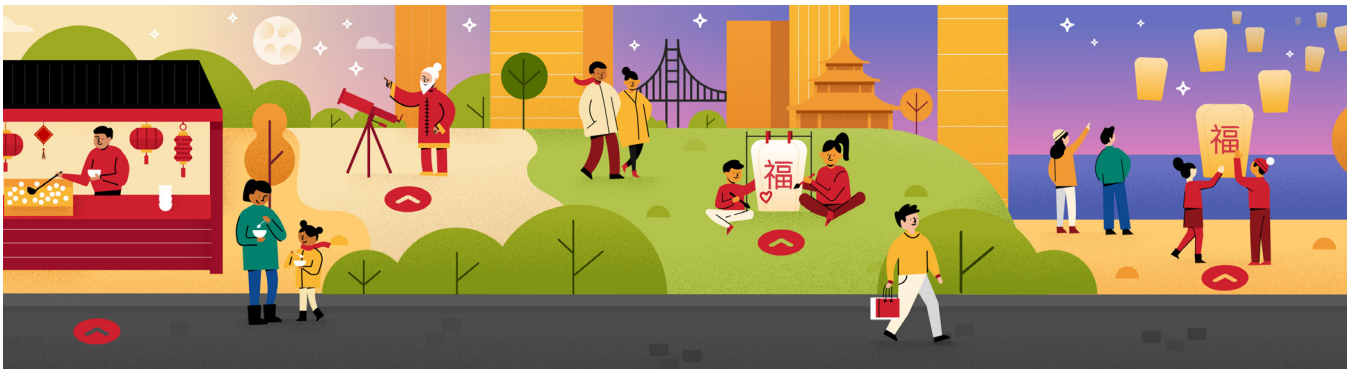
LANTERN FESTIVAL

1. OVERVIEW

The lantern festival falls on the 15th day of the Lunar New Year. Navigate through different activities in the lantern festival.

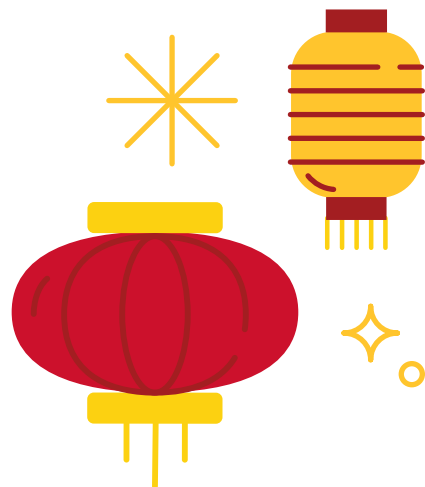
2. ACTIVITY

- **Explore** the various activities that can take place during the Lantern Festival!
- **Test your wits** with a lantern riddle. [Lantern Riddle Answer Key](#)
- **Eat the traditional rice cake dessert**, Tangyuan, which symbolizes togetherness with loved ones.
- **Learn about the moon cycles** and its significance to the lunar calendar.
- **Write a wish** on your lantern.
- **Release** your lantern in the sky.



3. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If your students enjoy arts and crafts, please share the [Make Your Own Lantern](#) activity with them!





LANTERN RIDDLE ANSWER KEYS

K-2ND GRADE

“They look like twins, both sturdy and tall. They work together and go everywhere together. But they only go near solid food and do not care for soup. Who are they?”	A: Chopsticks
“What building has the most stories?”	A: Library

3RD-5TH GRADE

“They look like twins, both sturdy and tall. They work together and go everywhere together. But they only go near solid food and do not care for soup. Who are they?”	A: Chopsticks
“I’m tall when I’m young and I’m short when I’m old. What am I?”	A: Candle
“What building has the most stories?”	A: Library



Zodiac Word Search

Find all the animals of the Zodiac! Words can be hidden across, down and diagonal.

H M F U U Y W K R A B B I T C C G E
 F Q O B G G B D I E X J G Q Y D Z G
 P T Z N J Q W L Z L I A X N C R M S
 T A I P K R R U F O Z C D Z X A Q N
 K O W E U E N G N C D H O S K G H A
 F F O H I G Y D R D P I G Z O O U K
 O X X A O D D B M A E H A B Z N X E
 A A N V A R I B T K M N L C P D N O
 Y P X E M Y S Y Y M I U A X W M U L
 W O I I M X E E V G K M U R N S V H
 T P W G C R O O S T E R A W Q P F V
 T C R G I V W B S T I G E R R A T I

Dog

Dragon

Horse

Monkey

Ox

Pig

Rabbit

Ram

Rat

Rooster

Snake

Tiger

Zodiac



WORD SEARCH ANSWER KEY

H	M	F	U	U	Y	W	K	R	A	B	B	I	T	C	C	G	E
F	Q	O	B	G	G	B	D	I	E	X	J	G	Q	Y	D	Z	G
P	T	Z	N	J	Q	W	L	Z	L	I	A	X	N	C	R	M	S
T	A	I	P	K	R	R	U	F	O	Z	C	D	Z	X	A	Q	N
K	O	W	E	U	E	N	G	N	C	D	H	O	S	K	G	H	A
F	F	O	H	I	G	Y	D	R	D	P	I	G	Z	O	O	U	K
O	X	X	A	O	D	D	B	M	A	E	H	A	B	Z	N	X	E
A	A	N	V	A	R	I	B	T	K	M	N	L	C	P	D	N	O
Y	P	X	E	M	Y	S	Y	Y	M	I	U	A	X	W	M	U	L
W	O	I	I	M	X	E	E	V	G	K	M	U	R	N	S	V	H
T	P	W	G	C	R	O	O	S	T	E	R	A	W	Q	P	F	V
T	C	R	G	I	V	W	B	S	T	I	G	E	R	R	A	T	I



Da Lu Mian – Chow Mein and Grilled Chicken with Gravy Recipe

Yield: 2 servings Time: 25 minutes

It wouldn't be a Lunar New Year celebration without a noodle dish! We love this easy take on Da Lu Mian, which literally refers to any type of noodles with gravy. During Lunar New Year, noodles symbolize a wish for longevity. So, as you are having fun preparing this dish, be careful to keep the noodles intact! Remember, long noodle, long life!

Ingredients:

FOR THE CHICKEN STIR-FRY

- 1/2 cup Panda Grilled Chicken or any protein of your choice
- 1 cup sliced napa cabbage or green cabbage
- 1/3 cup shredded or julienned carrots
- 1/2 cup bean sprouts
- 1/3 cup sliced scallions
- 2 cups Panda Chow Mein
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- Water, as needed

FOR THE GRAVY

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- 1 egg

Instructions:

1. Chop grilled chicken into small dices roughly 1/4-1/2 inch in size and set aside.
2. Cut cabbage to 1/4-inch wide slices, cut or shred carrots to 2x 1/4 x 1/4-inch and slice scallions to 2 inches in length.
3. Combine all the gravy ingredients except for the egg in a bowl and mix well. Scramble the egg separately to add at the end of cooking.
4. In a 2-inch deep pan or 12-inch wide pot, drizzle 2 tablespoons of oil and heat until there is visible white smoke.
5. Add the cabbage, carrots and bean sprouts and stir-fry for 30 seconds on high heat.
6. Add the cooked chicken, scallions and Chow Mein to cook for another 30 seconds on high heat.
7. Add the well-mixed gravy liquid into the vessel and cook until thickened or boiled.
8. Turn off the heat and drizzle the raw scrambled egg into the pan. Do not stir right away.
9. After 45 seconds, stir all of the ingredients a couple of times and then it is ready to serve.



Orange Chicken

Yield: 8 servings Time: 1 hour



PANDA
Cub
CLUB

According to Panda Express Executive Chef, Jimmy Wang “Orange Chicken is quintessentially American Chinese because it combines crispy boneless chicken that Americans love with a sweet, tangy and slightly spicy flavor profile that has existed for thousands of years in Chinese cuisine.” This sweet, sour and savory dish is sure to bring a smile to every guest around your table!

Ingredients:

FOR THE CHICKEN

- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 3 cups flour
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 6 cups oil, for frying

FOR THE ORANGE SAUCE

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1/4 teaspoon chili flake
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger, minced
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

Instructions:

1. On a cutting board, cut chicken into 1x1-inch cubes and set aside.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine salt, white pepper, cornstarch, and flour. Whisk to combine.
3. Add the egg, water, and 2 tablespoons of oil until it reaches the consistency of pancake batter.
4. Add the chicken to the batter and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.
5. Heat oil in a wok or heavy-bottomed pan to 350°F.
6. Carefully add the chicken and cook for 5-6 minutes until lightly golden brown.
7. Remove the chicken from the pan and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.
8. Heat a pot over medium-high heat and add the oil.
9. Once the oil begins to shimmer, add the red pepper flakes, ginger, and garlic, and cook for 30 seconds, stirring constantly.
10. Add the sugar and brown sugar, and stir to combine.
11. Add the orange juice and allow the sugars to dissolve in the liquid, stirring occasionally.
12. Add the vinegar and soy sauce, and stir to combine.
13. In a separate bowl, whisk the cornstarch and water together to combine. Add to the pot and stir.
14. Continue to cook the sauce until syrup-like consistency is achieved.
15. Add the fried chicken and stir until completely coated in the sauce.
16. Top with sesame oil.



This is not the same recipe as prepared at Panda Express; this is an interpretation of the Original Orange Chicken.

Guotie – Grilled Chicken and Super Greens Pot Stickers Recipe

Yield: 16-18 pieces **Time:** 35 minutes



PANDA
Cub
CLUB

Pot stickers are a type of dumpling, and these Guotie, as they're called in northern China, are a crispy savory delight. During Lunar New Year, dumplings symbolize wealth and prosperity since they resemble gold blocks. Not only are these pot stickers delicious, they are fun to make and a great way for family to spend time together.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups Panda Grilled Chicken
- 16 pieces of round dumpling skin
- All-purpose flour, as needed
- 1/3 cup Panda Super Greens
- Water, as needed
- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon scallions
- Teriyaki sauce, as needed
- 1 cup water



Instructions:

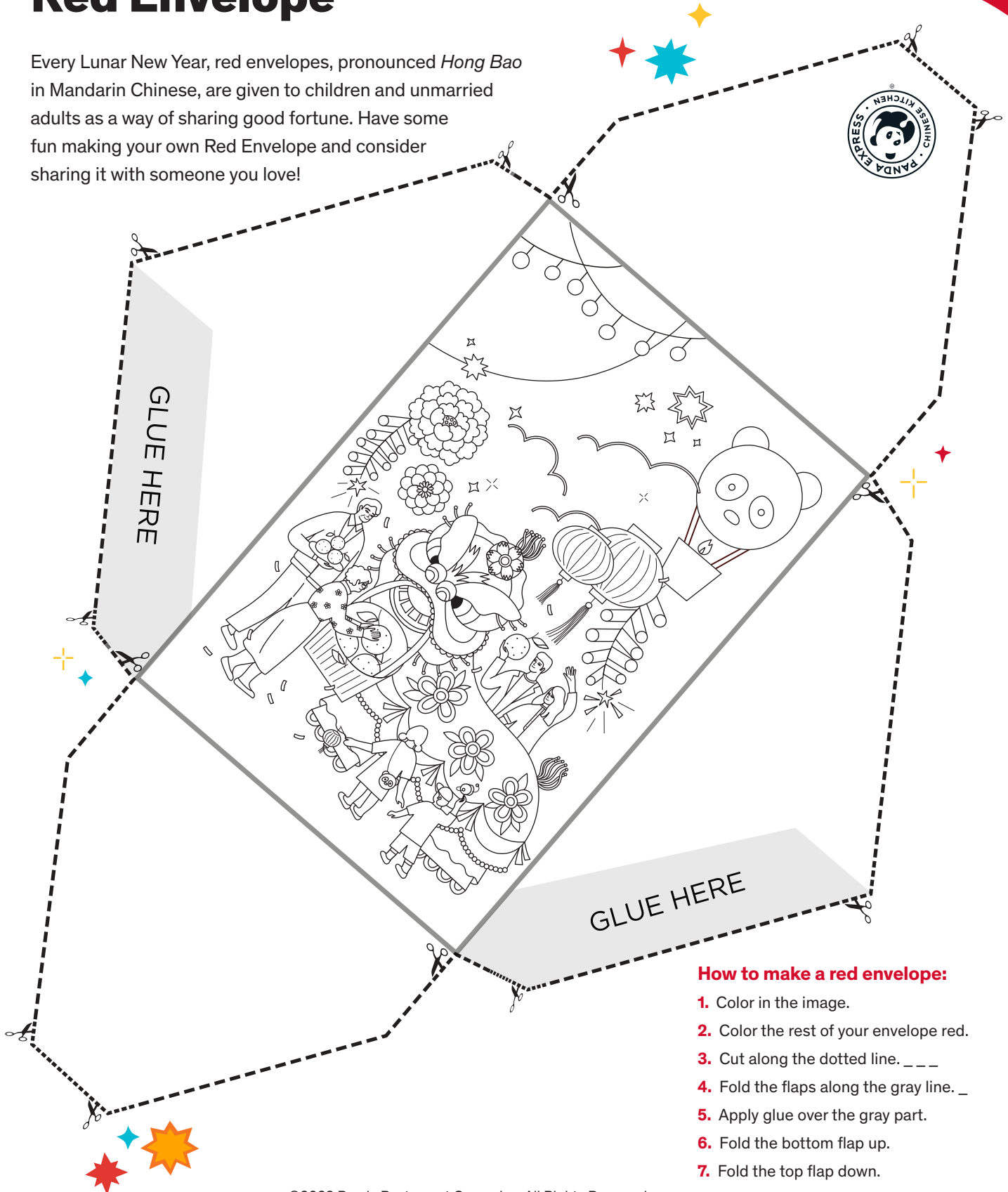
1. Chop grilled chicken into small fine dices, roughly 1/8-1/4 inch in size. Do the same with the Super Greens and scallions.
2. Combine chicken, scallions and greens in a bowl and mix well. Feel free to add additional teriyaki sauce for more seasoning.
3. Take out dumpling skins 4 pieces at a time. Lay flat on a clean surface.
4. Add 1/2 ounce of chicken filling on the center of the skin with a spoon or small ice cream scoop.
5. Dampen the dumpling skin with water as needed to help laminate the closing.
6. Clinch the top and bottom of the skin with a gentle pinch and use your thumb to slightly flatten the top.
7. The dumpling should look like a slightly flattened cannoli with two open ends. Fold inward with your thumb and index finger to close up and pinch the seal tight.
8. Heat a flat surface non-stick pan or any flat cooking pan on high heat.
9. Drizzle 3 teaspoons of cooking oil, heat until there's slight smoke from the center of the pan.
10. Place dumplings flat side down, placing one next to another until the pan is full. 8 pieces per pan would be best.
11. Add 1 cup of water in the pan and quickly cover with a lid.
12. The water should be nearly evaporated after 5-7 minutes. There should be sizzling around the dumplings with slightly brown edges.
13. Serve with your favorite condiment or as is.



PANDA
Cub
CLUB

Make Your Own Red Envelope

Every Lunar New Year, red envelopes, pronounced *Hong Bao* in Mandarin Chinese, are given to children and unmarried adults as a way of sharing good fortune. Have some fun making your own Red Envelope and consider sharing it with someone you love!



How to make a red envelope:

1. Color in the image.
2. Color the rest of your envelope red.
3. Cut along the dotted line. _ _ _
4. Fold the flaps along the gray line. _
5. Apply glue over the gray part.
6. Fold the bottom flap up.
7. Fold the top flap down.

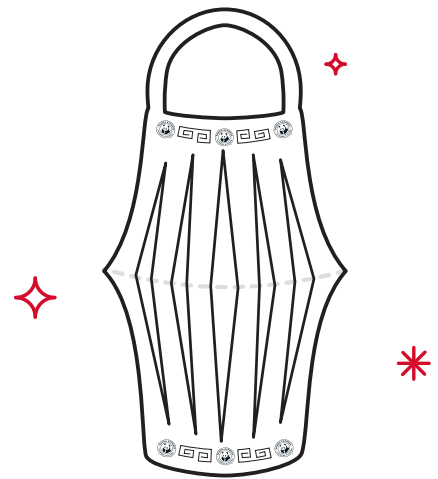


Make Your Own Lantern

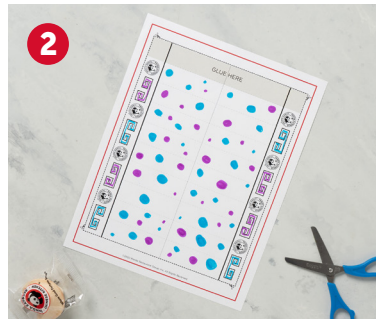
On the last day of the 15-day Lunar New Year celebration, thousands of red lanterns can be seen hanging in the sky during the “Lantern Festival.” Follow the instructions below to make your own lantern.

Materials:

- Lantern templates
- Glue
- Scissors
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons



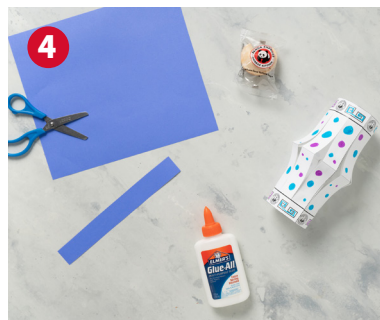
1
Color and decorate the handle and lantern.



2
Cut the lantern and handle along the dotted line. - - -



3
Fold the lantern in half along the gray line. —
Cut straight lines through the dotted lines and stop before the end. - - - -
Unfold the lantern.



4
Roll the lantern into a cylinder and glue the ends together. Squish it! Glue the handle to both sides of the top.



5
Enjoy your lantern!

Lantern Template

GLUE HERE



Handle

Extra Handle

