The Chinese Zodiac: What Is It?

A zine

By: Tracy Zhu
There are twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac. The first three are...

1. The rat:

2. The ox:

3. The tiger.
Then come...

- the rabbit  tù - 兔
- the dragon  lóng - 龍
- the snake shé - 蛇
- the monkey hóu - 猴
- the horse mà - 馬
- the sheep (or goat) yáng - 羊
- the dog gǒu - 狗
- the pig zhū - 猪
The animals correspond with each year.

2022 is the year of the tiger! 2010 is as well. There is a twelve year cycle.

**Rat:** charming; clever. 1996, 2008, 2020, 2032, 2044


The animals come in a specific order. This is often explained with the story of the Great Race.
The Jade Emperor, "Ruler of the Heavens", decided to gather all the animals in the kingdom to a race.

The cat was also invited, but the rat tricked him and the cat missed the race. That is why the cat chases the rat even now.

However, during the race, the competitors encountered a great river. They all tried to get across quickly, as the finish line was at the end of it.

The cat won first, as it had jumped onto the ox's back and then off again as soon as they reached the finish line.
In Chinese, the twelve zodiac animals are called "shēng xiào", which literally translates to (birth) resemblance.

十二生肖

(shi èr shēng xiào)

(twelve = shi èr)

When a year with your zodiac sign/animal comes, you are considered to be *unlucky*. This is because you are thought to have angered the **God of Age** (Jupiter-12 year orbit). These years come when you are twelve, twenty-four, thirty-six, and so on.

*The God of Age*

- He holds a peach, as they symbolize longevity.
One important thing to note about each zodiac year is that they don't start on January 1st. They follow the lunar calendar. That means the new year will fall somewhere in between mid-January and late February. In 2022, it falls on February 1st.

![Lunar Calendar](image)

![Solar Calendar](image)

This means that if you are born from January 1st through mid-January, you are the zodiac sign from the past year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feb. 12</th>
<th>Feb. 1</th>
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<td>Ox: 2021 - 2022</td>
<td>Tiger: 2022 - 2023</td>
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I hope you learned a lot about the Chinese Zodiac!

There is much more to know about the "十二生肖", so continue research on your own if you are interested! Happy Lunar New Year!
What zodiac animal are you?
There are 12 in the Chinese Zodiac.

Did you know that there is more than one calendar people follow? The Chinese Zodiac uses the Lunar Calendar.

February 24, 2022

Sources: China-highlights.com
Thanks to my parents too for sharing info!