

## ING07\_UN0403 - Transcript

Every winter, a sixth of the world's population, including one billion Chinese citizens, celebrate Chinese New Year. The 15-day festival, also known as Lunar New Year or the Spring Festival, kicks off on the second new moon after the winter solstice or according to the Gregorian calendar, in use since the 16th century, sometime between the January 21st and February 19th. But Chinese New Year goes back a lot further than the sixteenth century. It is based on the ancient Chinese calendar, which exists as early as the 14th century BC. Even though China adopted the Western calendar in 1912, and began marking January 1st as the official start of the year, Chinese New Year remains as the most important social and economical holiday. Over the centuries, holiday festivities have spread far beyond China and now take place all over the world. In fact, the biggest celebration outside of China takes place in the United States, San Francisco to be exact. Ever since the Gold Rush in 1840's and 50's brought an influx of Chinese workers to southern California, the city has held a massive parade for Chinese New Year. According to Chinese Tradition, each year is named for one of the twelve animals associated with the Chinese zodiac. Two of those animals, the dragon and the rabbit, are particularly important to Chinese New Year. You'll see dragons everywhere because the Chinese are said to have descended from the mythical creature. And on the fifteenth day of the New Year, known as the Festival of Lanterns, many people display paper lanterns in the shape of rabbits. This symbolizes a Chinese goddess named Chang E, who is said to have brought a rabbit with her when she jumped on the moon. To prepare for Chinese New Year, lots of people clean up their houses to rid them of ghosts and bad luck associated with the old year. They might get a new haircut and clothes, settle disagreements and pay off debts in order to start the year fresh. In this way, the Chinese New Year customs resemble the Western customs of New Year's Resolutions. In the late night hours of Chinese New Year's Eve, many families make dumplings together, this food is said to bring good fortune to the household. Long noodles are also a traditional Chinese New Year dish but if you want to live a long life, never cut the noodles while eating them. And be sure to wear red, the color of good luck and avoid black, which many people associate with death. Whether they are superstitions or resolutions, one thing is for sure, there is a lot of tradition associated with Chinese New Year that we bet you didn't know!