



# Legend of the 12 Zodiac Animals

The Chinese zodiac follows a cycle of 12 years. Each year is represented by a real or mythical animal, whose characteristics determine the personality and fate of every person born that year.

**According to ancient Chinese legend, many centuries ago the Jade Emperor called all the animals of the kingdom to him.** Only twelve obedient animals responded to his call, so the Jade Emperor decided to reward them for listening. He assigned each of the animals to one of the twelve lunar years. “But which order would the animals be in?” he thought. To solve this problem, he decided to hold a race to see which of the animals would reach the other side of the river first. The animals would receive their place in the twelve lunar years according to the order they reached the finish line.

The ox was worried about the race because he was nearly blind, and the rat was worried that he was too small compared to the other animals. So the ox made a deal with the rat: the rat would ride on the ox’s back and act as his guide. That way, the ox would be able to “see” and the rat would be “faster.”

Then the race started. All the animals gathered at one side of the river’s bank and jumped in. As the ox pulled ahead of all the animals and was about to reach the finish line, the rat jumped off the ox’s back and reached the opposite side of the bank first. Therefore, the rat became the first animal in the zodiac, followed by the ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar. Today, these twelve animals have become symbolic in different ways to different people.

According to another story, the cat was also in the race. The cat and rat were known to be the worst swimmers, so they decided that the best and fastest way to cross the river was for both of them to ride on the back of the ox. The good-natured ox agreed to carry the cat and the rat across. During the race, however, the rat pushed the cat into the river and the rat jumped ahead of the ox to win the race. That's why the cat is not part of the Chinese zodiac, and it's also the reason why the cat and the rat don't get along.

**What animal year were you born in? What personality traits describe you?**

### Happy Year of the Ox!

If you were born in the years 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009 or 2021  
you were born in the Year of the Ox.

#### **Characteristics:**

The ox is the second animal in the Chinese Zodiac. According to the Chinese Zodiac, people born in the Year of Ox are strong, reliable, and fair. They are often known for their honesty, patience, and confidence in themselves. However, they can also come off as stubborn at times as a result of their confidence.

#### **Famous Oxen:**

Jungkook, Jimin Park, Camila Cabello, Bruno Mars, Pharrell Williams, Billy Joel, Louis Armstrong, Celia Cruz, Vincent van Gogh, Walt Disney, Charlie Chaplin, George Carlin, Maisie Williams, Gal Gadot, Jim Carrey, George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Morgan Freeman, George Takei, Simone Biles, Cristiano Ronaldo, Jesse Owens, Vera Wang, Lisa Ling, Ed Sullivan, Edwin Hubble, Margaret Mead, Edith Cavell, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Barack Obama, Princess Diana, Malala Yousafzai.

