

WELCOME TO THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

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THE YEAR 2022 started a month ago, but lots of kids are now celebrating another new beginning: the Lunar New Year! Celebrated in China, Vietnam, Korea and other countries (including the United States), the Lunar New Year is a time for family reunions, feasts and public celebrations with parades, dancing and fireworks. The date for the celebration changes every year: It's based on a calendar that marks time partly by the cycles of the moon. This year, it starts on Feb. 1. Each year is also named for one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. As the Year of the Tiger begins, we asked kids about their favorite traditions.

DANCING LIONS AND DRAGONS

Big Lunar New Year celebrations, including traditional street parades and parties, were mostly canceled last year because of Covid. But now they're back! One famous tradition is the appearance of colorful lion and dragon costumes, carried and brought to life by two to eight performers. "There's a lot of stuff to do — jump around, shake the head, greet people," says Aaron Yim, 12, who has performed as a lion dancer twice in the San Francisco parade and will again this year. Liam Sin, 9, is also excited to play the drums in the parade in a group called a *luogu*, "because they're really loud."

A FEAST OF LUCKY FOODS

Many families get together for a New Year's feast, complete with dishes that are meant to bring good luck. Dumplings, for example, look similar to old Chinese money and stand for wealth. Eleanor Gomez, 7, from Braintree, Mass., likes going to her friend's house to make them. "They look like Stegosauruses," she says. It's also traditional to eat fish, because it sounds like the Chinese word for "extra," and leave leftovers, which "means every year we're going to have some leftover fortune," says Austin Kuo, 13, from San Marino, Calif. His favorite New Year's food is a sweet sticky rice cake called

nian gao, which sounds like the words for "year" and "high" in Chinese and is another good luck food.

RED ENVELOPES

Another Lunar New Year tradition kids love: getting money! Parents, aunts, uncles or grandparents will give younger family members money — always in a red envelope, symbolizing luck and happiness. When someone gets a red envelope, they're supposed to respond with a New Year's greeting. "I'll say something like, 'I hope you have a lot of health and you can make a lot of money,'" says Tuyen Lam, 11, from Chicago. ♦