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9 lucky ways to celebrate Chinese New Year



Most every Chinese restaurant worth its salt will be extra busy over the next few weeks when traditional families and curious foodies fill tables to celebrate Chinese New Year. Also known as the Spring Festival, the holiday lasts 15 days and provides a time to wish for peace and happiness.

2014 is the Year of the Horse, and many restaurants around the world will celebrate by offering foods considered to bring luck and good fortune. Examples include longevity noodles -- essentially one long noodle representing long life, which presumably brings bad luck if cut -- and whole fish, preferably those with silvery scales resembling coins. The Chinese word for fish ("yu") is a homonym for "surplus," and the head and tail should be included to ensure good luck from the year's beginning to end. Dumplings are also an important part of every Chinese New Year feast as they are thought to resemble purses full of gifts; vegetable dumplings are typically wrapped in the shape of an ancient boat-shaped coin ("yuanbao").

Here are some choice options for celebrating the holiday. *Gong Hei Fat Choi!* (Happy New Year!)



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Hakkasan, New York City

The international chain famous for its hip environs and exceptionally delicate dumplings will be recognizing the holiday with an assortment of authentic celebratory dishes such as steamed snapper with salted plum in Teochew style and stewed pork trotter with black moss in brown sauce (available through February 10). **New York** guests will enjoy a traditional lion dance performance, and at meal's end all guests will receive a crisp \$2 bill in a red envelope to signify good luck.

hakkasan.com/newyork

M.Y. China Restaurant, San Francisco

Through February 21, diners can enjoy traditional Chinese New Year dishes courtesy of Martin Yan (of "Yan Can Cook" fame). Festive items include "firecracker" wok-tossed longevity noodles with seasonal wild mushrooms and a "Good Fortune" crispy noodle pancake. Expect capacity crowds on February 15 when **San Francisco** hosts its annual **Chinese New Year Parade**. One of the biggest illuminated night parades of its kind in the country, the event features a 268-foot-long Golden Dragon ("Gum Lung.") mychinasf.com

Philippe, New York City

The celebrity chef Philippe Chow's famous noodles and dumplings provide a classic (and pricey) option for celebrating the holiday. His restaurant's special holiday menu includes baked seafood-stuffed crab and Chinese-style fried oyster. philippechow.com

Wing Lei, Las Vegas

Wynn Las Vegas' **opulent Chinese restaurant** is serving a celebratory dim sum lunch buffet from January 30 to February 9. During the holiday, the property will display three 800-pound Tang Dynasty horse sculptures gilded in gold leaf, and on February 1 at 6 p.m. there will be a traditional dragon dance parade (starring a 90-foot-long dragon) throughout the casino. wynnlasvegas.com

WP24 by Wolfgang Puck, Los Angeles

Wolfgang Puck's modern restaurant in The Ritz-Carlton, **Los Angeles** will serve an opulent 10-course holiday menu from January 31 to February 13 (\$175). Diners will enjoy symbolic dishes such as whole roasted Peking duck, signifying happiness and fidelity, and crispy red snapper, representing abundance. The stylish dining room will feature a traditional Chinese New Year "wishing tree," from which each party will select a red envelope (the color red signifies good luck) containing special gifts such as vouchers for a spa treatment or an overnight stay. ritzcarlton.com

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