

Chinese New Year Foods

Below are the meanings of some of the food traditions surrounding Chinese New Year. More information about food symbolism can be found at:

http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/food_symbolism.htm

- The colors red and gold— Red, red, and more red everywhere! Gold, too. Red symbolizes good luck, good fortune, and good wishes. This comes from the story of the New Year Monster, guò nián (过年), who would come down to eat all of the people. The monster was scared away by red flames and loud noise, hence the use of firecrackers and the color red:
<http://traditions.cultural-china.com/en/13Traditions474.html>.
- Red Envelopes – During the Chinese New Year, children and unmarried young adults often receive red envelopes containing money as a gift from their parents, grandparents, and even close friends and neighbors. It's also not uncommon for adults to give red envelopes to their elderly parents. At Yinghua, we place chocolate coins covered in gold foil in red envelopes to give to students.
- Lucky Candy – Eating sweets during the Lunar New Year is encouraged as it represents bringing sweet happenings to one's life and starting the New Year on a sweet note. You give the candy to wish someone good luck in the New Year.
- Apples – The Chinese word for apple is ping guǒ (苹果), which is a homonym of the Chinese word for peace: píng (平). You give an apple to wish someone peace in the New Year.
- Oranges –The Chinese word for orange is jú zi (橘子), which is a homonym of the Chinese word for gold gānjú (柑橘). You give an orange to wish someone riches in the New Year.
- Dumplings –Chinese dumplings—jiǎozi (饺子)—are served during Chinese New Year because the dumpling's shape looks like that of a traditional Chinese gold ingot and is therefore associated with wealth.