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801 East Durango Boulevard, San Antonio, TX 78205

Contact: **James M. Benavides**

E. james.benavides@utsa.edu

C. (210) 347-9786

O. (210) 458-2237

Contact: **Terry McDevitt**

E. mcdmedia@mac.com

C. (210) 232-5759

O. (210) 569-6926

ASIAN FESTIVAL

Institute of Texan Cultures celebrates Year of the Tiger

SAN ANTONIO – Every year, in the week of the Lunar New Year, San Antonio's Asian community celebrates its heritage and shares music, dance, food and customs during the Asian Festival. What started as a family reunion 23 years ago has become a day of activities held at the Institute of Texan Cultures.

This year's Asian Festival will be Saturday, Feb. 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., on the institute's grounds. An opening parade around the festival grounds will include popping firecrackers, beating drums and clashing cymbals, frightening away evil spirits and heralding the arrival of the San Antonio Lion Dance Association. These dancers, in elaborate two-person costumes, will perform dance and acrobatic maneuvers as they arrive at the main stage.

The day continues with the native dance and music of China, Japan, Korea and the Asian cultures of the Indian sub-continent and the Pacific Ocean. Guests can see traditional Okinawan dance, Hula-style fire dances and Filipino Binasuan, which challenges dancers to perform with glasses of water balanced on their heads.

Martial arts organizations from around San Antonio will showcase various techniques of defense and discipline, from the swordsmanship of Kendo to the meditation of Tai Chi Chuan. Many of the instructors will discuss the history of the techniques and the honor systems that govern them.

A series of lectures, discussions and demonstrations expand the educational aspects of the festival. Guests can learn about Eastern philosophies and religions, about cooking techniques from UTSA's East Asia Institute and St. Philip's College

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Asian Festival 2010

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school of culinary arts, about Asian games such as Mah-jongg, and about the Asian styles of harvesting and brewing tea.

The festival is an opportunity to sample the native foods of several Asian countries. Many food offerings are prepared in native styles from family recipes.

- Chinese - Stir fry, egg rolls
- Japanese – Sushi
- Pakistani – Curry, samosas, lassi (yogurt drink)
- Filipino – Chicken adobo, pancit noodles
- Thai – Bubble drink

In a returning event this year, Sushi Zushi will offer a sake tasting. Guests age 21 and up can purchase an additional \$5 ticket, first-come-first-served, for a presentation on rice wine and a taste of various styles and brands.

“The Asian Festival is a one-of-a-kind San Antonio family event with activities for all ages,” said Jo Ann Andera, director of special events at the ITC. “It is an opportunity to share and celebrate the traditions of the distinct Asian cultures of Texas and we invite everyone to join us for this unique experience.”

Advance tickets are available at TexanCultures.com. Adult tickets (13 and older) are \$8, children (6-12) \$4, five and younger, free. Group ticket discounts are automatically applied to online purchases of 20 or more tickets. Gate prices are adult (13 and older) \$10, children (6-12) \$5, five and younger, free.

The Institute of Texan Cultures is located on the UTSA HemisFair Park Campus, 801 E. Durango Blvd., a short distance from the Alamo and the River Walk. Regular hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call (210) 458-2300 or visit TexanCultures.com.