

## Celebrate Chinese New Year with Denver favorites

Traditionally, the 15-day Chinese New Year celebration, which begins Monday, is a period when more food is consumed than any other time of the year. Vast amounts are prepared - not only for friends and family, but for ancestors and loved ones who have passed before. Accordingly, it is considered good fortune that everything in the home should be full - from bread and rice baskets to grumbling, yet satisfied, bellies. Why not take this opportunity to loosen the belt strap this weekend and get a jump on the Year of the Dog?

Celebrate in grand style at **The Imperial**, 431 S. Broadway, a long-standing Denver favorite (for good reason!). Amicable owner Johnny Hsu's multiple award-winning restaurant is well-known for its unbeatable, authentic Chinese fare and lush, welcoming environs. Further, it is the spot to hit for an authentic Chinese New Year's celebration: for the next two weeks, Hsu and company will be offering an amazing multi-course meal for only \$25 per person (minimum of four).

The generous celebration begins with a smoked salmon salad, which is tossed by everyone at the table. Tradition states that the longer and higher you toss the salad the better your luck for the coming year. "It also symbolizes the whole group or family working together," states Hsu. In addition, the fish represents abundance and good fortune.

Following this is a delectable soup with lamb dumplings and winter melon, and the opportunity to share four unbelievable entrees: a spicy Hunan shrimp, filet mignon with sugar peas, Cornish game hen stuffed with wild rice (prepared special for this year) and a five striped bass served open with an abundance of fresh vegetables and a special sweet and sour sauce. For dessert, everyone shares in a Chinese rice cake. To add to the celebratory atmosphere, there will be Lion Dancing as performed by Boulder's Shaolin Hong Mei troupe this Sunday at 5:45 p.m. and the following Saturday at 5:30 p.m. Both weekend's lunch and dinner reservations are filling up fast, so be sure to call ASAP, 303-698-2800. For more information, visit [www.imperialchinese.com](http://www.imperialchinese.com).

Take a trip to the award-winning **Empress Seafood Restaurant** at 2825 W. Alameda, where they're known for the freshest seafood and top-notch dim sum. They'll be ushering in year 4704 with a special New Year's menu so authentic that co-owner Victor Chan had to translate it for me! It's highlighted by dishes both tempting and exotic; like the oysters with seaweed, crabmeat seafood soup, steamed flounder and

a pig's feet stew. Further, they're offering a great deal on live lobster, at \$16.95 for 1-1/4 pound. All are available as individual entrees or in the group banquet setting. On Sunday, they'll be featuring Lion Dancing, both at 11 a.m. (traditional Chinese) and later at 12:45 p.m. (a Vietnamese version), as well as a small kung fu exhibition in their parking lot. Meal times are already booked for these early afternoon events, but Chan says all are welcome to enjoy festivities.

The New Year's menu begins tonight and runs through the next two weeks until the celebration ends. And you can still stop in and order from their regular menu or take advantage of the perfect combo of tea and dim sum (all available as take out, too). For information, call 303-922-2822.