

Celebrate Lunar New Year!

Ren is celebrating Lunar New Year with her family.
Color in the picture of her enjoying the festivities.



Lunar New Year is a festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the lunar calendar. This important holiday is observed in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, and more!



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A Sweet New Year for Ren
By Michelle Sterling
Illustrated by Dung Ho

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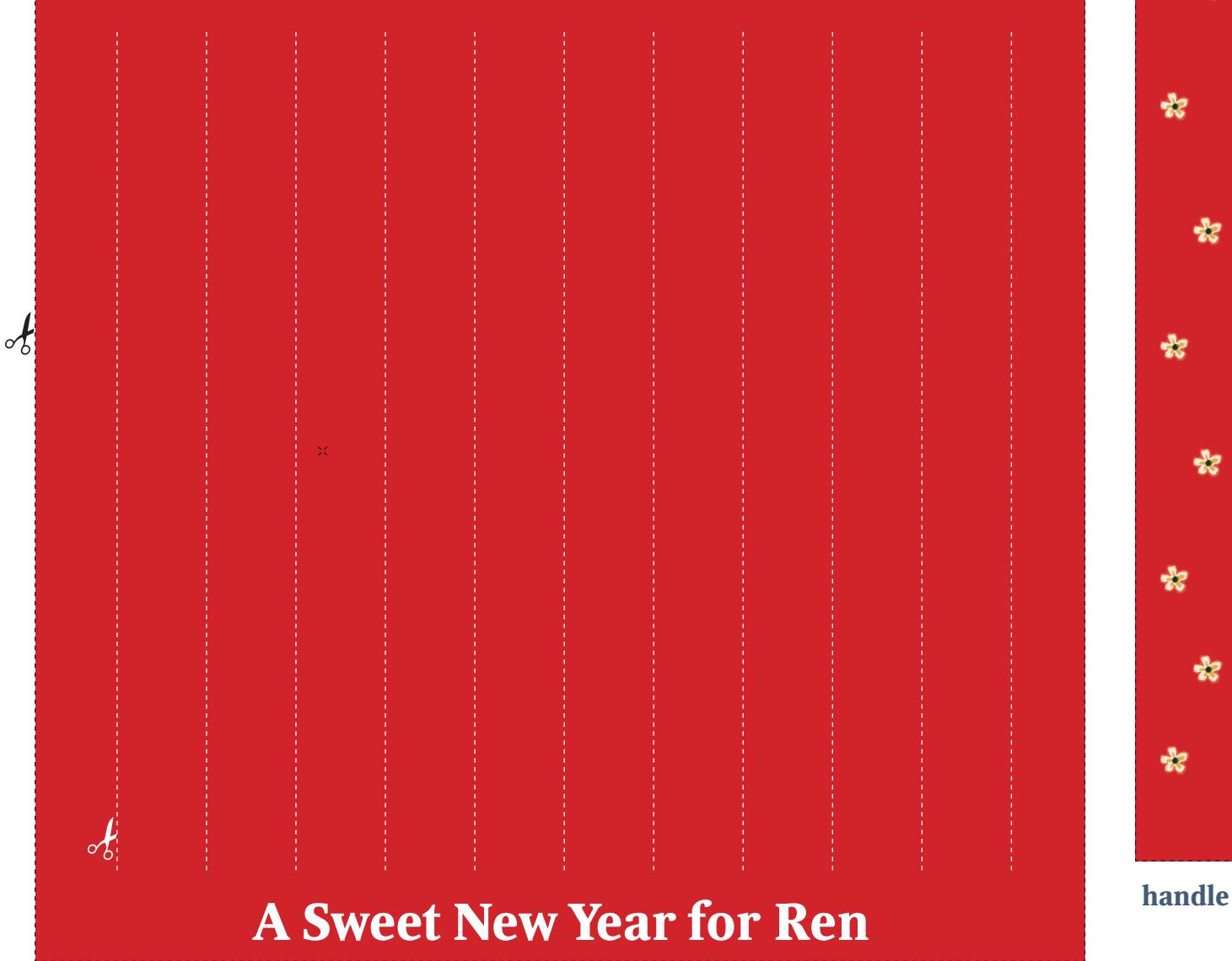


Make a Lantern

Ren's family decorates their house with many beautiful red lanterns.

You can create a lantern, too! With an adult's help, cut along the black dotted lines to make the outer part of your lantern. Then, fold in half and cut along the dotted lines to create slits.

A Sweet New Year for Ren



Outer Lantern

The color red is known as a very lucky color.

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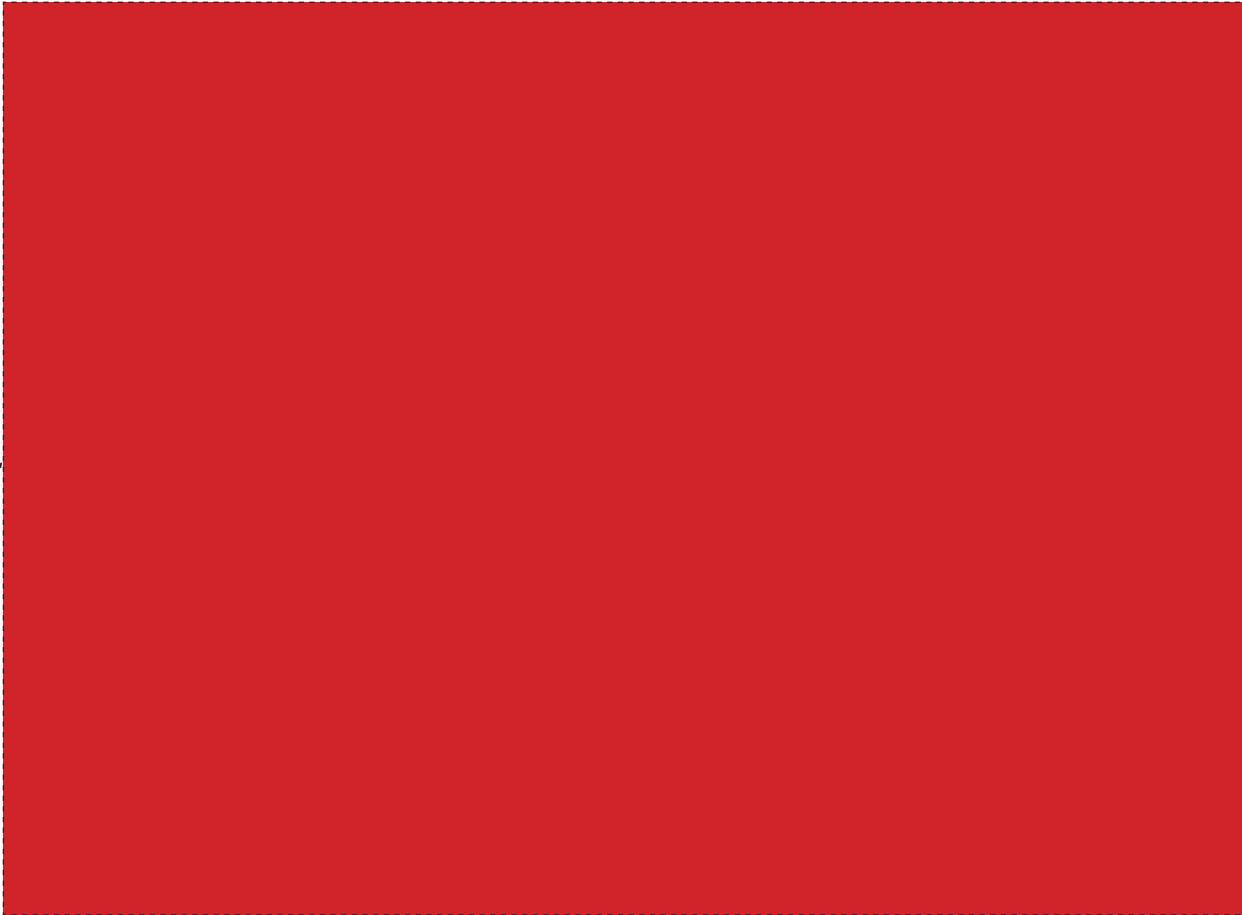
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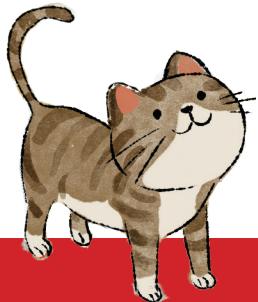


Make a Lantern

Now, cut along the black dotted lines to make the Inner Lantern. Glue or tape the short edges together to make a tube. Then, glue or tape the long edges of the Outer Lantern over the long edges of the Inner Lantern. Finally, fold and fasten the handle strip to the top of the lantern!



Inner Lantern



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Bake Pineapple Cakes

Ren loves all of the delicious food she gets to eat with her family on Lunar New Year. She especially loves pineapple cakes!



FILLING

- 2 20-ounce/567 g cans of crushed pineapple in juice
- 1 ½ cups/355 ml water
- 1 cup/200 g sugar
- 1 tbsp/15 g unsalted butter

TOOLS NEEDED

- 10 square aluminum pineapple cake molds
(4.8 cm x 4.8 cm x 1.8 cm) with a matching press

MAKE THE FILLING

1. Drain the pineapple in a fine mesh sieve placed over a large mixing bowl. Do not press or squeeze any juice from the pulp.
2. Place the pulp, water, and sugar into a large, nonstick pan over high heat. Mix the ingredients together. Bring the pulp to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer. Continue to simmer for about 1 hour. Stir occasionally.
3. When all the extra liquid has evaporated, you will start to hear the pulp sizzle. Add the butter and lower the heat. Continue to cook the pineapple for about 30 minutes. Stir and flip the pulp frequently so that the pulp doesn't burn. When the pineapple filling is done, it will look like a slightly glossy, very thick jam that is able to hold shape.
4. Transfer the filling to a bowl, then cover and cool completely. Measure out 25 2-teaspoon/18-g portions, then roll each portion into a ball. Place the balls in an airtight container. Set aside in the fridge.

MAKE THE CRUST

1. Sift together the flour, cornstarch, dry milk, and salt. Set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and cream cheese together. For best results, mix by hand using a rubber spatula.
3. Cream the powdered sugar in with the butter mixture. Mix in the egg yolk, condensed milk, and vanilla until everything is combined.
4. Add the sifted flour blend to the butter mixture and mix until everything is just combined. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl. Do not overmix.
5. Wrap the dough in a large piece of plastic wrap and shape it into a flat round. Place into the fridge to chill for at least 1 hour.

MAKES 25 CAKES

Please do not attempt without adult supervision

CRUST

- 1 ¾ cups/210 g all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp/15 g cornstarch
- ¼ cup/25 g dry milk
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 sticks/1 cup/226 g unsalted butter, softened
- 3 tbsp/45 g cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup/55 g powdered sugar, sifted



- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tbsp/35 g sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- extra flour for shaping

SHAPE THE CAKES

1. Remove the dough from the fridge. Measure out 25 2-tablespoon/25 g portions, then roll each portion into a ball. Set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Place 10 square pineapple cake metal molds 1 inch apart on a large baking sheet fitted with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper.
3. Remove the pineapple filling balls from the fridge. Have a bowl of bench flour set aside for shaping.
4. Roll a dough ball into the bowl of flour. Dust off any excess. With lightly floured hands, flatten a ball, then roll in flour and dust off any excess.
5. Place the ball inside a metal mold. Lightly dust the flat press with bench flour. Use the press to compact the filled dough ball into the mold. Repeat this process to make more cakes.
6. Bake the cakes in their metal molds for 12 minutes on one side, then remove the baking sheet from the oven. Using tongs and a cookie spatula, carefully flip each cake over, metal mold intact. Bake for an additional 5 to 7 minutes until golden brown.
7. Remove the cakes from the oven. Use tongs to remove the metal molds. Use a spatula to transfer the cakes to a cooling rack.
8. Pineapple cakes taste wonderful fresh out of the oven, but are even more delicious the day after baking. To store, place the cooled cakes in an airtight container and eat within 7 days.
9. Enjoy!

Recipe © Bonnie Eng, food writer



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