

WUZHEN, China, Dec. 24, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Wuzhen, a small 1,300-year old historically rich village, preserves tradition in its welcoming of the arrival of the Chinese New Year

. The ancient rites and rituals associated with the Chinese nation's most important annual holiday have been passed down from generation to generation in this ancient and beautiful "water town" that has always celebrated the Chinese New Year

in its own unique way. The village's residents don't hesitate to pull out all the stops in keeping with tradition, including hosting a family reunion dinner, holding the "Long Street Banquet" at tables aligned in a long series along the village's main street, watching traditional Chinese lion dances, offering incense on the first day of the holiday, adorning the doorways of their homes with antithetical couplets (a pair of phrases written in traditional calligraphy script on vertically placed red banners) and making rice cakes, all of which will serve to awaken all your memories of the Chinese Spring Festival (and for guests from abroad, to learn about and appreciate the importance and meaning of this festive celebration of the incoming year).

Celebrate the festival at Wuzhen Guesthouse

Today's hectic life leaves little time to spend with friends and family. Even during Spring Festival when there is an opportunity to be together with close family members, city dwellers often end up solitarily watching the festivities on TV or celebrating the holiday in the most cursory of manners. Shopping for the holiday with family members, sharing a family reunion dinner, staying up late or even till the wee dawn hours on New Year's Eve, visiting relatives and other fun-filled customs are still observed in some areas of the country, but many the old folk traditions of the holiday are fading away. However, these ancient rituals have been kept up and maintained just as they always have been in Wuzhen and include many that have been long forgotten and some that are unique to this ancient village.

Visitors to the village have the option of spending the night as a guest in the family inn of one the "pillow water families" - the families that have lived in Wuzhen going back countless

generations - where the guest can take in the strong atmosphere of a truly traditional Chinese New Year

writing spring scrolls, making paper-cuts for window decorations, preparing dumplings and participating in the family's grand New Year call ceremony. Led by the head of the household, guests, along with the home's family members, may express their dedication to the New Year Bodhisattva on the Eve of Spring Festival in a prayer for all things to run smoothly and for protection from danger in the coming year. The guest is then invited to take on the task of making rice cakes solo using only the very primitive stone mortar and enjoy the sense of achievement and resulting happiness. The traditional family reunion dinner is mouth-wateringly delicious, replete with all the great delicacies that the town is known for. Most of the dishes are prepared by the head of household and family members following the most traditional of food recipes for family reunion dinners. Everyone eat the dinner cheers each other joyously and without restraint as they look forward to continued peace among all in the coming year.

The Long Street Banquet enriches the atmosphere of the Chinese New Year celebration.

The grand Long Street Banquet, made up of adjoining table in a solid line, will take place on Xizha Street from the first to the sixth day of the lunar year. The most savory dishes of every type are served, including chicken, duck, fish and various meat delicacies, based on the town's traditional recipes, each resplendent in its array of colors, with the delectable aroma wafting over the entire length of the ancient thoroughfare. Visitors from all over the world are invited to come and join in the celebration of the arrival of spring and in the opportunity for families to reunite and enjoy each other's company during this once a year event. The old street is adorned with what appears to be an unending variety of ancient lanterns, enriching the atmosphere of festivities. During the banquet, traditional customs including the making of rice cakes is showcased for visitors. Town residents and guests alike can enjoy the unpretentious folk traditions and pause to remember their own childhood excitement during Spring Festival. Wuzhen has invited distinguished guests from afar to celebrate Chinese New Year and experience the emotion and feel the passion that are common to all that partake of these simple traditions. The Long Street Banquet will be held along the several mile-long stretch of Xizha Street, in what can be described as similar to a dragon lying entrenched through the middle of the town.

Celebrating Chinese New Year with Traditional Customs

During the dawn hours, Wuzhen, already well imbued with the strong Chinese New Year flavor, will awaken with a flourish of gongs and drums accompanied by loud cheering. The ebullient dragon and lion dances are performed non-stop in Xizha Street, another of the town's ancient

thorough fares. Local actors skilled in the folkloric dances express their heartfelt wishes and sincere thanks to visitors through the traditional performances. Guests who feel so inclined are invited to get up and participate in the celebration of the festival with the professional dancers. Volunteers living at the two ends of Xizha Street and experienced volunteers from around the village take turns in writing out complementary spring couplets and the "Fu" character (standing for "good fortune" or "happiness") in traditional calligraphy script for visitors, as a form of simple yet sincere expression of their wishes for all the best in the new year. Finally, from the first to the sixth day of the incoming year according to the Chinese lunar calendar, New Year greeting teams lining the streets and visiting the inns give their festival blessings to visitors.

The gradually disappearing traditional customs including the burning of the first incense stick and the making of rice cakes are once again popular in Wuzhen, where visitors can recall and enjoy anew the rich memories of the New Year celebrations of their childhood. To enjoy the wonder that is Wuzhen and to partake in these traditional Chinese New Year festivities, the town is offering to visitors from around the world tradition-packed "

Chinese New Year

Packages", with options to choose from various packages based on preferences and enjoy a truly traditional

Chinese New Year

in the South of

China

. Discounts are provided for bookings made online!

For more information, please visit the official website of Wuzhen Tourism: <http://www.wuzhen.com.cn> and the

website for booking a reservation:

<http://www.ewuzhen.com>

Email: wuzhen@wuzhen.com.cn

Telephone for booking and inquiries: 400-809-6288

SOURCE Wuzhen Tourism Co.,Ltd

The Pleasures of Ushering in This Year's Spring Festival in Wuzhen, an Historically Rich 1,300-Year Old Village

Written by Australian Business

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