

## Lunar New Year Festivities

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Red decorations, gold lettering, aromatic food, and melodies of the far East all indicate the festivities are about to begin.

On Friday Feb. 19 from 4:00-6:00 in the Student Center (Stuce) Asbury will be celebrating Lunar New Year. The activities on campus were organized by Asbury's Asian Student Alliance (ASA).

Lunar New Year fell on Feb. 12 this year. This date varies annually depending on the traditional Chinese calendar, which factors in the cycles of the moon. Lunar New Year is a critical holiday to many East Asian countries including China, South Korea, and Vietnam among others according to CNN.

Often Lunar New Year is a time centered around visiting family and offering blessing or good wishes to friends. The length of time in which people celebrate varies from three to seven days in some places. Traditionally Lunar New Year officially concludes on Feb. during the Lantern Festival. The pandemic has altered some of these celebrations but many stay determined to preserve the spirit of the holiday (CNN).

As with many cultural festivals, Lunar New Year typically revolves largely around traditional foods. There will be plenty of these foods in the Stuce for hungry students. Some of these foods are connected to symbolic meanings such as dumplings (representing wealth) and lo-mein (representing longevity) according to USA today.

"I think the main thing other than the food is the interaction you get" said Alex Kim, ASA president. "You get more conversations, and you get to learn more about the culture, and you learn more about the things people do to celebrate. This is how we appreciate our culture and our people."

The main attraction of the event will be the performance by members of Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institute is a long-standing organization within the University of Kentucky that promotes the celebration of traditional Chinese heritage. Representatives of this organization often partner with ASA to provide entertainment including traditional dances and musical performances on ancient instruments at different events throughout the year.

"It's not just educational," said Kim. "Though you get some of that, it's a lot of fun experiences that aren't always what you would typically find in America."

Kim spoke to the benefits of attending the campus event.

"Everything is free, everything is fun... and you have good conversations" said Kim. "If you like being around people and having that kind of community, it's a great opportunity to take advantage of."