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Celebrating
Chinese
New Year
in Sydney

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YEAR OF THE PIG

THE YEAR OF THE PIG

BY JAMIE APPS



On February 5 another round of New Year celebrations will commence throughout the city, this time we'll be celebrating the beginning of the Lunar New Year and the arrival of the Year Of The Pig, which represents carefree fun, good fortune and wealth.

As a truly multicultural community, Sydney will turn red and come to life as events celebrating the Lunar New Year happen throughout the city. To help our readers make the most of the occasion the *City Hub* has put together this comprehensive guide to some of the finest events and restaurants to add to your calendar. If you're really looking to dive in by immersing yourself in the culture with an action-packed day then this is the plan for you.

Kick off the morning down by Cockle Bay Wharf to witness the largest dragon boat race regatta in the southern hemisphere. Over the course of two days, thousands of paddlers will board their ornately designed boats, each 12-metre vessel is carved to resemble a dragon gliding through the water, and participate in races every 10 minutes. The sound and visual spectacle is like nothing else on offer throughout the year.

Obviously the most logical place to head to next is Chinatown and Dixon Street Plaza. This already colourful and extravagant area will become even more special as the thoroughfare is decorated with lanterns, live performances, drumming and the enticing smells of Chinese cuisine.

After walking through the Dixon Street Plaza why not head over to Paddy's Markets in Haymarket to witness the spectacular Lion Dance performed by the Jin Wu Koon Dragon and Lion Dance Association.

The performers will make their way through Paddy's Markets to the rhythmic beat of the

drums. As they show off their impressive dancing skills, they will consume hanging lettuces from participating store holders as part of the Choy Cheng ritual, or Eating of the Green, a symbolic ritual representing prosperity which is believed to bring luck for the New Year.

If you're the type of person who prefers a much more subdued and calm style of celebrating then Sydney hasn't forgotten you. Start the day with a peaceful, and educational, guided tour of the Oriental Garden within the Royal Botanic Garden.

During this tour, you will get to hear the

fascinating stories and characters behind the various plants showcased within the Oriental Garden. Learn about the evolution of this quiet spot in the heart of the Royal Botanic Gardens from Maiden's Bamboo Grove to the important wild-sourced collection of Asian plants that it is today.

After your tour of the Oriental Garden you'll likely be feeling a little peckish so why not indulge in some dumplings for lunch at The

Calyx. Serving up a mouth-watering Lunar New Year inspired tasting menu of bao buns and stacks of dumplings this is sure to hit the spot.

Later in the evening why not take a quiet evening stroll through The Rocks to witness the vibrant colours of the giant animal lanterns which will be strewn throughout the precinct.

Each 13-metre tall lantern has been designed by an Asian-Australian artist and are all modelled after on one of the 12 creatures of the Chinese zodiac. Bring the whole family and get up close to these magnificent, giant artworks as you snake your way along the path from the Sydney Opera House around to The Rocks.

The highlight of the lantern walk is the star of this year's Lunar New Year, the pig. This particular lantern is an abstract 3D pig-shaped grid designed by Qian Jian Hua and will stand at the Sydney Opera House's Western Boardwalk.

Finally after completing the lantern walk head on over to the Bodhi Restaurant Bar to enjoy a wonderful vegan special menu created just for the Chinese New Year.

Throughout February, diners will be able to enjoy Bodhi's pan-Asian inspired vegan dishes, with Lunar New Year specials aiming to ensure a prosperous life. The evening set menu features a traditional Lunar New Year dish known as Longevity Noodles which is believed to symbolise and bring a long and prosperous life to those who eat it.

Bodhi owner Heaven Leigh says, "Celebrating the Lunar New Year is a special tradition in my family, a time to reflect on the year past, and set intentions for the one ahead. It's a time to come together with the ones we love and enjoy delicious food."

City Hub hopes all of our readers are able to go out and soak up the joyous atmosphere of the Chinese New Year celebrations, and we wish everybody a happy and prosperous Year Of The Pig.



**Chinese New Year
At Paddy's Market.
Photo: Supplied**