



## LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Time an Asia trip with the Lunar New Year for culture-curious clients, writes **Laura French**

**T**he start of spring is a cause for celebration around the world, and few places do it better than in Asia, when the Lunar New Year sees festivities across the continent and each country adds its own flair.

Also known as the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year, it officially starts on the first day of the lunar calendar (this year, February 17) lasting for 15 days. It's a time for families to come together to feast in the hope of good fortune ahead – but it's also a great opportunity for clients to get a feel for local culture.

From Hong Kong to Vietnam, South Korea to Singapore, we've rounded up some of the best places to experience the festival in 2027, when the new year falls on February 6.



### HONG KONG

Hong Kong's New Year festivities put vibrancy at the heart, with flower markets, a night parade and an extravagant fireworks display over Victoria Harbour among the celebrations. "Travellers can soak up the atmosphere watching lion and dragon dances and visit the temples at Wong Tai Sin, Che Kung and Man Mo," says Mark Henderson, head of specialist product for Gold Medal. "There's even a thrilling New Year race day, all against a backdrop of red lanterns, family feasts and lucky red envelopes that bring the spirit of the festivities to life."

**Book it:** Gold Medal offers six nights' B&B at the four-star Harbour Plaza North Point hotel in Hong Kong from £1,499 per person, flying from Heathrow on February 3, 2027.  
[goldmedal.co.uk](http://goldmedal.co.uk)



### MAINLAND CHINA

There are myriad festivities across China, with Beijing and Shanghai laying claim to some of the biggest. Temple fairs are the stars of the former, with folk performances, street food vendors and craft stalls taking over historic sites. Shanghai, meanwhile, hosts the Yuyuan Lantern Festival, when giant artistic creations illuminate Yuyuan Gardens and its ponds. "Beijing is at its most atmospheric during the Lunar New Year," says Gary King, head of trade sales at Wendy Wu Tours. "Visitors can get a real sense of tradition, plus it's an incredibly special way to understand how families and communities across China come together in order to celebrate."

**Book it:** Wendy Wu Tours can offer a 10-day tailor-made Lunar New Year private tour combining Beijing and Xi'an from £4,490, including B&B accommodation and flights on February 5, 2027.  
[wendywutours.co.uk](http://wendywutours.co.uk)

# DESTINATIONS

## ASIA | LUNAR NEW YEAR

3



### SINGAPORE

From pineapple tarts and *nian gao* (sweet rice cakes) to live performances and fireworks, Singapore's celebrations are as spectacular as its skyline. At the core is the Chingay Parade (pictured), a carnival-style extravaganza that combines huge floats, elaborate costumes, performances and pyrotechnics. Elsewhere, glowing lanterns create an ethereal backdrop at the Chinatown Street Light-Up, while Gardens by the Bay holds its own lantern display in the form of the River Hongbao Festival, featuring intricately crafted installations, music, games, rides and more.

**Book it:** If Only offers six nights at The Clan Hotel Singapore from £3,295, including flights, transfers and daily breakfast, departing February 3, 2027.  
[ifonly.net](http://ifonly.net)

4

### VIETNAM

It's not only Chinese New Year that follows the lunar calendar. Vietnam's Tét holiday is considered the country's most important festival, with families gathering on Tét Eve and cities taking on a slower, quieter pace over the period. Residents head to flower markets to prepare for the lead-up – visit Quang Ba in Hanoi to seek out bouquets of peach blossom and chrysanthemums, the symbols of the festival. Then, fireworks light up Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City as midnight strikes. Expect lion dances, cultural performances and quintessential Tét treats – don't miss the *banh chung* (sticky rice cakes).

**Book it:** Audley Travel can offer an 11-day tailor-made trip to Vietnam during Tét from £4,695, including flights, transfers, accommodation and excursions.  
[audleytravel.com](http://audleytravel.com)



5

### SOUTH KOREA

South Korea welcomes the Lunar New Year with Seollal, in which families honour their ancestors. Restaurants and shops often close, but there are many places to explore. In Seoul, direct clients to Gyeongbokgung Palace for New Year games and cultural performances, or suggest a visit to the Korean Folk Village an hour from the city for fortune-telling and other activities. If they're here on the 15th day, they can witness the Jeongwol Daeboreum fire festival (pictured) and the *daljip* ritual, where wishes are thrown into bonfires to bring good luck.

**Book it:** Bamboo Travel can arrange its 12-night Adventure Korea tailor-made itinerary to coincide with the Lunar New Year, priced from £4,620, including flights, B&B accommodation, private guides and transfers.  
[bambootravel.co.uk](http://bambootravel.co.uk)



# DESTINATIONS

## ASIA | LUNAR NEW YEAR

### ASK THE expert

**Gary King,**  
head of trade sales,  
Wendy Wu Tours

"Lunar New Year is one of the most meaningful times to travel in Asia as it offers a rare opportunity to experience cultures at their most expressive and traditional. Celebrations are rooted in family, renewal and ritual, and that sense of occasion is felt everywhere, from temples and city streets to food, performances and local customs. We continue to see strong demand for travel that coincides with the Lunar New Year, particularly from those returning to Asia for a deeper, more meaningful experience. China and Vietnam consistently perform best when itineraries are designed to work with the festive period. For travel agents, the key is setting expectations early. Clients should book well in advance, be prepared for some reduced opening hours and understand this is about cultural immersion rather than conventional sightseeing. Positioned correctly, Lunar New Year travel can be a once-in-a-lifetime experience."



### INDONESIA

With a significant Chinese-Indonesian community, Indonesia hosts a flurry of events. "Jakarta and West Kalimantan offer two of the biggest celebrations, showcasing Indonesia's distinctive expression of Lunar New Year, known as Imlek," says Melissa Nicholas, product director at Experience Travel Group. "For an urban celebration, head to Glodok (Chinatown) in Jakarta, or for a unique experience, visit Singkawang in West Kalimantan for the Cap Go Meh festival." Taking place on the 15th day, it features a parade of Tatung performers said to be spirit mediums warding off evil. **Book it:** Experience Travel Group can tailor-make a two-week trip to Indonesia from £5,500, travelling to Jakarta, Java and Bali and including flights, accommodation, daily breakfast, guides and transfers. [experiencetravelgroup.com](http://experiencetravelgroup.com)



### MALAYSIA

Red lanterns, family reunions and dragon dances ring in the new year in Malaysia, and Kuala Lumpur and Penang are at the centre of things. In Penang, capital George Town gets very lively, with night markets, decorations, crafts and street performances, while seven-tiered Kek Lok Si Temple (*pictured*) turns into a fairytale vision with thousands of LED lights and lanterns. Penang's version of Chap Goh Meh sees a ritual with a fruity twist: single women inscribe their name on a mandarin that they throw into the water for men to find – and hopefully fall in love. **Book it:** Kuoni can tailor-make a trip combining Kuala Lumpur and Penang with a rainforest stay in Borneo from £2,549, including international flights from Heathrow on February 5, 2027, domestic flights and accommodation. [kuoni.co.uk](http://kuoni.co.uk)



### TAIWAN

Food is at the heart of Taiwan's Lunar New Year holiday, with dumplings, spring rolls and *tangyuan* (sweet sticky rice balls) among the good-luck staples. Taipei is home to some of the most vibrant festivities, with locals gathering at Longshan Temple for age-old rituals and incense offerings. But for the most memorable displays of all, suggest clients linger on. The end of the two-week period marks the start of the Taiwan Lantern Festival (*pictured*), while the Pingxi district, just outside Taipei, hosts a separate Sky Lantern Festival, when thousands of lanterns are released into the night sky in a dazzling spectacle. **Book it:** Regent Holidays has a nine-day Taiwan Group Explorer Tour coinciding with the New Year in Taipei from £2,450, including B&B accommodation, guides and flights on January 30, 2027. [regent-holidays.co.uk](http://regent-holidays.co.uk)

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Julius Bramante, Nalidisa, wu hseung