



FROM THE DESK OF *JOHN RAZUMICH*

FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

- Feb. 1 — National Freedom Day
- Feb. 2 — Groundhog Day
- Feb. 3 — Feed the Birds Day
- Feb. 4 — Thank a Mailman Day
- Feb. 5 — National Weatherperson’s Day
- Feb. 6 — Pay a Compliment Day
- Feb. 7 — National Marriage Week
- Feb. 8 — National Kite-Flying Day
- Feb. 9 — National Pizza Day
- Feb. 10 — National Umbrella Day
- Feb. 11 — National Inventor’s Day
- Feb. 12 — Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday
- Feb. 13 — Galentine’s Day
- Feb. 14 — Valentine’s Day
- Feb. 15 — National Gumdrop Day
- Feb. 16 — National Almond Day
- Feb. 17 — Random Acts of Kindness Day
- Feb. 18 — National Caregivers Day
- Feb. 19 — National Vet Girls ROCK Day
- Feb. 20 — National Love Your Pet Day
- Feb. 21 — Washington’s Birthday
- Feb. 22 — National Margarita Day
- Feb. 23 — National Banana Bread Day
- Feb. 24 — National Chili Day
- Feb. 25 — National Clam Chowder Day
- Feb. 26 — National Pistachio Day
- Feb. 27 — National Strawberry Day
- Feb. 28 — Play More Cards Day



If you need some extra luck this year, why not eat something delicious and lucky at the same time? Chinese New Year is a fascinating holiday layered with tradition and meaning, and the dishes are also very intentional about bringing good fortune to families for the upcoming year.

Here are five dishes you can use to boost your good luck, and if you don’t want to cook, you can support your local Chinese restaurants!

No. 1: Dumplings

With a history of 1,800 years, dumplings are a staple food in Northern China and also a quintessential dish in various Chinese festivals, especially during Chinese New Year. In fact, the Chinese name for dumplings (jiaozi) means the changing of years. In China, this savory steamed dish is a symbol of wealth, since it’s in the shape of an ancient Chinese gold ingot.

Different fillings have different meanings, too! Celery filling means a hardworking attitude will lead to a wealthy life. Leek filling means you’ll have everlasting affluence, and cabbage filling means you’ll have over a hundred different ways of making your fortune.

No. 2: Fish

Fish is an indispensable dish during Chinese New Year. The Chinese pronunciation of fish is “yu,” which means surplus and fortune. Different kinds of fish have different meanings, as well — eating a Chinese mud carp will bring good luck and blessings, while eating catfish means you’ll live a rich life overall.

Interestingly, there are particular methods to eat fish on Chinese New Year. First, you can’t turn over your fish after you’ve finished eating it on one side — it’s considered unlucky. To show

Continued on Page 2 ...

respect, the head of the fish also needs to be pointed toward elders or distinguished guests. Lastly, in Southern China, some people will only eat the middle part of the fish on the eve of the new year, then finish off the head and tail on the next day to symbolize completeness.

No. 3: Longevity Noodle

You might know that eating noodles on Chinese New Year means you'll live a long life, but did you know that there's a longevity noodle dish made with one single, continuous noodle? Eating it from beginning to end without breaking it is considered powerful good luck!

No. 4: Glutinous Rice Balls

This food is lucky during both the Lantern Festival and Chinese New Year, which is good news because it's also delicious! Smooth, sticky rice balls are stuffed with sweet paste (usually red bean), brown sugar, or fruits and nuts and prepared by boiling until tender and sticky. Their round shape represents completeness and family reunion.

No. 5: Spring Rolls

Because these crispy rolls are often filled with fresh vegetables or springtime ingredients, people commonly enjoy them during the Spring Festival, but they can be enjoyed during Chinese New Year, as well. They represent wealth, treasure, and making a fresh start.



Although these are not dishes, lucky Chinese numbers include 3, 5, and 8. The Chinese word for “3” sounds like the same word for “to live” or “life” and refers to the three significant events of life (birth, marriage, death). Five can be associated with the five elements in Chinese philosophy (earth, wood, fire, water, metal) and is historically associated with the emperor of China. Eight is an auspicious number that sounds like the Chinese word “to prosper” and is exceptionally lucky.

If you can incorporate these numbers into your meal (eight side dishes, three entrees, and five desserts) then you're in for an extraordinary year! Good luck, and we hope you enjoy some of these delicious dishes.

THE VALUE OF THE CONSTITUTION

3 REASONS THE CONSTITUTION EXISTS

Within the Articles of Confederation, Congress didn't have the power to enforce laws and was only allowed to collect funds from each state. State governments held the majority, which made the federal government weaker. This led to states fighting over territory, war pensions, and taxation, all of which could potentially destroy the country.

These issues led to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, which helped create the Constitution that we have today. You might be surprised to learn that a body of water — and other concerns — helped draft the document.

Separate State Currencies

Unlike today, the Confederation Period didn't have a common currency. The federal government and the states had separate money. This separation made trade between states and other countries extremely difficult. Due to different currencies, Congress couldn't print out money for the entire country to use. Fortunately, the Constitution established a common currency for all states and also allowed Congress to coin money and regulate its value.

The Erie Canal

Within the Articles of Confederation, each state managed the territory that lies within their state lines. George Washington wanted to use the Erie Canal as a form of transportation but couldn't because the canal was in New York territory. He needed permission from New York in order to use the canal. But with the development of the Constitution, the Erie Canal was managed by the federal government. Washington could then use the canal as a form of transportation into the rest of the continent.

No Judiciary or Executive Branch

There was only one branch for Congress, and each state had one vote in order to get laws passed. If Congress wanted to pass any laws, they needed 9 out of 13 states in order to approve it. Requiring this high majority made it difficult to pass any legislation. The Constitution divided the government into branches and gave certain powers to each branch, known as checks and balances.

The first attempt at a constitution — the Articles of Confederation — failed, but with some adjustments and ratifications, the Constitutional Convention created the document we still use today.



A BIG NYC ATTRACTION BECOMES ILLEGAL

THE 1930S AND PUSHCART MARKETS

If you were an immigrant who just arrived to New York City in the 1880s, you probably didn't have much money to spare. But, if you had at least 10 cents, you could rent a pushcart and become a pushcart merchant and business owner.

For more than 50 years, pushcart markets in New York City offered immigrants immediate access to an \$828 million industry (in today's money) that sold competitively priced goods like groceries, household items, clothing, and much more. Pushcart merchants would line up their carts along the streets of New York City and create vibrant and diverse markets that even tourists could enjoy. But not everyone in the city seemed happy about it.

Although technically "merchants," in the late 1800s and early 1900s, pushcart sellers were not described as such. Many of New York City's middle class and wealthy residents reserved this favorable term for sellers who had brick-and-mortar stores since they did not see pushcarts as a traditional means of honest work. Instead, they saw it as a public nuisance and a source of embarrassment. Politicians, city planners, and anti-pushcart movements complained primarily about poor sanitation in the open-air markets. So, in 1938, Mayor La Guardia proclaimed in *The New York Times* that "peddling on the streets of this city is a thing of the past."

To ease opposition, La Guardia opened indoor markets, which required pushcart sellers to apply for limited spots and pay higher fines. Upon opening the first indoor market, Mayor La Guardia proclaimed to the crowd, "I found you

pushcart peddlers, and I have made you MERCHANTS!" Despite the cheers that followed, thousands of pushcart sellers lost their jobs after the final ban of open-air pushcart markets.



The ban surprised the people who supported it; some brick-and-mortar stores lost as much as 60% of their business with the decrease in nearby foot traffic. New Yorkers eventually became nostalgic about pushcart markets. Once described as dirty and a "menace to the health of New York City," people began to describe them as "fresh and attractive," even "picturesque."

To this day, pushcart selling is still illegal, and New York City's licensing policies make it extremely difficult for vendors to obtain permits, leading to an underground black market of selling and buying outdoor permits. However, in the city, you'll still find street food with hardworking vendors making their American dream a reality!

Cherry Cordial Cake Balls

Inspired by TasteofHome.com



Ingredients

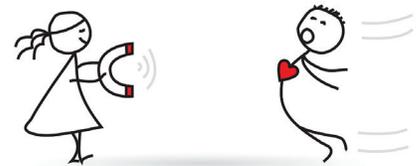
- 1 package fudge marble cake mix
- 1 1/4 cups and 3 tbsp brewed coffee, divided
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 3 eggs
- 10 oz maraschino cherries, stemmed, drained, and chopped
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 1/4 cup cherry preserves
- 1 cup chocolate frosting
- 1 lb chocolate candy coating, chopped

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, 1 1/4 cups coffee, canola oil, and eggs. Beat on low for 30 seconds, then on high for 2 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
3. Pour batter into a greased, floured 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes and let cool.
4. In a small bowl, combine cherries, brandy, cherry preserves, and remaining coffee.
5. Crumble cake. Add frosting and cherry mixture. Combine and shape into 1-inch balls.
6. Melt chocolate coating, following package directions.
7. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Dip balls into coating. Let them stand on the paper for 20 minutes, then serve!

TAKE A BREAK!

BILLY FOUND JILL



REALLY ATTRACTIVE

GOOD NEWS: FLOWERS FOR YOU



BAD NEWS: NO GARDEN...



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Brock vs. Brock

THE MAN WHO SUED HIMSELF

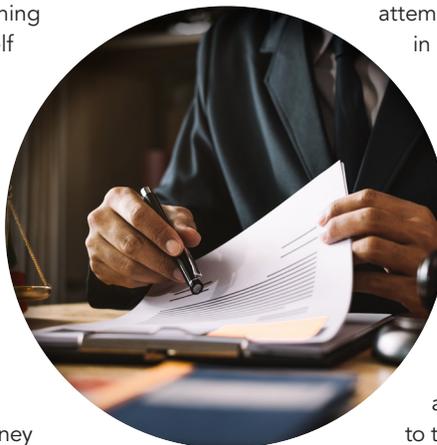
On July 1, 1993, Robert Lee Brock made a mistake. By his own account, he had a few too many alcoholic beverages that evening, and in his drunken state, he committed breaking and entering, as well as grand larceny. Brock was arrested, and the court sentenced him to 23 years behind bars at the Indian Creek Correctional Center in Chesapeake, Virginia.

In 1995, Brock decided he deserved restitution. Reasoning that he had violated his own civil rights, he sued himself for \$5 million. For his family's pain and suffering, as well as his children's college tuition, he requested \$3 million. He also asked for \$2 million to support his needs during his 23-year prison sentence.

Central to Brock's claim was that, due to his drinking, "I caused myself to violate my religious beliefs. This was done by my going out and getting arrested, which caused me to be in prison." And since he was a ward of the state, he explained that Virginia should pay the \$5 million on his behalf. After all, he was incarcerated and unable to work, and the state was responsible for his care. Plus, he promised to pay the money back after his release.

In a move that shocked no one (except, perhaps, Brock), Judge Rebecca Beach Smith dismissed his case. While she did call his claim "ludicrous," she also praised his creativity, stating that he "presented an innovative approach to civil rights litigation."

Perhaps the lawsuit against himself wasn't his first or last attempt at legal restitution. He once filed 29 complaints in a single year. Due to the repeated suits, the court removed his ability to file further litigation. "None of Brock's allegations have ever been found by any court to have any merit," the decision read. "Because Brock's repeated, frivolous claims have placed a significant burden on this court, as well as on the district court ... we hereby impose sanctions upon Brock."



Brock's case ranked No. 3 on Time Magazine's list of Top 10 Outrageous Legal Battles. So, while he didn't achieve wealth, he did gain fame. It was an impressive feat for a man who found a novel way to take personal responsibility for his actions.