

CONTACT: M. SILVER ASSOCIATES  
Tel: 212-754-6500  
Fax: 212-754-6711  
Aik Wye Ng  
aik@msilver-pr.com  
Carmen L. Tong  
carmen@msilver-pr.com



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SPECIAL CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR FRUITS AND PASTRIES BRING GOOD FORTUNE AND PROSPERITY

**NEW YORK, NY – January 14, 2005** – Food has always played an important role in Chinese culture and Lunar New Year specialties such as pastries, candies and fruits are no exception. Most noted for bringing good luck and fortune, Lunar New Year foods will be available at Chinatown bakeries and supermarkets in celebration of the big day on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Beginning in mid-January through the end of February, everyone can get their fill of favorites such as *Nian Gao* (*Lunar New Year Cake*) and *Xiu Hou Joe* (*Crunchy Smiley Face*). For a complete list of Lunar New Year activities in Chinatown New York City, visit [www.ExploreChinatown.com](http://www.ExploreChinatown.com)

Be sure to sample the following tasty treats for a year filled with prosperity or you'll have to wait until the next Lunar New Year rolls around!

- o ***Nian Gao (The Lunar New Year Cake)*** - *Nian Gao* otherwise known as New Year's Cake, is the most important cake eaten during Lunar New Year. Literally translated as 'Year Cake', *Nian Gao* is a sweet, sticky dessert similar to a pudding. The word 'nian' means 'year', and the pronunciation of 'gao' sounds the same as the Chinese word for 'high' or 'higher'. Therefore, eating *Nian Gao* ensures your advancement in the New Year. The main ingredient, glutinous rice flour, is a symbol of cohesiveness and family. It is believed that a household will have a good year if the *Nian Gao* is made perfectly with a nice smooth texture. There are many types of *Nian Gao*, but the most traditional is the one made with brown sugar and dried dates.
- o ***Lo Bak Gao (Turnip Cake)*** - This savory dish is available at dim sum restaurants year-round but it is particularly popular during Lunar New Year. Served on New Year's Day as a symbol of prosperity and increasing fortune, the 'gao' is a homonym for the Chinese word for tall or high, so you'll want to dig into this dish if you're hoping to grow taller or move up the corporate ladder! This dish is typically made with white radish or turnips, Chinese sausages, dried shrimp, black mushrooms, and flour. It is generally cut into one inch thick slices, pan-fried and served with oyster sauce on the side.
- o ***Jin Dui (Chinese Sesame Balls Filled with Red Bean)*** - *Jin Dui* are Chinese sesame balls filled with red bean paste. The balls are made from mashed sweet potatoes, glutinous rice flour, flour, and filled with red bean paste, which are then deep fried till they are puffy and rolled in sesame seeds. This golden crispy pastry is symbolic of prosperity in the coming year.

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- o ***Xiu Hou Joe (Crunchy Smiley Face)*** A Lunar New Year deep-fried favorite is *Xiu Hou Joe*, or literally translated means ‘Crunchy Smiley Face.’ This unusually named snack is a sesame-coated sweetened dough ball that looks as if it has a laughing face, which symbolizes the long-lasting happiness that will be with the person who consumes a ‘Crunchy Smiley Face.’
- o ***Yau Gok* or *Gok Jai (Little Crescents)*** - These deep-fried crescent-shaped goodies are very popular because they look like traditional Chinese gold ingots. The little crescents are stuffed with chopped peanuts, sesame and a sugar mixture, symbolizing “treasure and gold.” It is a “must” for the New Year because the “treasure and gold” is believed to bring good fortune.
- o ***Fa Gao (Prosperity Cake)*** - *Fa Gao* literally translated means ‘Prosperity Cake’ and is made from wheat flour, water, sugar and yeast or baking powder so it will rise. The batter is steamed until it rises and splits open at the top and the higher it rises, the better one’s fortunes will be in the coming year.
- o ***Tong Yuen (Sweet Glutinous Ball Soup)*** - *Tong Yuen* sounds like the Chinese word for “togetherness.” Traditionally, the sweet glutinous ball soup is eaten on New Year’s Eve to ensure the family’s togetherness in the coming year. *Tong Yuen* comes in many varieties, but the most popular ones are filled with black sesame paste, red bean paste or peanut paste. There is also a savory version from Toisan in Mainland China, which does not have a filling but comes in broth with mushrooms and dried shrimp.
- o ***Melon* or *Sweet Lotus Seeds (Red or Black Seeds)*** – Melon or sweet lotus seeds are eaten during the New Year to symbolize the growth of family or fertility.
- o ***Lunar New Year Fruit and Candy Tray*** - For a little of everything, pick up a *Lunar New Year Tray*, which is typically filled with eight types of dried sweetened fruits. Each segment of a tray is a little different – some segments contain the traditional preserved fruits and nuts, while others consist of hard candies and chocolate covered fruits. Each has different meanings, for instance candied melon symbolizes growth and good health; red melon seed dyed red represents joy, sincerity and truth; lychee is symbolic of a strong family relationship; kumquat symbolizes prosperity; coconut represents togetherness; peanuts exemplify longevity; longan epitomizes filial piety; and lotus seeds represent fertility.

Chinatown bakeries and supermarkets offering these traditional foods include:

#### **BAKERIES:**

- o *Fay Da Bakery*, Stores on 83 Mott Street; 191 Centre Street; and 214-216 Grand Street; Phone: 212-791-3884
- o *Lung Moon*, 83 Mulberry Street, Phone: 212-349-4945
- o *Manna House*, 87 East Broadway, 27 Catherine Street, 125 Mott Street, and 212 Grand Street, (212) 267-6200
- o *Nice One Bakery*, 47 Bayard Street, Phone: 212-791-9365
- o *Sun Dou Dumpling*, 214 Grand Street, Phone: 212-965-9663
- o *White Swan*, 24 Bowery, Phone: 212-619-3388

#### **SUPERMARKETS:**

- o *Dynasty Supermarket*, 68 Elizabeth Street, Phone: 212-966-4943
- o *Kam Man Food Products*, 200 Canal Street, Phone: 212-571-0330
- o *Po Wing Hong Food Market*, 49 Elizabeth Street, Phone: 212-966-1080

Profiles of Chinatown’s bakeries and supermarkets are available on [www.ExploreChinatown.com](http://www.ExploreChinatown.com).

**About Chinatown New York City**

Chinatown New York City combines 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](http://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.

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