

Year of the Horse



People born in the Year of the Horse are usually lively and popular, mentally alert, good communicators, and honest. However, they are impulsive: inspired by ideas, they tend to act on them without delay which can make them unpredictable, over-eager, restless and at times, volatile.

Horses are born in: 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014.*

Famous people born in the Year of the Horse – Bursting with life, vivacity, and enthusiasm, Horse people thrive in lively company. They are intelligent and can easily pick up a new skill and are practical with their knowledge. Famous Horses include: Louisa May Alcott, Leonard Bernstein, Jackie Chan, Frédéric Chopin, Sean Connery, James Dean, Clint Eastwood, Ella Fitzgerald, Harrison Ford, Aretha Franklin, Bob Geldof, Rita Hayworth, Jimi Hendrix, Genghis Khan, Ang Lee, Paul McCartney, Sir Isaac Newton, Teddy Roosevelt, Jerry Seinfeld, John Travolta, Mike Tyson, Rembrandt van Rijn, Antonio Vivaldi, Boris Yeltsin.



Chinese name: Ma, sign of elegance and fervour

Colours: red, fiery orange, also green, purple and gold

Gems and stones: Amethyst, turquoise, topaz

Hour: 11 am-12:59 pm

Western counterpart: Gemini

Horse characteristics

Horse people are independent and confident. They enjoy a challenge and seek success but shy away if they sense failure is imminent, are made to feel inferior, or are expected to do things that seem ill-directed or pointless. They are prepared to devote tireless energy to making a success of something they feel committed to, and they don't mind working hard as part of a team as long as their efforts are recognised. However, the Horse would prefer to change course rather than deal with the anxiety of a failing project they are associated with.

Horses love large social gatherings, to be entertained, and to spend time in good company – overall they like to be the centre of attention. Their honesty and genuine warmth and cheerfulness attract many friends. People confide in them but because of their eager nature, Horses find it hard to keep a secret.

They are adept at carrying on several conversations at once or at holding down two or three jobs at a time. Due to their restlessness, projects can often be left half-finished when a new interest diverts their attention. A love for travel or to be on the move can also lead to an erratic, restless way of life and a tendency to change careers or employers.

Their approach to finance is relaxed – they enjoy making it and spending it, but are not overly concerned about it. When they have it, it's a feast, and when it's gone, they simply go out and make some more. Often they will take risks and gamble, but more for the fun than for the financial reward. They are naturally lucky when it comes to money and career.

- + Vivacious, witty, independent, cheerful, refined, friendly, energetic, industrious, strong-minded, persuasive, amusing.
- Self-centred, volatile, impatient, condescending, vane, reckless, jealous, opportunistic, anxious, excessively pragmatic.



* In the Chinese calendar, based on the movement of the moon, new year's day does not fall on a fixed date. Therefore, if you were born in January or February, consult a lunar calendar chart as you may belong to the previous animal year.

The Horse personality

Generally people born in the Year of the Horse have many contradictions to their character. On the whole the Horse is likable and trustworthy, a good companion and a good leader. But Horse people can have fits of stubbornness, in which they show their self-centred side and their temper. They can find themselves exploding in a sudden rage, which, however justifiable the provocation, will usually seem out of proportion. Afterwards, they will be full of regret, but not everyone will be able to understand and forgive the episode.

Despite their flighty and volatile disposition, they feel miserable if they are alone for any great length of time. In fact, a natural herding instinct for them is to join clubs and associations in an attempt to surround themselves with like-minded individuals or have a supportive network of friends around them. Fortunately, with their vivacious personality, people gravitate toward them, and Horses find it easy to make friends.

Horses are quick-witted and able to come to grips with new facts, ideas and situations quickly. They are open and honest but are perhaps better characterised as cunning rather than intelligent. While Horse people are dependably loyal to friends and colleagues, and particularly to partners, they like to preserve their freedom and independence. They want to belong, yet are burdened by their need for independence and belief in their own capacity to get what they want by themselves. They seek people who can reassure them in moments of doubt, but who can give them freedom to pursue their own adventures as well.



Horse types

The characteristics of people born under the Horse sign are tempered by one of the five Chinese elements of Wood (born 1954), Fire (1906, 1966), Earth (1918, 1978), Metal (1930, 1990) and Water (1942, 2002).



Wood Horse: generally more predictable than other Horse people, and better able to control excessive restlessness and take a more disciplined approach to life. Ultimately, this brings professional success and stability in personal relationships. All Horses work hard, but Wood Horses perhaps tend to stick to the task in hand more readily than other Horse types and work cooperatively with others.

Fire Horse: volatile, flamboyant, passionate individuals, who are both engaging and held in awe. They have great flair, but not much staying power. There is a strong, wild streak in the Fire Horse, making them want to live life on the edge. They are either hugely fortunate and successful or deeply miserable and unlucky. Fire Horses typically love change and action.

Earth Horse: will work methodically towards a chosen goal. In relationships they generally weigh up consequences before deciding to take action and are never reckless or impulsive. Coupled with their kindness, adaptability and good humour, this makes them an easy companion. When a broad view is required they are fine, however, when dealing with smaller details, their relative indecisiveness means the Earth Horse considers everything carefully, and will appear not to be able to make up their mind.

Metal Horse: more adventurous, independent and freedom-loving than the average Horse. The Metal Horse has a fear of being trapped. They are reluctant to settle or commit when it comes to work or relationships. This wild and untamed spirit is also what makes them attractive to others.

Water Horse: the most adaptable of all Horses, but they are also the most indecisive. Changing courses constantly can be confusing to others. While this behaviour may appear spontaneous and that they are able to make the most of any situation, it can also be irritating and inconsistent to others. The Water Horse is always cheerful, with a sparkling wit and sense of humour.

Professions best suited to Horses

With their agile mind, boundless energy, great ability to pick up new skills quickly and willingness to try anything once, Horse people are suited to almost any career, as long as routine and taking orders are not involved. Many people born in the Year of the Horse are suited to mentally or physically demanding work. Horses are independent and rarely listen to advice (though they are often ready to offer it), and therefore need to work at monitoring their behaviour when irritated so they don't act purely on impulse. Likewise, while they are comfortable taking calculated risks, they can make promises recklessly.

Horses like to work in areas that bring them into contact with plenty of people, but with their independent and self-reliant tendency, they prefer to be in control. They have the potential to be an inspiring leader. They are perhaps best suited to careers involving communication: they have a talent for getting through to other people, and often a considerable gift for languages as well.

Ideal careers include language teacher, translator, athlete, information technologist, librarian, journalist, tour operator, hotelier, performer, publicist, politician, or careers in advertising and sales. Other occupations that may suit include geographer, explorer, actor, artist, or construction worker.

Health and constitution

When it comes to health, those born under the sign of the Horse are literally as 'strong as a horse'. Their optimistic outlook, positive attitude and active lifestyle ensure they are in good health. If denied the outdoor life they love, they feel under par, but they also need to learn to relax rather than operating at full speed all the time.



Love

For Horses, love is blind. They lose their heart and head, swept up in the exhilaration of new relationships and are easily charmed. They tend to throw everything over to follow the object of their desire and sometimes forget other responsibilities.

2014 Year of the Wood Horse

Lunar New Year is the celebration of the beginning of the year of several Asian calendars and includes Chinese New Year, Japanese New Year, Korean New Year, Mongolian New Year, Tibetan New Year and Vietnamese New Year. In 2014, the Lunar New Year will start on Friday 31 January and is 15 days in duration. The exact new moon time is 9:39 pm Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). This is the beginning of the 4712th Chinese year – a Wood Horse Year in the five-element system.

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The year ahead

In Horse years there is a sense of hurtling headlong. Affairs are spirited, events erratic, the work pace brisk and emotions volatile. Energy and action characterise the year. For some, acting on impulse and following instincts will bring success.

Horses in particular will need to resolve problems rather than avoid them, think of compromise before confrontation, and when choosing a new skill or pursuit, they will need to persevere until it has been perfected or completed. The key to maximising the positives this year is to think smart and make rational decisions.

In general, this is a year for keeping a tight hold on the purse strings. Poor management, whether personal, political or an approach to work can lead to wild fluctuations in fortunes. Freedom is the buzz word: leisure, travel, and all outdoor pursuits are favoured under the auspices of the Horse. It is also a year when compassion and support from friends will protect those who need help to ride out challenges, and a more measured approach will draw recognition for hard work and loyalty from superiors in the workplace.

Forthcoming Chinese New Year dates:

- 31 January 2014 (Horse)
- 19 February 2015 (Sheep/Goat)
- 8 February 2016 (Monkey)
- 28 January 2017 (Rooster)

History



Clean Day - 25th lunar day of the 12th lunar month

Before the Tang dynasty, cleaning house was a religious ceremony to get rid of disease. During the Sung dynasty, Clean Day was set on the 24th day of the 12th lunar month, when Zao Jun, the Kitchen God was said to have returned to Heaven to report on a family's behavior during the previous year. A negative report by the Kitchen God means a family will suffer bad luck in the year to come.

During this week before the new year, people start to clean the entire house. Every corner is dusted, windows are cleaned and rooms washed so the house can be decorated for the coming new year.



Cake Day (26th lunar day of 12th Lunar Month)

The Chinese traditionally make different kinds of rice cakes to worship the gods on Chinese New Year's Eve. The most popular sweet cakes are:

Fa-Gao - Eating Fa-Gao helps people's career, wealth and health to improve.

Nian-Gao - Think of it as a sticky rice fruit cake. The custom of feeding Sticky Cake to the Kitchen God was to ensure he either gave a favourable report to the Jade Emperor, or his mouth was too full of cake to pass on an unfavourable report. Often steamed, it is usually re-heated (sliced and fried) before serving. The sweetness of Sticky Cake symbolises a rich, sweet life; the layers symbolise abundance for the coming year; and its round shape signifies family reunion.



Lucky red envelopes

'*Hong Bao*', also known as lucky money, often carries boundless blessings. Red envelopes are given at happiness occasions, such as New Year's day, weddings, or birthdays and are given out to signify good fortune and good energy, especially when the money consists of crisp new notes with fresh 'chi' energy. The amount of cash inside the red envelope is usually an even number.

Many older Chinese people say that the red envelope is given to symbolise longevity for the bearer. By giving children red envelopes, the older person "borrows" the young 'chi' from children, and in exchange, the children receive lucky money in the red envelope.

The use of red stems from religious rituals and is considered an auspicious colour by the Chinese. Before the introduction of paper, red pigment on cloth or red thread would most likely have been used. Today, red envelopes are made of paper, come in different sizes and designs with a combination of blessings and lucky symbols to wish good fortune, wealth and happiness.

Over time, the practice of giving red envelopes stuffed with lucky money has flourished. Lucky red envelopes are often placed on appropriate items or places in the home or office to bring good Feng Shui, to create or attract positive 'yang' energy to help bring harmony, happiness and success.

The Chinese believe that the red envelope will bring good luck to the person who receives it and to the person who gives it. The more you give out, the more luck comes back to you.

