

Dragon Boat Festival



Why Chinese people race around in dragon boats each year...

The Dragon Boat Festival is a traditional holiday that originated in China over 2,000 years ago. There are several explanations to its origins but the most popular is to commemorate the attempted rescue of the legendary Chinese poet and patriot, Qu Yuan, during the Zhou Dynasty. Slandered and banished by his own king, Qu Yuan eventually, out of despair, committed suicide by jumping into the Miluo River. Upon hearing the news, the local villagers rushed out on their boats in an attempt to save or at the very least, recover his body. The townspeople also threw balls of cooked rice into the river so that the fish would eat that and not his body. This happened on the 5th day of 5th month of the lunar calendar and ever since, the Chinese had set aside this date to commemorate the death of Qu Yuan. This holiday is also known as Double Fifth Festival.

Today the holiday is commonly celebrated with dragon boat races and the eating of joong (Cantonese) or zhongzi (Mandarin). Joong is a triangular-shaped ball of sticky rice filled with either savory or sweet ingredients. The joong represents the



peak, the boats are decorated like a dragon to represent male energy.

rice that was thrown into the Miluo river. The boats used in the races are called dragon boats because the fore and the stern are in the shape of a traditional Chinese dragon. In Chinese culture the dragon represents male, while the phoenix represents female. Same as the sun represents male, while the moon represents female. Since the festival is held near the summer solstice, when the sun is at its