

# The Chinese Calendar

The Chinese calendar is used to mark traditional Chinese holidays, but our calendar, (the one used by most of the rest of the world) is used for daily business in China.

## Animal Years

Each year in the Chinese calendar is named after an animal. There are 12 animals that the years cycle through. Every 12 years the cycle repeats itself.

### Rat

Years: 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008

### Ox

Years: 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009

### Tiger

Years: 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010

### Rabbit

Years: 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011

### Dragon

Years: 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012

### Snake

Years: 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013

### Horse

Years: 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014

### Sheep (or Goat)

Years: 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015

### Monkey

Years: 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016

### Rooster

Years: 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017

### Dog

Years: 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018

## Pig (Boar)

Years: 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019

## Legend of the Chinese Years

According to ancient Chinese legend, the order of the animals in the calendar was determined by a race. The animals raced across a river and their position in the cycle was determined by how they finished in the race. The rat won because it rode on the back of the oxen and jumped off its back at the last minute to win the race.

## Holidays

Major Chinese holidays still use the Chinese calendar to determine when they are celebrated. These holidays include the Chinese New Year, Lantern Festival, Boat Dragon Festival, Night of Sevens, Ghost Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and the Winter Solstice Festival.

### Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)

The most important festival of the year is the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year. The entire celebration lasts for 15 days. It starts with the first day of the New Year and ends with the Lantern Festival.

The Spring Festival is a time for getting together with family, exchanging gifts, and lighting fireworks.

## Challenge

Work out when the next year for celebrating each animal will be, e.g.

rat: 2020

ox:

tiger:

rabbit:

dragon:

snake:

horse:

sheep:

monkey:

rooster:

dog:

pig:

**Did you know:** The dragon that is used for Chinese celebrations originates from actual dragons that were a type of dinosaur. There are carvings of them on ancient temples, which show they lived at the same time as human beings.