

Giant Lanterns of China event at Edinburgh Zoo marks the Year of the Dog



The Giant Lanterns of China at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo is set to host Scotland's biggest celebration of Chinese New Year, which begins Friday, 16 February, to welcome the Year of the Dog featuring traditional performers and street food native to China.

Thousands of visitors are expected to attend Scotland's only Chinese lantern festival, which is inspired by the Zoo's giant pandas, Tian Tian (Sweetie) and Yang Guang (Sunshine), who were born in Sichuan Province, China.

Visitors to The Giant Lanterns of China will be entertained by performances including the mysterious facechanger and traditional tea pouring ceremony known as Gongfu Tea, native to Sichuan Province. Performances will take place each night of the event alongside traditional Chinese acts including an acrobatic plate spinner and contortionist Haiyan He and acrobatic duo Jinyi Liu and Yujie Zhou.

Lantern festivals are a highlight in Chinese New Year celebrations around the world and typically used to welcome in the new year and mark the start of spring.

The Temple of Heaven, one of China's most iconic landmarks, has been transported 5,000 miles to Edinburgh in the form of a colossal silk lantern which takes centre stage at the event. Visitors will explore a trail of over 450 gigantic Chinese lanterns and get the chance to try delicious Chinese foods such as black bean and kung pao Sichuan street pots and Western-fusion shredded Peking duck pizza.

Barbara Smith, CEO of RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, said: "The Giant Lanterns of China will be Scotland's biggest celebration of Chinese New Year and brings an authentic taste of Chinese culture to Scotland's capital. We're expecting thousands of visitors over the next week but there is still time to book your tickets. There's no better or more exciting place to welcome the Year of the Dog."

Chinese New Year celebrations typically span several weeks and follow the lunar month calendar, different to the conventional Western calendar. Each new year is marked by a Chinese zodiac and this year will be the Year of the Dog.

The incredible event is Scotland's only Chinese lantern festival. The event features a magical trail around the Zoo combined of 34 bespoke installations made of 469 gigantic lanterns including 30 giant pandas, a 19-foot high and 115-foot long Chinese dragon, 20 penguins and 25 flamingos amid incredible illuminating flowers, fauna, insects and Chinese heritage symbols such as signs of the zodiac.

Tickets for The Giant Lanterns of China are priced from £9.50 and available at: edinburghzoo.org.uk/lanterns