



# Aladdin

Aladdin is the story of the poor boy from China who is desperately in love with the Emperor's daughter, however he must battle his way past the evil Abenazer before she can be his.

Aladdin lives with his mother, Widow Twanky, and the laundry hand, Wishee Washee, in their laundry shop. One day, the Princess Soshy comes to complain about the state of the royal laundry. Aladdin is immediately infatuated with the Princess, but cannot do anything about it because of his lowly status.

Meanwhile, Abenazer, the meanest, greatest and baddest magician in all Africa, has come to China to pose as Aladdin's Uncle to help him get what he wants - the Magic Lamp. Once Abenazer offers a small reward of a bag of gold, Aladdin jumps at the chance to help, and they start out for the dark cave.

Once inside the cave, Aladdin wants the riches that lay inside. When he has the lamp, and as much gold as he can carry, he asks Abenazer to help him out of the cave. Abenazer refuses and decrees that 'if I can't have the lamp, no one can', and shuts Aladdin in the cave.

All is not lost. Aladdin gives the lamp a good rub and - poof - out pops the Genie, not a giant blue one from the Disney film, instead a Welsh miner from the Valleys. The Genie has Aladdin, and all of the riches he found, out of the cave in a jiffy and on his way home to Widow Twanky.

Now that they are rich, Aladdin decides he wants to marry the Princess, Soshy. However, the Emperor's Vizier, who wants his son to marry the Princess, suggests Aladdin pays 30 caskets of gold for the Princess. Thankfully, Aladdin has the Genie at hand to make this happen. The Genie provides Aladdin with potfuls of money, a palace and servants to tend to him.

Just when it seems like everything is going to turn out ok, along comes Abenazer to put a spanner in the works. He disguises himself as a lamp seller, swapping old lamps for new ones. Widow Twanky, unaware of the lamp's magic, swaps Aladdin's lamp for a new one, giving Abenazer the lamp and the Genie.

Abenazer demands that the Genie transport himself and Princess Soshy to his home in Africa, and the Genie has no choice but to oblige. However, Aladdin has his magic flying carpet to transport him to Africa to rescue the Princess and make sure that Abenazer can't cause any more trouble.

The Genie returns them all home to Widow Twanky and both Aladdin and the Princess Soshy live happily ever after.



# Chinese New Year Celebrations



Chinese New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. The lunar cycle is about 29.5 days. In order to "catch up" with the solar calendar the Chinese insert an extra month once every few years (seven years out of a 19-year cycle). This is the

same as adding an extra day on leap year. This is why, according to the solar calendar, the Chinese New Year falls on a different date each year.

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. The celebration was traditionally highlighted with a religious ceremony given in honour of Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and the family ancestors.

The sacrifice to the ancestors, the most vital of all the rituals, united the living members with those who had passed away. Departed relatives are remembered with great respect because they were responsible for laying the foundations for the fortune and glory of the family.

The presence of the ancestors is acknowledged on New Year's Eve with a dinner arranged for them at the family banquet table. The spirits of the ancestors, together with the living, celebrate the onset of the New Year as one great community. The communal feast called "surrounding the stove" or weilu. It symbolizes family unity and honours the past and present generations.

## Chinese New Year Decorations

Prior to New Year's Day, Chinese families decorate their living rooms with vases of pretty blossoms, platters of oranges and tangerines and a candy tray with eight varieties of dried sweet fruit. On walls and doors are poetic couplets, happy wishes written on red paper. These messages sound better than the typical fortune cookie messages. For instance, "May you enjoy continuous good health" and "May the Star of Happiness, the Star of Wealth and the Star of Longevity shine on you" are especially positive couplets.

## Plants and Flowers

Every traditional Chinese household should also have live blooming plants to symbolize rebirth and new growth. Flowers are believed to be symbolic of wealth and high positions in one's career. Lucky is the home with a plant that blooms on New Year's Day, for that foretells a year of prosperity. In more elaborate settings, plum blossoms just starting to bloom are arranged with bamboo and pine sprigs, the grouping symbolizing friends &ndash; the plum blossom also signifies reliability and perseverance; the bamboo is known for its compatibility, its utility and its flexible stems for furniture and other articles; the evergreen pine evokes longevity and steadiness. Other highly prized flowers are the pussy willow, azalea, peony and water lily or narcissus.



The Chinese firmly believe that without flowers, there would be no formation of any fruits. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to have flowers and floral decorations.

They are the emblems of reawakening of nature, they are also intimately connected with superstition and with the wish for happiness during the ensuing year.

### Oranges and Tangerines

Etiquette dictates that you must bring a bag of oranges and tangerines and enclose a lai see when visiting family or friends anytime during the two-week long Chinese New Year celebration. Tangerines with leaves intact assure that one's relationship with the other remains secure. For newlyweds, this represents the branching of the couple into a family with many children. Oranges and tangerines are symbols for abundant happiness.



### Candy Tray

The candy tray arranged in either a circle or octagon is called "The Tray of Togetherness" and has a dazzling array of candy to start the New Year sweetly. After taking several pieces of candy from the tray, adults place a red envelope (lai see) on the centre compartment of the tray. Each item represents some kind of good fortune:

Candied melon - growth and good health

Red melon seed - dyed red to symbolize joy, happiness, truth and sincerity

Lychee nut - strong family relationships

Cumquat - prosperity (gold)

Coconut - togetherness

Peanuts - long life

Longnan - many good sons

Lotus seed - many children



# The Chinese Animal Zodiac



Below are all the Chinese animal years and their meanings. Which animal are you?

## Year of the Dog



**1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006**

People born in the Year of the Dog possess the best traits of human nature. They have a deep sense of loyalty, are honest, and inspire other people's confidence because they know how to keep secrets. But Dog People are somewhat selfish, terribly stubborn, and eccentric. They care little for wealth, yet somehow always seem to have money. They can be cold emotionally and sometimes distant at parties. They can find fault with many things and are noted for their sharp tongues. Dog people make good leaders. They are compatible with those born in the Years of the Horse, Tiger, and Rabbit.

## The Year of the Dragon

**1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000**

People born in the Year of the Dragon are healthy, energetic, excitable, short-tempered, and stubborn. They are also honest, sensitive, brave, and they inspire confidence and trust. Dragon people are the most eccentric of any in the eastern zodiac. They neither borrow money nor make flowery speeches, but they tend to be soft-hearted which sometimes gives others an advantage over them. They are compatible with Rats, Snakes, Monkeys, and Roosters.



## Year Of The Horse



**1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002**

People born in the Year of the Horse are popular. They are cheerful, skillful with money, and perceptive, although they sometimes talk too much. They are wise, talented, good with their hands, and sometimes have a weakness for members of the opposite sex. They are impatient and hot-blooded about everything except their daily work. They like entertainment and large crowds. They are very independent and rarely listen to advice. They are most compatible with Tigers, Dogs, and Sheep.

# Year Of The Monkey

**1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004**

People born in the Year of the Monkey are the erratic geniuses of the cycle. Clever, skillful, and flexible, they are remarkably inventive and original and can solve the most difficult problems with ease. There are few fields in which Monkey people wouldn't be successful but they have a disconcerting habit of being too agreeable. They want to do things now, and if they cannot get started immediately, they become discouraged and sometimes leave their projects. Although good at making decisions, they tend to look down on others. Having common sense, Monkey people have a deep desire for knowledge and have excellent memories. Monkey people are strong willed but their anger cools quickly. They are most compatible with the Dragon and Rat.



## The Year of the Pig

**1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007**



People born in the Year of the Pig are chivalrous and gallant. Whatever they do, they do with all their strength. For Boar Year people, there is no left or right and there is no retreat. They have tremendous fortitude and great honesty. They don't make many friends but they make them for life, and anyone having a Boar Year friend is fortunate for they are extremely loyal. They don't talk much but have a great thirst for knowledge. They study a great deal and are generally well informed. Boar people are quick tempered, yet they hate arguments and quarreling. They are kind to their loved ones. No matter how bad problems seem to be, Boar people try to work them out, honestly if sometimes impulsively. They are most compatible with Rabbits and Sheep

## The Year of the Ox

**1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997**

People born in the Year of the Ox are patient, speak little, and inspire confidence in others. They tend, however, to be eccentric, and bigoted, and they anger easily. They have fierce tempers and although they speak little, when they do they are quite eloquent. Ox people are mentally and physically alert. Generally easy-going, they can be remarkably stubborn, and they hate to fail or be opposed. They are most compatible with Snake, Rooster, and Rat people.



## The Year Of The Rat

**1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996**



People born in the Year of the Rat are noted for their charm and attraction for the opposite sex. They work hard to achieve their goals, acquire possessions, and are likely to be perfectionists. They are basically thrifty with money. Rat people are easily angered and love to gossip. Their ambitions are big, and they are usually very successful. They are most compatible with people born in the years of the Dragon, Monkey, and Ox.

# Year Of The Rabbit

**1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999**

People born in the Year of the Rabbit are articulate, talented, and ambitious. They are virtuous, reserved, and have excellent taste. Rabbit people are admired, trusted, and are often financially lucky. They are fond of gossip but are tactful and generally kind. Rabbit people seldom lose their temper. They are clever at business and being conscientious, never back out of a contract. They would make good gamblers for they have the uncanny gift of choosing the right thing. However, they seldom gamble, as they are conservative and wise. They are most compatible with those born in the years of the Sheep, Pig, and Dog.



## The Year Of The Rooster

**1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005**



People born in the Year of the Rooster are deep thinkers, capable, and talented. They like to be busy and are devoted beyond their capabilities and are deeply disappointed if they fail. People born in the Rooster Year are often a bit eccentric, and often have rather difficult relationship with others. They always think they are right and usually are! They frequently are loners and though they give the outward impression of being adventurous, they are timid. Rooster people's emotions like their fortunes, swing very high to very low. They can be selfish and too outspoken, but are always interesting and can be extremely brave. They are most compatible with Ox, Snake, and Dragon.

## Year Of The Ram

**1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003**

People born in the Year of Ram are elegant and highly accomplished in the arts. They seem to be, at first glance, better off than those born in the zodiac's other years. But ram year people are often shy, pessimistic, and puzzled about life. They are usually deeply religious, yet timid by nature. Sometimes clumsy in speech, they are always passionate about what they do and what they believe in. Ram people never have to worry about having the best in life for their abilities make money for them, and they are able to enjoy the creature comforts that they like. Ram people are wise, gentle, and compassionate. They are compatible with Rabbits, Pigs, and Horses.



# The Year Of The Snake

1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001



People born in the Year of the Snake are deep. They say little and possess great wisdom. They never have to worry about money; they are financially fortunate. Snake people are often quite vain, selfish, and a bit stingy. Yet they have tremendous sympathy for others and try to help those less fortunate. Snake people tend to overdo, since they have doubts about other people's judgment and prefer to rely on themselves. They are determined in whatever they do and hate to

fail. Although calm on the surface, they are intense and passionate. Snake people are usually good-looking and sometimes have marital problems because they are fickle. They are most compatible with the Ox and Rooster.

# Year Of The Tiger

1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998

Tiger people are sensitive, given to deep thinking, capable of great sympathy. They can be extremely short-tempered, however. Other people have great respect for them, but sometimes tiger people come into conflict with older people or those in authority.

Sometimes Tiger people cannot make up their minds, which can result in a poor, hasty decision or a sound decision arrived at too late. They are suspicious of others, but they are courageous and powerful. Tigers are most compatible with Horses, Dragons, and Dogs



## Chinese Lunar Calendar

The Chinese animal signs are a 12-year cycle used for dating the years. They represent a cyclical concept of time, rather than the Western linear concept of time. The Chinese Lunar Calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, and is constructed in a different fashion than the Western solar calendar. In the Chinese calendar, the beginning of the year falls somewhere between late January and early February. The Chinese have adopted the Western calendar since 1911, but the lunar calendar is still used for festive occasions such as the Chinese New Year. Many Chinese calendars will print both the solar dates and the Chinese lunar dates.

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Why don't you have a go at designing and making your own Chinese New Year Dragon. Remember to make it as bright, colourful and scary as possible, so it can scare off the evil spirits

# Looking at Poetry

Japan is a country not too far away from China. The Japanese created a style of poetry called the Haiku. Here we will look at the basics of how to create a poem and give you some examples so you can have a go at creating your own.

## What makes a poem?

Matching sounds, repetition of words and phrases, end rhymes, alliteration.

Rhythms can suggest mood, speed, movement and stillness can make a poem seem light hearted or serious.

## Haiku

The Haiku is a short one verse poem consisting of only three lines. It originates from Japan but is now widely used. Strictly, there are seventeen syllables in the haiku - five in the first line, seven in the second line and five in the third line.

Here's an example:

Aladdin is poor  
Rub lamp, find magic Genie  
He marries Princess.

Now you try

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