

To the Market with Dumplings!

February 17, 2007

One of the most exciting activities to do during the New Year season is to go to the local market.

Markets are set up near the New Year especially for vendors to sell New Year-related products. These are usually open-air markets feature flowers, toys, clothing, for shoppers to buy gifts for family and friends as well as decoration to spruce up the home. The practice of shopping for the perfect plum tree is like the American tradition of picking out a Christmas tree.



Shopping for the Feast!

During the New Year, Chinese people like to cook up a variety of foods that are known for being New Year celebration foods. Today, you will shop for some different kinds of Chinese vegetables:

Chinese turnip (for perhaps that turnip cake) [luo bo]

Chinese eggplant (broiled/stir-fry) [qie zi]

Chinese Broccoli (stir-fry) [jie lan]

Chinese okra (stir-fry) [si gua]

Bitter Melon (sliced and stir-fried. Very bitter!) [ku gua]

Chinese Pear (A favorite since ancient China) [ya li]

Schedule for today:

10:30-10:45 Decorate your shopping "baskets!"

10:45-10:50 Introduction to the Market

10:50-11:05 Station 1

11:05-11:20 Station 2

11:20-11:35 Station 3

11:35- 11:50 Closing Activity

11:50-12:00 Snack time!

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Dressing your best

During the new year, people flock to the markets because this is the prime time to buy new clothing. Nowadays, people enjoy dressing in traditional Chinese outfits, such as in the picture (time period: Manchurian dynasty). Today, you will see some more examples of traditional pieces and make your own hair accessory!



Decorating your house

Before the new year, it is very important for Chinese families to decorate their house. At the market, there are a lot of upside down "fu" hanging messages and other colorful calligraphy messages called "chun lian". Fu, which means luck, when hung upside down is called "fu dao" which also means luck is here! You would also see some hanging fish, which symbolizes prosperity. Other important decorations are lanterns and live plants such as pretty blossoms and potted plum trees.

Learn some Chinese!

市场 (shi chang) market

房子 (fang zi) house

新衣服 (xin yi fu) new clothes

菜 (cai) vegetable

春联 (chun lian): vertical strip of calligraphy

福到 (fu dao) good luck is here

福倒 (fu dao) good luck upside down