



A shopper passes by a Chinese New Year display in Richmond's Aberdeen Centre atrium, where entertainment and a live countdown will be held this weekend. NICK PROCAYLO — THE PROVINCE

Join in fun, festivities for Chinese New Year

YEAR OF THE OX: Help celebrate with good food, fortune

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Chinese New Year

In these tough financial times, not even fortune tellers are willing to predict with any certainty what lies ahead in the Year of the Ox.

Then again, it doesn't hurt to ask.

So for those hoping to usher in Chinese New Year as a 6/49 jackpot winner, you might want to consider these lucky numbers: 2, 3, 8 and 9.

Richmond fortune teller Sherman Tai says those four numbers are particularly auspicious for the Year of the Ox, which begins Monday.

"But don't tell people they will win with certainty," cautions Tai. "It's not 100-per-cent accurate — otherwise, I'd be a billionaire."

Saturday's Lott6 6/49 windfall is a whopping \$43 million, one of the highest jackpots in history. But fear not, if the fortune gods aren't smiling on you tomorrow — there are plenty of other lucky ways to usher in the Lunar New Year.

Many families will be gathering this weekend for a traditional feast prior to Chinese New Year's Day.

Expect Chinese restaurants throughout Metro Vancouver to offer plenty of auspicious-sounding foods, such as hair moss, or "fat choy," a play on the Chinese phrase "get rich," and

Other celebrations:

■ Countdown to the Year of the Ox: Aberdeen Centre, Richmond, Jan. 23-26 and 31.

Various events, including live countdown show Jan. 25 from 10:40 p.m. to 12:10 a.m. in the central atrium. Dragon and lion dance at 11 a.m. on Jan. 26, the New Year.

■ Parade: Chinatown, starting from Millennium Gate on West Pender to Keefer, Feb. 1, noon.

■ International Village: Chinatown, 88 West Pender, Jan. 30 to Feb. 1. Kids' performances, exhibits and hourly lucky draws, noon to 10 p.m. on the first two days and ending at 7 p.m. Feb. 1.

■ Dr. Sun Yat-Sen courtyard: 578 Carrall St., Feb. 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Story- and fortune-telling, calligraphy and other demonstrations.

■ Vancouver Art Gallery: Feb. 1, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Lantern-A-Mania showcasing unique lanterns.

sun-dried oysters, "hou si," phonetically identical to "good market."

Chinese households will also be full of fresh flowers, as a symbol of new beginnings. In China, millions will buy their blooms this weekend at the

many flower markets that spring up around this time of year.

Lower Mainlanders, however, can join in the ritual by heading to Richmond, where both the International Buddhist Temple and Aberdeen Centre will hold a flower-and-crafts bazaar tomorrow through Monday.

And if that's not enough, soak up more celebratory spirit at the annual Chinese New Year Parade in Chinatown on Feb. 1.

Starting at noon, an estimated 3,000 participants will make their way along Pender Street from the Millennium Gate toward Main Street.

This year's parade will feature 14 lion dance teams, one dragon dance and even a unicorn dance. There will also be a Vietnamese drumming and dancing group alongside traditional Chinese music troupes and dancers.

Depending on the weather, organizers are expecting up to 75,000 spectators.

"Our first parade was held in 1974. This is our 35th year and it's become an annual event for many people," says parade director Jun Ing. "I hope everyone, spectators and participants, will have fun that day. That's what it's all about."

For more event listings and Year of the Ox Chinese astrology predictions, check Sunday's *Province*.

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