American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

The Pig reigns supreme in 2019 — or 4717 in China

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The Chinese, or Lunar New Year, kicked off Tuesday, Feb. 5, and it's the Year of the Pig. According to Chinese tradition, if you are diligent, optimistic, truthful and generous, you share some of the Pig's qualities.

Traditional Lunar New Year celebrations last for 15 days and include fireworks displays, the exchanging of red envelopes stuffed with money, and feasts with family members and colleagues. Lunar New Year can be a busy time for businesses in Chinese communities around the world, which also makes it a busy time for the world's second-largest travel market, China, as millions of customers take to the skies to join loved ones for the holiday.

About 1.5 billion people in Asia celebrate Lunar New Year, so the American Airlines teams in Beijing (PEK); Hong Kong (HKG); Seoul, South Korea (ICN); and Shanghai (PVG) held celebrations two weeks early to toast the year ahead and look back on a successful 2018. American's Asian Pacific Islander Employee Business Resource Group also hosted celebrations throughout the system, including at Tulsa (TUL), Los Angeles (LAX), Raleigh-Durham (RDU) and the company's Fort Worth, Texas, headquarters.

"Delivering great, dependable service to our customers takes a tremendous amount of hard work from our teams in Asia and the U.S.," said Russ Fortson, Managing Director of Asia Pacific Operations for American. "They keep customers happy, get flights out on time and make the jobs of those who sell our service so much easier. American has really made its mark in recent years in the world's fastest-growing aviation market. We are seeing more customers in the Asia Pacific region who had not flown American before come back to fly with us again and again, and that's a testament to the great service our teams are delivering every day."

The Year of the Pig was last celebrated in 2007, a year after American first began serving China at PVG and 20 years after American's first flight to the continent with service to Tokyo Narita (NRT).

Fun fact

PVG served more than 74 million passengers in 2018. American ranked as the best North American airline and the third-best international airline for on-time flights at PVG.

American, the world's largest airline, recently took a big step forward with Asia's largest airline, China Southern. The two airlines are expanding their partnership this year to include more codeshare flying and reciprocal loyalty program benefits and lounge access. When the codeshare expansion is complete, American and China Southern will codeshare on flights to 20 destinations in China beyond Beijing and Shanghai and 21 destinations in the U.S. beyond Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York, as well as all of the carriers' long-haul flights between China and the U.S.

"We're incredibly excited about our growing relationship with China Southern and everything we're doing together to deliver a world-class product and customer experience throughout Asia," said Shane Hodges, Managing Director of Asia Pacific Sales for American. "We're looking forward to the Year of the Pig being a great one for American and our customers and team members in Asia."

The team in Beijing celebrates the Lunar New Year.

The China Southern (left) and American Airlines tail fins.

American Airlines Chairman and CEO Doug Parker and President Robert Isom along with other company leaders and representatives from Pacific Joint Business partner Japan Airlines joined in on Lunar New Year celebrations at American's headquarters on Feb. 6.

LUNAR NEW YEAR EXPLAINED: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MOON

There are 12 animals in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. The months in China's traditional calendar also align with the new moon, with the New Year falling on the second (or sometimes the third) new moon after the winter solstice. With some variations, Lunar New Year is celebrated and considered an important holiday across many Asian countries.

The Zodiac animal is also linked to five elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Gold and Water. This year is the Year of the Earth Pig. Those born during this 60-year cycle of the Earth Pig are known for being excellent communicators, well-liked among their peers and always on time.

People born during Pig years (2007, 1995, 1983, 1971, 1959, 1947, 1935 and 1923) are said to be most compatible with other Pigs. Founded in 1926, American Airlines is a Fire Tiger — and gets along well with the Pig.