

# CELEBRATING ASIAN HERITAGE

## LESSON FOUR

### THE "ROLL" OF THE EGG ROLL

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Because the Asian holidays are a time for feasting and celebration, it doesn't matter if it is the Lunar New Year or the Dragon Boat Festival; all the families work together to cook their favorite dishes. The egg roll is a classic Asian delicacy and a holiday must-have food, which many consider teamwork, or a family effort to prepare.

Even before you enter an Asian household as a guest for the holiday feast, you may hear the sound of chopping in quick rhythm. It must be the mom who is chopping fresh pork or beef for egg roll filling. Walking into the kitchen, you may see her daughter preparing egg roll skins with either wheat flour or rice powder on the kitchen island. While one of her brothers is washing celery, cabbage, and carrots in the sink, the other may be next to him, cutting water chestnuts and green scallions. The chef, of course, is the dad, who is mixing a sauce with basil and mint and getting ready to put the fillings together. As a guest, you may volunteer to be part of this egg roll team by helping to peel bamboo shoots. Soon everyone is busy and will all, including guests, gather around the table and together roll several hundred egg rolls while catching up with news about their school, their career, and life in general.

The hosting mom may want to roll a couple of dozen small finger rolls for the kids, while her daughter wraps a few veggie rolls for herself. The dad is likely to be busy making small square rolls like "gold nuggets," which signify prosperity and wealth. You may take advantage of the busy scene and secretly place a small chocolate candy inside three or four of the egg rolls. Hopefully the hosting parents will get one of them and be surprised. "This egg roll is so sweet!" All you would say is, "Yes, this is a sweet family; this is the best place I could be during this holiday! Thank you so much for your hospitality!"

You may now understand why the egg roll tradition has remained so popular in Asian cuisine for nearly a thousand years. It is not only because of their delicious taste, but also the festive rituals surrounding their preparation.



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