

# Happy Lunar New Year!

## The Rat scurries in



**RAT RACE.** Rats made of jade are seen for sale at a roadside shop in Bangkok, Thailand, in this January 27, 2008 file photo. The Lunar New Year, which begins January 25 this year, marks the Year of the Rat. People born under the sign of the Rat are generally considered to be intelligent, charming, passionate, and dynamic individuals who are patient and talkative. They are also known for their tendency to be defensive and can be restless and gossipy. (AP Photo/Apichart Weerawong, File)

### What sign are you?

Find the year you were born. Those born in January or February should consult page 16.

1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020 — Rat  
 1901, 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021 — Ox  
 1902, 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022 — Tiger  
 1903, 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023 — Rabbit  
 1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024 — Dragon  
 1905, 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025 — Snake  
 1906, 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026 — Horse  
 1907, 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027 — Sheep  
 1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028 — Monkey  
 1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029 — Rooster  
 1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030 — Dog  
 1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031 — Pig

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#### The Gregorian and Chinese lunar calendars

Animal	Gregorian	Chinese
Rat	January 25, 2020	Year 4718
Ox	February 12, 2021	Year 4719
Tiger	February 1, 2022	Year 4720
Rabbit	January 22, 2023	Year 4721
Dragon	February 10, 2024	Year 4722
Snake	January 29, 2025	Year 4723
Horse	February 17, 2026	Year 4724
Sheep	February 6, 2027	Year 4725
Monkey	January 26, 2028	Year 4726
Rooster	February 13, 2029	Year 4727
Dog	February 3, 2030	Year 4728
Pig	January 23, 2031	Year 4729

### A few animal characteristics

**Rat:** Honest, idealistic, practical, sentimental, argumentative, greedy  
**Ox:** Careful, diligent, eloquent, patient, eccentric, stubborn  
**Tiger:** Ambitious, dynamic, honorable, loyal, critical, impatient  
**Rabbit:** Artistic, considerate, intelligent, peaceful, hesitant, judgemental  
**Dragon:** Energetic, faithful, generous, sincere, defensive, opinionated  
**Snake:** Charitable, elegant, organized, reflective, anxious, possessive  
**Horse:** Calm, confident, independent, talented, contradictory, moody  
**Sheep:** Adaptive, creative, empathetic, polite, impractical, pessimistic  
**Monkey:** Charming, sensitive, vivacious, wise, cunning, selfish  
**Rooster:** Adventurous, courageous, funny, hardworking, cynical, vain  
**Dog:** Brave, devoted, knowledgeable, trustworthy, disagreeable, strict  
**Pig:** Affectionate, cheerful, obliging, optimistic, naïve, snobbish

Read your forecast for the Year of the Rat!  
 Horoscopes by Madame Mingmei begin on page 12.

The Year of the Rat scurries in January 25, 2020, and its arrival will be celebrated by people throughout the world — not only in Asian nations such as China, Korea, Nepal, India, Vietnam, Iran, and Mongolia, but also in western and other countries. Considered by many to be the oldest calendar system in the world, the Chinese lunar calendar traces its origin back as far as 2637 B.C.E. Each year is represented by one of the 12 animals of the zodiac: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

Similar to many traditions, the observation dates back to an ancient legend: China's Jade Emperor wanted to determine the order of the calendar, so he called upon 12 animals in the kingdom to participate in a race. The order in which the animals finished determined the placement in the calendar. The Rat finished first, followed by the Ox, Tiger, and Rabbit. In 2020 we celebrate the restless and protective Rat.

Like many celebrations observed by multiple cultures, the Lunar New Year is known by many names. In Vietnam, it is known as *Tet Nguyen Dan*, while Korea celebrates *Sol*, Cambodia commemorates *Chaul Chnam Thmey*, and Thailand enjoys *Songkran*, which occurs in April. China recognizes the Spring Festival, *Chuen Jie*, when friends and family come together to wish one another happiness and pay respects to ancestors in a celebration that begins on the New Year and continues for 15 days.

#### Different lunar zodiac animals

Each culture has different traditions, and in the case of the lunar calendar, the animals that make up the yearly cycles sometimes differ. For example, in the Tibetan cycle, the Rabbit is referred to as the Hare and the Rooster as the Bird. In the Vietnamese tradition, the Rabbit is referred to as the Cat, the Sheep as Ram, and the Rooster as Cock. This year's animal, the Rat, is also called the Mouse in some countries.

Each animal recurs every 12 years, but in a different incarnation based on one of five elements — metal, water, wood, fire, and earth. For example, this year is the Year of the Metal Rat, which was last

celebrated 60 years ago in 1960. After exiting on February 11, 2021, the Metal Rat will not return until 2080.

According to Chinese astrology, people born in the Year of the Rat (1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, and 2020) are known to be practical, open-minded, and sensual individuals who are idealistic, affectionate, and always busy. They are also known for their tendency to be secretive and suspicious and can be selfish and quick-tempered. Metal Rats — including those born between January 25, 2020 and February 11, 2021 — are ambitious, cheerful, and charming but are also sometimes inflexible and jealous.

#### New Year traditions

For many cultures, the arrival of the New Year marks a spiritual time in which celebrants give thanks at temples and pray for a year's good luck. Another widely practiced tradition involves sweeping homes clean of evil spirits by literally cleaning and sweeping dwellings of dirt. In addition, new clothing is often purchased in commemoration of the New Year.

The Spring Festival ushers in China's busiest travel season, a time when families journey great distances to celebrate with loved ones. In Thailand, revellers get wet and wild during *Rohd Nam Songkran*, a festival in which celebrants douse one another with water to bring rain in the coming year.

Worldwide celebrations also bring out many culinary traditions. Chinese traditionally eat rice cakes and dumplings, Vietnamese dine on a kind of rice cake called *banh trung*, and people in Korea prepare traditional foods, including *duk-kuk*, a rice cake soup.

Children celebrating the arrival of the Lunar New Year are greeted with many treats. In China and Vietnam, youngsters receive special red envelopes containing New Year's money (in China, the envelopes are called *hong bao*). Korean children bow to their parents and grandparents and, in return, receive freshly minted money (though not in red envelopes).

The next Lunar New Year will bring the Year of the Ox, from February 12, 2021 to January 31, 2022. Have a safe and prosperous Year of the Rat!

### The Year of the Rat

The Rat is the first animal of the lunar zodiac. Those born under the Rat sign are generally considered to be practical, open-minded, and expressive individuals who are idealistic and always busy. They are also known for their tendency to be picky and can be calculating and argumentative. Rats born between January 25, 2020 and February 11, 2021 are Metal Rats. The metal element makes for Rats who are cheerful and charming but have trouble hiding their jealousy or anger. Metal Rats like to spend money and have no problem buying quality goods. They are ambitious and know how to advance but are also inflexible.

#### Rat facts

**Year of the Rat:** January 25, 2020 to February 11, 2021

**Chinese Calendar Year:** 4718

**Rat Years:** 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020, 2032

**Characteristics:** Those born in the Year of the Rat are clever, protective, and familial. Rats can be ambitious and experimental and often seem to have a solution for many things. Rat people are imaginative and quick-witted, and often want to keep going even when a chance for a short break finally arises. Rats are honest and patient, but sometimes their greed and secretive nature overtakes their compassionate side.

**Best careers:** Rat people make good counsellors, actors, managers, politicians, entrepreneurs, musicians, historians, and advertising executives.

**Born in the Year of the Rat:** Daniel Inouye, Laurence Yep, Fukuda Yasuo, Ki-duk Kim, S. R. Nathan, Samy Vellu, Lim Guan Eng, Lee Bee Wah, Tony Pua, Koh Poh Koon, John Cho, Hiroyuki Sanada, BD Wong, Sung Kang, Prince Charles, and Prince Harry.