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Celebrate Chinese New Year in Omaha

For most people, Chinese New Year is a foreign holiday based around an archaic calendar. For me, however, having been raised by a Chinese immigrant, it is a day that I look forward to all year. Now you might think this is a cliché introduction to some “heartfelt” story about the Chinese holiday, but you would only be half right; this will be cheesy.

The Lunar New Year is a holiday celebrated by various countries and peoples, including not only China (even though this is the country with which it is most associated), but also throughout Monsoon Asia. The tradition dates back to ancient China and celebrates the beginning of the lunar calendar. With over a billion people living in China, and how connected the world is in this information age, you might find it beneficial to get to know the culture of this massive portion of the world. A great starting point is, as you may have guessed, learning about the Chinese New Year. If you need more convincing, then think about how learning about a culture can help you in the future, by giving you a different perspective. Also, who doesn’t like more holidays? I sure do.

Let’s talk about the good stuff, the holiday itself. You may not get an extra day off by celebrating the Chinese New Year, but you still get a holiday with all the goodies that come with it. Kids, you’re going to like the red envelopes given to you by your parents and relatives. Guess what’s in them? (Hint: it’s green and you can exchange it for stuff at stores) Now for you adults out there, there are various traditions that you might find interesting, such as the lion dance, parties, and fireworks (should you want an excuse to set those off). Want something more? It’s also a good time to try out actual Chinese food (not Americanized-Chinese food like sweet and sour chicken, crab rangoons, and mu shu pork). Don’t worry; most of the food is not quite as interesting as what you may see Mr. Andrew Zimmern eating on the Travel Channel’s Bizarre Foods.

Yes, you guessed right. The reason I’m writing this is to promote the Omaha Chinese Culture Association’s New Year Gala – the Year of the Snake Celebration. I mean, I might as well give you a way to learn Chinese culture, right? You might not be able to sample some exotic cuisine at this year’s Gala, but for \$15 (Student \$10) you will see various cultural performances both traditional and contemporary, including martial arts, and have a chance to check out the kids’ activities. And I’m going, so that’s another reason to go.

You may go to www.omahachinese.net for more information about the Gala.

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