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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ring in the Year of the Yellow Earth Pig

Russians get a jump on Chinese New Year

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Igor Ivanko / Moskva News Agency

Among other time-honored New Year's Eve traditions, many Russians include an early and idiosyncratic observance of the Chinese New Year. Although it will be celebrated on Feb. 5, Russians pay close attention to the horoscope for the incoming year based on the Chinese zodiac. In 2019, the "yellow earth pig" is king.

The pig stands alone

Russian astrologists note that the pig is a very domestic, carefree, yet intuitive and compassionate creature. It symbolizes, above all, comfort, light-heartedness, pragmatism and aversion to conflict —although the pig is also known for its indomitable spirit, and even if provoked, it will not deviate from its chosen course.

In general, astrologists say the Year of the Pig will be a quiet and rewarding one, bringing

renewed focus on family, close friends and loved ones, as well as a renewal of old bonds and the creation of new ones. Good fortune, both personally and professionally, will come to those who are not afraid to be pig-headed in their pursuit of aims, but likewise to those who also understand the value of the mediating influences of intuition and altruism. The Year of the Pig is the year of the selfless go-getter.

This little piggy went to market

For those looking to honor the Chinese zodiac custodian and bank a little luck for the coming year, the characteristics of the pig can inform everything from what to wear to what to serve on New Year's Eve.

According to the Chinese zodiac, this year's pig is in the cycle of yellow earth, so warm colors are the ones to wear this holiday. Emphasis, however, should be on comfort. No need to go whole hog on your costume and make-up this year: stick to warm yellows, hazelnut browns and olive greens, non-synthetic fabrics, and gray, dark red or metallic accessories. Even make-up should be used sparingly.

When thinking of which gifts to buy, the advice is to keep things simple, pragmatic and useful. Don't throw pearls before swine! Gifts that will make your loved ones' lives easier, especially in the sphere of the home, are the best bet.

Finally, as one might expect, it is absolutely encouraged to eat high on the hog at this New Year's dinner table. In the Chinese tradition, it would be taboo to serve pork dishes to celebrate the Year of the Pig – but Russians can get around this by claiming that they are not strictly observing Chinese New Year on Dec. 31.

In any case, meat – and a lot of it – is the order of the day according most Russian astrologists, who recommend baked and roasted meats, sausages, and meaty salads. This bodes well for traditional Russian favorites such as Olivier salad and kholodets (meat in aspic). Baked or roasted pig and duck will also make for the luckiest holiday entrees this year.

All in all, New Year's celebrations should be spent quietly and comfortably at home around a sumptuous dinner table with family and the closest of friends.

Are these Year of the Pig suggestions worth buying into? It's not certain as to whether wearing warm colors and eating copious amounts of meat will really bring us all luck in the coming year, but it's probably okay to buy a pig in a poke this time around.

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