



ichingo.app GUIDE

# "Numbers and Their Amazing Secrets in Chinese Culture!"

## "Why Do Numbers Bring Good Luck in China? Let's Discover!"

Why your hotel has no 4th floor, why nobody gives clocks as gifts, and what 666 actually means here.

### The numbers everyone **wants**

WHY 6, 8 AND 9 ARE EVERYWHERE

Chinese number wonderful mostly comes down to sound, not math. Many numbers are lucky or unlucky simply because they sound like another word — a phone number, license plate, or wedding date with the "right" digits is genuinely seen as a small advantage in life.



# 8

### WEALTH

#### MOST LUCKY

Sounds almost identical to 发 (fā), "to generate wealth." The single most desired digit in China — phone numbers and license plates packed with 8s sell at a real premium.



# 9

### LONGEVITY

Sounds like 久 (jiǔ), "long-lasting." The largest single-digit odd number, historically linked to emperors and eternity — still common in gold purity marks like 999.



# 6

### SMOOTHNESS

Linked to 顺 (shùn), "smooth" or "without obstacles," as in the popular saying 六六大顺 — "everything goes smoothly."



# 2

### TOGETHERNESS

Even numbers in general are considered more auspicious than odd ones, and 2 specifically reflects the idea that good things come in pairs.



### Numbers that combine into phrases

Combinations carry their own meaning beyond the individual digits: 520 and 521 sound like "I love you," 1314 sounds like "forever," and 168 sounds like "a smooth road to wealth." You'll see these constantly in marketing, gifts, and red envelope amounts.

## The number everyone avoids

AND WHY YOUR HOTEL HAS NO 4TH FLOOR



### 4

#### SOUNDS LIKE "DEATH"

##### MOST AVOIDED

四 (sì) sounds close to 死 (sǐ), "death." It's avoided in phone numbers, car plates, gift quantities, and floor numbers — many buildings skip straight from 3 to 5, or relabel the 4th floor as "3A."



### 7

#### ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEAD

Linked to ghosts and funerals — the 7th lunar month is the "Ghost Month," and gifts are traditionally never given in sets of seven.



### An interesting wrinkle: 666 means something different to foreigners

In China, "666" online is actually a compliment, roughly meaning "smooth," "skilled," or "awesome" — the opposite of its association with evil numerology in the West. Don't be confused if you see it everywhere in livestream chat comments.

## Gifts to think twice about

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO DINNER

Most of these taboos come from the same place as the unlucky numbers — a gift's name sounds like something bad, even if the object itself is perfectly nice.



### Clocks & Watches

#### SOUNDS LIKE A FUNERAL

送钟 ("giving a clock") sounds identical to 送终, the phrase for attending someone's final moments. Considered the single biggest gift taboo, especially for older relatives.



### Pears

#### SOUNDS LIKE "LEAVING"

梨 (lí, pear) sounds like 离 (lí), "to part" or "leave." Avoid giving pears to couples or close friends in particular.



## Umbrellas

### SOUNDS LIKE "SCATTER"

伞 (sǎn) sounds like 散 (sàn), meaning to scatter or break up — an odd thing to symbolically give a friendship or relationship.



## Shoes

### SOUNDS LIKE "EVIL"

鞋 (xié) sounds like 邪 (xié), "evil" or "inauspicious." Also seen as suggesting the other person will "walk away" from you.



### Other common ones worth knowing

Sharp objects like knives or scissors imply "cutting off" a relationship. Mirrors are linked to bad luck and breakage. Handkerchiefs are associated with funeral farewells. And wallets, oddly, are seen as risky to give — it's said to symbolically hand over your "money luck" along with the object.

## Colors, dates, and other everyday taboos

BEYOND NUMBERS



## White & Black

### COLORS OF MOURNING

Both colors are strongly associated with funerals. Red is the color of celebration instead — it's why red envelopes, not white ones, are used for gifts of money.



## Ghost Month

### THE 7TH LUNAR MONTH

Considered an unlucky time for weddings, moving house, or starting a business, as it's believed the spirit world is closer to the living during this period.



### None of this needs to change your plans

Most younger, urban Chinese treat these as fun cultural quirks rather than firm rules — picking a lucky moving date or skipping a clock as a gift is more like avoiding walking under a ladder than a genuine fear. Knowing the basics just helps you understand the jokes, the décor, and the odd missing 4th floor button in the elevator.

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These are cultural traditions and beliefs, not universal rules — attitudes vary by region, generation, and individual.  
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