MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA

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.

The rabbit earned its place by hopping along the path until it reached the river bank. To cross the river, it jumped from stone to stone, but slipped along the way, nearly being swept away from the river rapids. Thinking quickly, it clutched onto a near-by log and was able to float its way to the finish line and into 4th place. Some say that the Dragon saw the rabbit in need, floating on the log, and let out a giant breath of air to help it reach the finish line safely.

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

Happy Year of the Rabbit!

If you were born in the years 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011 or 2023
you were born in the Year of the Rabbit.

Characteristics:

The rabbit is the fourth animal in the Chinese Zodiac. According to the Chinese Zodiac, people born in the Year of the Rabbit are gentle in spirit, approachable, good-humored, and expressive, including when it comes to their personal style. They're known for their elegance, artistic eye for design, and attention to detail. Some consider those born in the Year of the Rabbit to be overly sensitive, insecure, and cautious in their decision making – to a fault – in hopes of avoiding conflict.

Famous Rabbits:



Jet Li, Michael Jordan, Sally Ride, Frank Sinatra, Michelle Obama, Lionel Messi, Whitney Houston, Lou Gehrig, Kate Winslet, Sidney Poitier, Charlize Theron, Elliot Page, Sting, Lil Nas X, Maria Sharapova, Robin Williams, Tiger Woods, Edith Piaf, Tobey Maguire, Angelina Jolie, Drew Barrymore, Nicolas Cage, Francis Ford Coppola, David Beckham, Zac Efron