



AN INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN CULTURE IN BOSTON

For Massachusetts Employee Resource Groups



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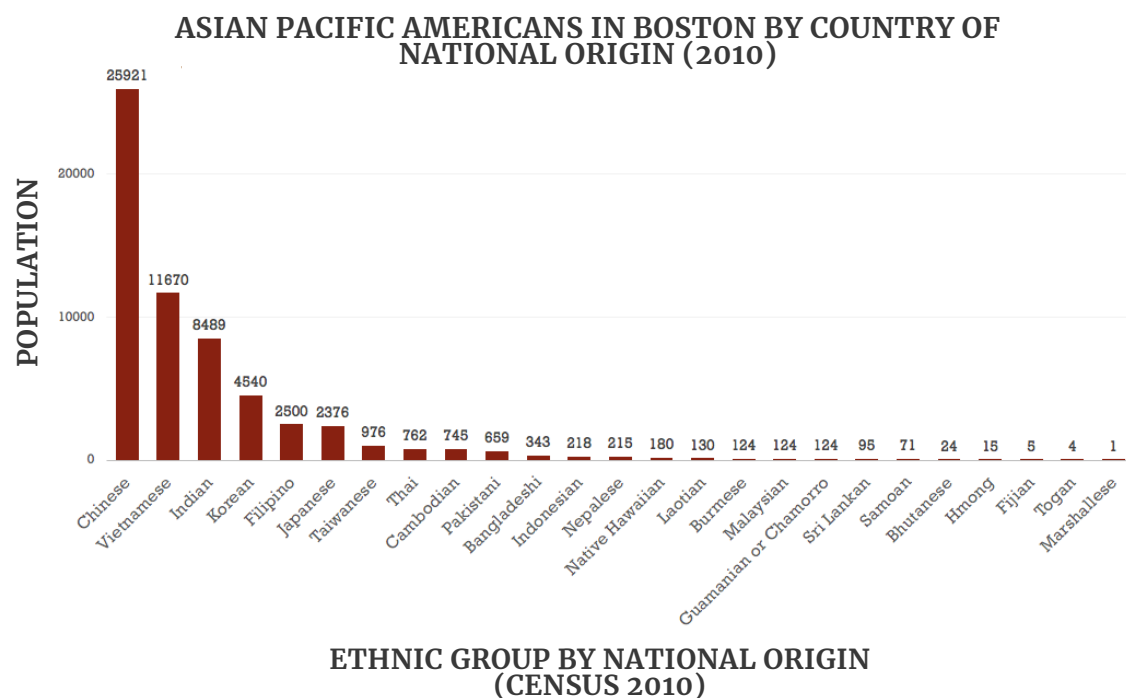
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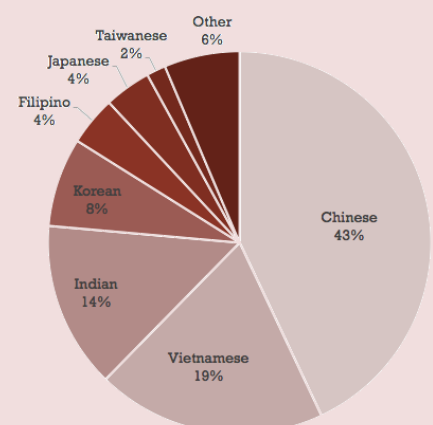
ABOUT ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURE IN BOSTON

Global collaboration is now more important than ever in all facets of business. In attempts to continue to maintain a competitive lead in the global marketplace, companies and organizations seek to employ the most qualified individuals from all corners of the world. As technology enables more efficient means of communication, the bottleneck in productivity is shifting away from technology and towards communication.

We at the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP) [Boston chapter](#), actively work with Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and other partnership organizations to address this modern challenge. To help our community partners get started, we have compiled an overview of the Asian American community here in the greater Boston Area. This overview references prominent local cultural events to experience, an introduction to understanding their culture, and access to further professional resources.



It is important to recognize that the “Asian” ethnic group makeup is not as simple as the singular term may suggest. In Massachusetts, there is a vast variety of nationalities that make up the “Asian” ethnic groups. We understand that the cultural diversity in our Boston community may not be immediately apparent. The best way to harbor this understanding of our Asian community’s rich cultural diversity is to experience them. Luckily, Boston is rich in cultural events and offerings by the local national communities.



Adopted from 2010 Census.

GUIDE TO LOCAL ASIAN TRADITIONAL EVENTS

The following is a sampling of public Asian cultural events. All are open to the public and generally free to attend.

The dates listed are nominal for annual events. Due to the effects of COVID-19 in 2020, many events are postponed, cancelled, or held in virtual format.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY (PER LUNAR CALENDAR): LUNAR NEW YEAR - BOSTON (CHINA)

A variety of Asian countries celebrate the Lunar New Year to welcome the new year on the traditional lunar calendar as a national holiday every year. This holiday is celebrated in multiple ways, such as through food, festivals and events. Chinatown holds an annual parade (learn more at thebostoncalendar.com) to celebrate. The Museum of Fine Arts (learn more at mfa.org) holds exhibits and workshops to not only celebrate the holiday but teach the community as well.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY (PER LUNAR CALENDAR): TẾT - BOSTON (VIETNAM)

Celebrated over three days, Tết is the most important holiday for Viet people. Celebrating the lunar new year, Tết represents a time of returning to family in reunion and celebration. In Boston, this holiday is celebrated by the community via a large festival called Tết in Boston jointly run by the Vietnamese-American Community of Massachusetts and the Intercollegiate Vietnamese Student Association. This past year has been the 31st time it has been held. The event attracts over 5,000 attendees and over 80 vendors per year. Learn more about this event at: tetboston.org



FEBRUARY: LOSAR, TIBETAN NEW YEAR - AMHERST (TIBET)

The Tibetan New Year is the longest and most extravagant celebration for the Tibetan people. The Students for a Free Tibet holds a large Tibetan New Year Celebration at the UMass Amherst campus annually to help bring solidarity to their community. The event boasts colorful traditional garb, performances, great food, and community recognitions. Learn more at: umassamherst.campuslabs.com



MARCH: HOLI - HOLISTON (INDIA)

A popular Hindu holiday to celebrate spring, love, and colors; known widely for its flashy celebratory display with colored powder and dyes. Many local community events are held, but one of the largest local events is held at Sri Radha Bhakti, Hindu Nimbarkī Vaisnavas' is Holiston. See the [Festival of Colors Holi's Facebook page](#) for more details.



APRIL: SONGKRAN, THAI NEW YEAR - GREATER BOSTON (THAI)

Songkran is a traditional Thai new year celebration which spans across a 3-day period following the Buddhist calendar. Often referred to as the Thai water festival, Songkran is a major public holiday in Thailand. This 3-day holiday period is often accompanied by merit-making rituals, religious ceremonies, and water splashing festivities. In Massachusetts, Thai temples celebrate Songkran every year on the following Sunday after Songkran (learn more at [watnawamin.org](#) and [watboston.org](#)). Songkran is also celebrated at the Lowell Southeast Asian Water festival in August.



APRIL: JAPAN FESTIVAL - BOSTON (JAPAN)

Japan Festival Boston is held annually in the spring to coincide with cherry blossoms in the region with various booths for food, business, culture, cosplay, and performances. In 2019, the festival celebrated 60 years of partnership between Boston and Kyoto, Japan. Learn more at: [japanfestivalboston.org](#)



JUNE: DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL - CAMBRIDGE (CHINA)

The Boston Dragon Boat Festival takes place annually on the banks of the Charles River in Boston and Cambridge.

Starting in 1979, Boston Dragon Boat Festival, the first and oldest such festival in North America, has grown from a small neighborhood event commemorating the death in 200 B.C. of the beloved Chinese poet-patriot Qu Yuan to the largest Asian-American cultural event in New England, drawing more than 30,000 participants and spectators each year. Celebration includes traditional music, dance, demonstrations, food, and the dragon boat race. Learn more at: [bostondragonboat.org](#)



JUNE: PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY - BOSTON (PHILIPPINES)

Every year various Filipino groups gather and organize a parade in celebration of the Philippine's independence from Spain. Following the parade, there is a cultural show and concert. Stay connected to the Pamana New England for any updates! Learn more at: pamanainc.org



AUGUST: AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL - BOSTON (CHINA)

The Autumn Moon Festival is celebrated in the middle of the autumn season for harvests and to prepare for the change of seasons. In August, there are a variety of events taking place locally, such as in Chinatown (bostoncentral.com) and Quincy (quincyasianresources.org).



AUGUST: TẾT TRUNG THU - BOSTON (VIETNAM)

Also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival, this tradition celebrates good harvests. In Vietnam, this festival tends to focus on children, with it also being commonly known as the Children's Festival. Lanterns are common here due to taking place at night along with folklore tying to the importance of lanterns as a guide. This annual festival is hosted annually. Review highlights from 2019 and stay connected here at: midautumnlanternfestival.com



AUGUST: SOUTH EAST ASIAN WATER FESTIVAL - LOWELL (SOUTHEAST ASIA)

The Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival, Inc. is dedicated to the preservation, protection and sharing of cultural heritages of the Southeast Asian Americans in the Greater Lowell area of Massachusetts. Every third Saturday in August, more than 60,000 people from around the country and the world come to Lowell to celebrate water as it is celebrated in Southeast Asia. They come for the blessings, food, crafts, performances, and (of course) the people. Learn more at: lowellwaterfestival.org



NOVEMBER: DIWALI - BOSTON (INDIA)

A popular Hindu holiday known for its decorative candlelight displays to signify the triumph of light over darkness. The celebration is traditionally held for 5 days over the Hindu Lunisolar month, between mid-October and mid-November. Museum of Fine Arts Boston typically holds a free admission event annually. Learn more at: mfa.org

ABOUT NAAAP BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

NAAAP Boston has access to the perfect resources to address the growing challenges and competitive needs to create diverse, inclusive, and effective cultural growth within organizations.

As an organizational partner of NAAAP Boston's Employee Resource Group program, you will have access to tailored seminars, workshops, and professional forums. Our previous professional programs include: Inclusion of Asian Americans in the Workplace, Speak Up Strategies, Igniting your Passion, and more. If this opportunity excites you, we invite you to contact us at programming@naaapboston.org.



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