

Galloping Into Destiny

THE YEAR OF THE HORSE



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As the year 2025 draws to a close, so 2026 usher in the year of the horse. The seventh zodiac sign behind the snake, legend has it that in the Great Race, the snake had coiled itself around the horse's ankles, and sprung ahead when the horse approached the finishing line, thus becoming the sixth horoscope instead of the horse. After the cool and slow paced year, the Year of the Fire Horse is said to be a dynamic change of pace; a year of fiery passion and boundless ambition.

In Chinese culture, the Horse is known for its energetic, confident and dynamic nature, and they tend to dislike being reined in by others. They're seen as fit and intelligent, swift and decisive; but they can also be headstrong, impulsive and impatient, which could lead to conflicts with others. Drawing from the horse's merits, the Year of the Horse is generally regarded as lucky, with promising opportunities for growth, prosperity, and achievement ahead of you.

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For people born in the Year of the Horse (2014, 2002, 1990, 1978, 1966 and 1954) 2026 is your zodiac year. This means you're in for a significant year, and with the Tai Sui (the God of Age) right above you, it can bring some fortuitous blessings and daunting challenges.

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by the intensity of the changes happening around you, but with the stars in your favour, it should not be too difficult to find your footing after a stumble as you navigate through the year.

Career: It is predicted that you might experience career growth this year. This isn't hard to see why- you are enthusiastic, cheerful, pleasant to be around and bond easily with colleagues.

In team settings, you are assertive and can clearly define your roles and execute your tasks well. You might even chance upon an unexpected benefactor that will catapult your career to new heights.

Wealth: The fortunes are in your favour, and your financial situation is predicted to be stable this year. Your career will provide you with stable, consistent income, though there might not be significant gains from other streams of income.

You could potentially come into unexpected wealth, but careful money management is necessary to avoid squandering your hard earned wealth.



Love: Relationships might be an aspect that requires more effort and attention. You might find yourself getting into conflicts arising from minor misunderstandings. With your headstrong nature, you might find it difficult to concede and compromise, but failure to resolve these disagreements could lead to the severance of several close bonds. Emotional regulation and conflict management are crucial skills to develop this year.



Health: You might face health challenges this year and find yourself encountering various misfortunes, like accidents, health scares or burns. It would do you well to take extra precaution when going out to avoid unexpected disasters of trouble. You should also take a more proactive approach in taking care of your body and health to fully benefit from the blessings of your zodiac year.



What Is Chinese New Year?

Also known as the Spring Festival, it marks the start of the first month of the lunar calendar.

The exact date of the Chinese New Year is determined by the traditional Chinese calendar. It's a calendar system widely used in China and some countries in East Asia, and it is based on the movements of both the moon and the sun, which is why it's also called a "lunisolar calendar."

A month in the Chinese calendar lasts 29 or 30 days, depending on the moon's cycle. And each year has 12 lunar months, making it shorter than a solar year. So the date of Chinese New Year will change every year. To keep the calendar aligned with the solar year and the seasons, a leap month is added roughly every 2-3 years. In the end, the traditional festivals, like Chinese New Year or the Mid-Autumn Festival, still fall in the right seasons

Chinese New Year celebrations are traditionally celebrated to mark the end of the cold winter and the beginning of spring. The festival was rooted in ancient agricultural traditions of praying for a good harvest, symbolising the upcoming spring season as a period of renewal and prosperity. As time went on and civilization developed and pivoted away from agriculture, the celebration evolved to become a celebration for family reunions and honoring cultural heritage.





Chinese New Year Celebrations in Malaysia

Before New Years' Eve: Chinese New Year is steeped with traditions and customs. Preparations to welcome this auspicious season starts long before the actual date.

Families will start thoroughly cleaning their homes, also called spring cleaning, as it is believed that bad luck will be swept away, and cleaning during Chinese New Year is considered taboo as it is believed that your fortune will be swept away.



Alongside cleaning, the home is also decorated with auspicious items like couplets, paper cuttings, and red lanterns to liven up the home and invite in good fortune.

New Years' Eve: The day before CNY is arguably more important than the actual day. Reunion dinner is a joyous affair where the extended families all gather for a substantial dinner with traditional dishes as everyone gathers around, and catch up on life. Amongst these traditional dishes is noodles, which represent long life, Yee Sang.



A uniquely Southeast Asian Chinese New Year tradition, yee sang—also known as the raw fish salad—is both a culinary and symbolic celebration of abundance and prosperity. Its name is derived from the word yu, meaning fish, which sounds like the word for “surplus” in Chinese, making it an auspicious dish rooted in wordplay and well-wishing, a hallmark of the festive season.

The ritual of tossing yee sang is delightfully straightforward yet deeply meaningful:

as diners lift their chopsticks and toss the colourful strands ever higher, they shout out auspicious phrases and blessings in unison. The higher the toss and the louder the cheers, the greater the promise of luck, wealth, and success in the year ahead. Loud, messy, and joyfully chaotic, the experience embodies the spirit of togetherness and celebration—transforming a simple dish into a moment of shared laughter, optimism, and memories to be cherished long after the festivities end.



First Day

The first day of CNY unfolds in a flurry of activities. Families will offer sacrifices to be placed at altars, and incense are burned and prayers are offered to ancestors and gods. Some families will also visit temples and perform their prayers there as well. Afterwards, as the family gathers, there is a tradition of wearing new clothes that are red or brightly coloured, as these colours symbolise good luck and prosperity.



The most highly anticipated event for children during CNY has to be the tradition of receiving Ang Paos or red packets with money inside from parents and relatives. The child has to say their greeting and well wishes to the adults before they can receive their red packets. Married couples will also gift Ang Paos to their parents and elderly relatives as a sign of respect.



Another thing that families often do aside is to visit shopping malls, which are lavishly decorated and are a sight to behold. There are also different kinds of spectacles and performances that entertain and mesmerise, such as the dragon dance, or fan dance, but none are as anticipated as the lion dance. With their loud drum beats and symbol clash, along with the eye-catching lions weaving about the mall or on tall poles, the lion dance is a showstopper that is an integral part of the festivities.

From the eve to the fifteenth day of CNY, it is common for the night skies to be lit up with firecrackers and fireworks that dazzle and paint the sky in ephemeral colours. This tradition stems from the belief that by lighting up fireworks, the sights and sounds will drive away evil spirits and warmly bring in the New Year and drive away evil spirits.





The Last Day: Chap Go Mei

Chap Go Mei, also known as the 15th night in Hokkein the last day of CNY marks the end of the New Year celebration. On this day, Malaysian people will adorn their houses with colorful lights and red lanterns and light them up at night.

In some regions like Penang, Chap Go Mei has a romantic courtship tradition where single women throw oranges into the sea, hoping for a single man boating to seek out and be a good husband.



In other places like KL, some have modernised this tradition where the women throw oranges with their names and numbers from upstream, and men wait downstream and those that receive an orange can take the initiative in calling the number and see if their fates connect.



As the lanterns dim and the last echoes of firecrackers fade into the night, Chinese New Year in Malaysia leaves behind more than memories—it leaves a feeling. From the ritual calm of temple visits to the joyous chaos of yee sang tosses, the celebration is a vivid expression of culture lived, not just observed. For travellers, this season offers a rare window into the heart of Malaysian Chinese traditions, where ancient customs are lovingly preserved yet unmistakably local in flavour.

The arrival of the Year of the Horse adds an extra spark to the festivities. It is a year that calls for movement, courage, and momentum—qualities mirrored in the bustling streets, glowing malls, and spirited lion dances across the country.

Whether you find yourself sharing a reunion dinner with a local family, watching fireworks bloom over a city skyline, or spotting oranges bobbing in the waters on Chap Goh Mei, Chinese New Year in Malaysia is an invitation to celebrate renewal with open arms.

Step into the rhythm of the season, follow the sound of the drums, and let the Year of the Horse carry you forward—boldly, brightly, and full of promise.

