

Facts about China

China's most famous traditional festivals.

The Spring Festival takes place on the first day of the Lunar New Year. At this time families have at least a three-day holiday, enjoy delicious food, parties and a variety of entertainment.

The Lantern Festival or *yuanxiao* is celebrated on the 15th day of the first lunar month. In Hong Kong beautiful lanterns of every size and shape, made out of all kinds of materials are on display in Victoria Park. Prizes are given out for those judged the most novel and beautiful.

The Dragon Boat Festival falls on the 5th day of the 5th month of the lunar calendar. It marks the death of the great poet, Qu Yuan, who died more than 2000 years ago. He committed suicide by drowning in the Miluo River on the 5th day of the 5th month protesting corruption in the government.

The Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar. It originated in the custom of the emperors worshipping the moon. Moon cakes are the most common delicacy generously given to friends and relatives and eaten on this day.

Mainland China also observes a number of religious festivals. Among the most popular are:

The Laba Festival which falls on the 8th day of the 12th month of the lunar calendar. This feast celebrates the day that the founder of Buddhism, Sakyamuni, achieved enlightenment.

Qing Ming Festival is celebrated around April 4th or 5th. This festival, which was not observed for many years in present-day China, is now regaining popularity, especially in the rural areas. It is also called the festival of Pure Brightness. Early in the morning families go out to sweep the graves of their ancestors in a gesture of veneration. People burn paper money and make simple offerings.