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DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

15 DAYS OF LUNAR NEW YEAR TRADITIONS USHER IN THE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER

NEW YORK, NY – January 26, 2005 – The 12 days of Christmas are now over, but there is another reason to keep up the celebratory mood: the festive 15 days of Lunar New Year are fast approaching! Also known as Chinese New Year and the Spring Festival, Lunar New Year celebrations last for 15 days and end with a Lantern Festival on the final day.

Families make preparations for the upcoming new year almost a month before the first day of the Lunar New Year. Houses are thoroughly cleaned to sweep away any bad luck, debts are repaid, hair cut and new clothes bought. Doors and window frames are repainted, usually red, and then decorated with paper scrolls.

Celebrate the Lunar New Year in Chinatown New York City, where exciting events to celebrate the Year of the Rooster will take place: including a flower market, festivals, parades and elaborate feasts at Chinatown restaurants. The official date of the upcoming Lunar New Year is Wednesday, February 9, 2005. **To learn more about Lunar New Year please visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.**

The 15 Days of Lunar New Year

Day 1: On the first day of the Lunar New Year, families honor and welcome the gods of the heavens and earth. Children and unmarried young adults are given *lai see*, or red envelopes, from their parents that contain “lucky” money. These red envelopes can be found at **Kam Man** - 200 Canal Street. The Lunar New Year’s greetings begin: “Kung Hei Fat Choy!” (“Happy New Year!”) Most Chinese do not eat meat on this day, believing that this will ensure long and happy lives for them.

Day 2: This is the day that the Chinese pray to their ancestors and their gods. The second day of the Lunar New Year is believed to be the birthday of all dogs – remember to show extra kindness towards dogs and feed them well on this day!

Days 3 & 4: Often bringing gifts, son-in-laws pay respect to their parents-in-law on the third and fourth days of the Lunar New Year. Lucky Lunar New Year gifts such as golden roosters and jade can be found at **Golden-Jade Jewelry Inc.** – 189 Canal Street.

Day 5: The fifth day is called *Po Woo*, and people stay home to welcome the God of Wealth. No one visits friends and family on this day as it brings bad luck to both parties.

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Days 6 - 10: From the sixth through the tenth days of the Lunar New Year, people visit friends and family and enjoy elaborate dinners together. They also visit Chinese temples and pray for good fortune and health. Visit the **Mahayana Buddhist Temple** – corner of Canal and Bowery or come to Chinatown with friends and family for a Lunar New Year feast at one of the many restaurants in the neighborhood.

Day 7: The seventh day of the Lunar New Year is for farmers to display their produce. The **Deluxe Food Market** - 122 Mott Street in Chinatown has a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, seafood and meats. It is also the day believed to be the birthday of all human beings. Uncut noodles are eaten on this day to encourage longevity, and raw fish is eaten for success and good fortune.

Day 8: The people of Fujian Province in China have a family reunion dinner on the eighth day of the Lunar New Year, and at midnight they pray to *Tian Gong*, the God of Heaven.

Day 9: Offerings are made to the Jade Emperor on the ninth day. For those who love the beautiful green hue of jade, be sure to stop by **Lucky Stone** – 234 Canal Street and admire the wide selection of jade jewelry.

Days 10-12: On these special days friends and relatives should be invited over for Lunar New Year dinner. Special Lunar New Year dishes include: *man tau* (steamed buns), *zai* (Chinese roots and fibrous vegetables), *jing yu* (steamed whole fish), *zong* (glutinous rice wrapped in reed leaves), *nian gao* (steamed rice pudding) and uncut noodles that symbolize longevity, among other dishes. Food, both at home and at restaurants, is usually prepared in abundance to signify wealth and prosperity.

Day 13: Rice and congee, along with *choi sum* (Chinese mustard greens), are eaten on this day to cleanse the system after having so much rich food in the previous days.

Day 14: Preparations are made to celebrate the Lantern Festival.

Day 15: This is the last of the Lunar New Year and is also known as the Lantern Festival. The full moon is visible on this day, and in China, colorful lanterns are put on display. Young children also enjoy holding festive lanterns and strolling outside with their parents on this day.

The following are highlights of Lunar New Year events and celebrations in Chinatown:

☞ **Chinatown Lunar New Year Flower Market – February 5-6** - In Chinese communities around the world, going to the market to purchase flowers is a popular way of ushering in the Lunar New Year. Participate in this time-honored tradition with the Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) and the United East Athletics Association's (UEAA) Second Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Flower Market. The flower market opens Saturday, February 5, 2005, from 10:00 am – 8:00 pm; and Sunday, February 6, 2005, from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. The market will be situated at the Roosevelt Park at Grand and Chrystie Streets (take B or D train to Grand St.). For more information please call MoCA at 212-619-4785 or visit www.moca-nyc.org.

☞ **Chinatown Lunar New Year Firecracker Ceremony – February 9** – Two Firecracker detonations, with expected attendance by local politicians and community leaders, will take place in Chinatown on Wednesday, February 9th to ward off evil spirits for the new year. One will be at Mott Street and Bayard Street at 12:00 pm; and the other at Market Street and East Broadway at 2:00 pm. From 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, at both intersections, stages will feature all-day cultural performances by traditional and contemporary Asian-American singers and dancers. In addition to that, a dozen lion, dragon and unicorn dance troupes will dance and parade through Chinatown's main streets, including Mott Street, the Bowery, East Broadway, Bayard Street, Elizabeth Street and Pell Street.

- ✍ **6th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival – February 13** – The parade and festival takes place Sunday, February 13, 2005, from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm. The spectacle features elaborate floats, marching bands, lion and dragon dances galore, Asian musicians, magicians, acrobats and procession by local organizations. Over 5,000 people are expected to march in the parade, which will start at Mott Street and proceed through practically every street in of Chinatown, finally dispersing at Worth Street. The parade is expected to conclude at 3:00 pm, at which time an outdoor cultural festival will take place on Bayard Street featuring more performances by musicians, dancers and martial artists. This event, as well as the February 9th Firecracker Ceremony, is organized by the Better Chinatown Society and sponsored by the Lower Manhattan Development Corp, the September 11th Fund, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, WABC-TV, *The New York Post*, Bank of America, CenterCare and Affinity Health Plan.
- ✍ **Authentic New Years Feasts at Chinatown restaurants** – Throughout the month of February, restaurants will offer special Lunar New Year multi-course banquets to celebrate the holiday, such as the Oriental Garden (14 Elizabeth Street, Phone: 212-619-0085), which is offering four special banquet menus ranging in price from \$298 - \$498 for up to ten people. The \$498 Special Banquet Menu features stir-fried conch and jumbo shrimp with fried bean curd; braised abalone; boiled lobster in broth; roasted squab; and steamed whole fish with soy sauce. The Golden Unicorn is offering a special dinner menu for the Lunar New Year priced at \$28 per person (including tax and gratuities) with options ranging from a two- to a ten-person dinner. Menu items include the *shredded duck with rainbow vegetable*, *Peking roasted duck* and *fried grouper cubes with corn sauce*. For a complete list of restaurants offering special menus, please visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Other restaurants offering Lunar New Year specials and banquets include:

- *A & B Lobster King House* (1 Mott Street, Phone: 212-566-0930)
- *Buddha Bodai* (5 Mott Street, Phone: 212-566-8388)
- *Chatham Restaurant* (9 Chatham Square, Phone: 212-267-0220)
- *Fuleen Seafood* (11 Division Street, Phone: 212-941-6888)
- *Golden Unicorn Restaurant* (18 East Broadway, Phone: 212-941-0911)
- *Jing Fong Restaurant* (20 Elizabeth Street, Phone: 212-964-5256)
- *Hop Lee* (16 Mott Street, Phone: 212-962-6475)
- *Shanghai Garden* (14 A Elizabeth Street, Phone: 212-964-5640)
- *Sweet-n-Tart Restaurant* (20 Mott Street, Phone: 212-964-0380)
- *The Nice Restaurant* (35 East Broadway, 212-406-9776)
- *XO Café & Grill* (48 Hester Street, Phone: 212-965-8645)

About Chinatown New York City

Chinatown New York City, combines authentic Asian-American culture with the energy and influence of the most exciting city in the world. With over 200 restaurants, numerous Asian bakeries and tea houses, jewelry shops, arts and antique stores, an active nightlife and dozens of cultural attractions and landmarks, Chinatown stands as a world within a city. Whether dining, shopping, or strolling down the charming, narrow streets, visitors to Chinatown New York City, will find virtually limitless opportunities for new experiences and added insight.

Located on the east side of Lower Manhattan, Chinatown New York City, is the largest in the United States. The neighborhood has been growing steadily since the mid-1800s, and today stands as a vibrant community offering the opportunity to enjoy and explore Asian-American culture. Chinatown New York City is easily accessible via many New York City MTA subways and buses, as well as several convenient area parking garages. For more information, visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Note to editors: NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization, is a private, membership-based non-profit dedicated to building New York City's economy and positive image through tourism and convention development, major events and the marketing of the city on a worldwide basis.