

# Moon Festival and Mooncakes

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The Moon Festival, also called the Mid-Autumn Festival, is one of Taiwan's most **cherished** holidays. It takes place on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month when the moon is at its fullest and brightest. Families gather together on this special night to admire the beautiful moon and enjoy each other's company. The festival has been celebrated for thousands of years and is connected to **ancient** legends about the moon. Many Taiwanese consider it the second most important holiday after Chinese New Year.

The most famous **legend** tells the story of Chang'e, a beautiful woman who flew to the moon. According to the tale, her husband Hou Yi received a magic potion that would make someone **immortal**. Chang'e accidentally drank all of it and floated up to the moon, where she still lives today. People look at the full moon and imagine seeing her there. This **romantic** story helps explain why the Moon Festival is often associated with love and family reunion.

Mooncakes are the **traditional** food of the Moon Festival, shared among family and friends. These round pastries are filled with sweet **lotus** seed paste, red bean, or egg yolks that represent the moon. The cakes often have beautiful designs pressed into the top showing flowers or Chinese characters. Giving mooncakes to relatives, teachers, and business partners is an important **custom** during this season. Bakeries start selling mooncakes weeks before the festival arrives.

In Taiwan, barbecuing has become a popular Moon Festival **activity** that brings neighbors together. Families set up grills outside their homes and cook meat, seafood, and vegetables together. The smell of barbecue fills the air in neighborhoods across the island. This modern tradition started from a television commercial in the nineteen eighties and quickly became hugely popular. Now, barbecuing is just as important as eating mooncakes for many Taiwanese families.

Children enjoy the Moon Festival by carrying colorful lanterns and playing outside under the moonlight. Some families **gather** on rooftops or in parks where they can see the moon clearly. Traditional games include trying to balance eggs, which is said to be easier during the full moon. Pomelos, a large citrus fruit, are also popular treats during this **festive** time. The Moon Festival reminds everyone to appreciate family, nature, and the beauty of the night sky.

## A. Vocabulary

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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. cherished _____   | a. from a very long time ago       |
| 2. ancient _____     | b. something done for enjoyment    |
| 3. legend _____      | c. an old story passed down        |
| 4. immortal _____    | d. cheerful and celebratory        |
| 5. romantic _____    | e. a type of water flower          |
| 6. traditional _____ | f. following customs from the past |
| 7. lotus _____       | g. loved and cared for deeply      |
| 8. custom _____      | h. relating to love and feelings   |
| 9. activity _____    | i. a traditional way of behaving   |



10. festive \_\_\_\_\_

j. living forever; never dying

## B. True or False

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| 1. The Moon Festival is on the eighth lunar month. _____ | 2. Chang'e is a man who flew to the moon. _____    | 3. Mooncakes are filled with cheese and ham. _____     |
| 4. Barbecuing became popular in the 1980s. _____         | 5. Mooncakes are round like the full moon. _____   | 6. The festival is more important than New Year. _____ |
| 7. Children carry lanterns during the festival. _____    | 8. Pomelos are popular Moon Festival fruits. _____ | 9. The legend involves a magic potion. _____           |

## C. Fill in the Blanks

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**Word Bank:** cherished, ancient, legend, immortal, traditional, custom, festive

1. The Moon Festival is one of Taiwan's most \_\_\_\_\_ holidays.
2. The festival is connected to \_\_\_\_\_ legends about the moon.
3. The most famous \_\_\_\_\_ tells the story of Chang'e.
4. The magic potion would make someone \_\_\_\_\_ and live forever.
5. Giving mooncakes to relatives is an important \_\_\_\_\_ during this season.

## D. Comprehension Questions

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1. When does the Moon Festival take place in the lunar calendar?
2. Who is Chang'e and what happened to her according to legend?
3. What are the common fillings found in mooncakes?
4. How did the barbecue tradition start in Taiwan?
5. What traditional game involves trying to balance something?

## E. Discussion Questions

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1. Does your culture have any holidays connected to the moon?
2. What special foods does your family eat during holidays?
3. Why do you think family gatherings are important during festivals?

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## Answer Key

**A. Vocabulary:** 1-g, 2-a, 3-c, 4-j, 5-h, 6-f, 7-e, 8-i, 9-b, 10-d

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-T, 9-T

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-cherished, 2-ancient, 3-legend, 4-immortal, 5-custom

**D. Comprehension:** 1. The fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month; 2. A beautiful woman who drank a magic potion and floated to the moon; 3. Lotus seed paste, red bean, or egg yolks; 4. From a television commercial in the 1980s; 5. Balancing eggs