



Left: Decorations about at the Taste of Illumina Greater China event in December 2024. Below: The Singapore team during the 2023 Lunar New Year celebration. Photos by Illumina

## Illumina celebrates Lunar New Year around the world

*From Shanghai to San Diego, employees ring in the Year of the Snake*

ACCORDING TO THE CHINESE calendar, 2025 is the Year of the Snake, which marks a period of growth, wisdom, and abundance. It's a particularly auspicious time for Illumina Head of Region in Greater China Jenny Zheng. "In 2025, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Illumina's presence in China," she says. "This year, we look forward to opening the Beijing Customer Experience Center, expanding our local manufacturing capabilities, and driving many other exciting projects and collaborations."

Illumina employees have much to celebrate, both professionally and personally. Inside the Illumina Shanghai office where Zheng works, employees are honoring the Lunar New Year with events and activities extending into the next few weeks. A Lantern Festival Celebration & Illuminating the Rare Disease Community event in February will show support for patients and advocates while embracing Lunar New Year traditions, such as serving dumplings and guessing riddles written on lanterns.

At the Illumina headquarters in San Diego, employees are preparing to celebrate the holiday with a special menu at the cafeteria, calligraphy lessons, and other activities. Employees will be encouraged to wear red and

learn about Chinese traditions courtesy of the SHADES employee resource group.

In the spirit of looking ahead, we asked Illumina employees around the world how they will celebrate Lunar New Year and why it's so meaningful to them.



"I always organize a corporate lunch for everyone at the Singapore commercial office to celebrate the new year as one big team! Our favorite part of the event is the tossing of the yusheng to symbolize bountiful wealth, prosperity, and happiness throughout the year. This event is very

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meaningful to me, as it creates the opportunity for all our employees to mingle and connect with one another and bring smiles to their faces.”

—Janet Lim, Office Manager, Singapore



The yusheng symbolizes prosperity and happiness.

PHOTO BY ILLUMINA



Amy Tran's family celebrates Tet in Hanoi.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY TRAN

“Lunar New Year, known as ‘Tet’ in Vietnamese, is a significant time for Vietnamese people globally, marked by family reunions and cherished as a favorite season of the year. It is a period to set aside past troubles and look forward to a better and happier year ahead. In Hanoi’s chilly air, we engage in housecleaning; decorating with peach blossoms, kumquats, and flowers; and preparing various special holiday foods. Numerous customs and traditions are observed during Tet, including ancestor veneration, exchanging New Year’s greetings, giving lucky money to children and the elderly, and visiting relatives and neighbors.

“Despite the many changes life brings and the fading of some traditional cultural values, Tet remains a moment for us to pause, return to our loved ones, and offer

comfort after a challenging year. Tet is truly felt when families gather, witnessing grandparents, parents, and siblings in good health, raising a toast to everyone’s well-being, and anticipating the brilliance of New Year’s Eve fireworks. To all who are celebrating Tet at home, afar, or in spirit, I extend my wishes for a peaceful Tet and a new year filled with happiness and laughter. Remember, you are someone’s Tet!”

—Amy Tran, Vietnam Country Manager, Hanoi



Before the holiday, Yolanda Liu celebrated the arrival of 2025 with her Shanghai colleagues at a Taste of Illumina event. They created paintings using traditional Chinese wood-block printing techniques. “The theme of the painting was ‘blessings of the spirit snake,’ symbolizing good fortune, wisdom, and luck in the coming year.”

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“As an only child, I always return home to spend the holiday with my parents. In coastal Weihai, Shandong, fishing families hold a sea-worship ceremony before the Spring Festival, releasing lanterns into the sea to pray for safe journeys and favorable weather. In addition to fireworks and burning incense, people in Weihai make dumplings on New Year’s Eve. However, fishing families follow a slightly different custom. Because dumplings floating in water are considered a bad omen, they usually wait until the clock strikes midnight on New Year’s Eve to eat them. Dumplings symbolize wealth and prosperity, as they resemble gold ingots.”

—Yolanda Liu, Supervisor, Greater China Sales Specialist team, Shanghai

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PHOTO COURTESY OF KIBUM CHANG



*Kibum Chang celebrates with family at home in Seoul.*

“During the Lunar New Year, our families gather to perform a traditional bowing ceremony called ‘sebae.’ This is a deeply respectful gesture where younger members of the family bow to their elders, wishing them good health and fortune for the coming year. In return, the elders give ‘sebaetdon,’ which is money given as a token of good luck and blessings. This exchange symbolizes respect, gratitude, and the passing of wisdom and prosperity from one generation to the next. It is a cherished tradition that strengthens family bonds and preserves cultural heritage. After the bowing ceremony sebae, everyone gathers to share a traditional Korean rice cake soup called ‘tteokguk’ and engage in various conversations. Sometimes, we bring a cake and share it together.”

—Kibum Chang, Head of Sales, Seoul, South Korea



*Joanna Ang and friends at the SHADES Lunar New Year event last year in San Diego.*

“I plan on celebrating with SHADES at Illumina headquarters! I grew up attending celebrations with my local Chinese community where there would be a big show (traditional dances, music, skits, et cetera) and, of course, lots of food. As an adult, it’s nice to still have a way to celebrate and even share the joy with my coworkers.”

—Joanna Ang, Staff Program Manager, Technical, San Diego ♦

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