Lunar New Year sauce and allergen guide

Lunar New Year 2027 falls on Saturday 6 February 2027. Sauces and festive foods often carry allergens you cannot see. Recipes and brands differ, so check every label and ask the cook.

Food	⚠ Allergens it often contains	Good to know
Soy sauce	Soy. Usually wheat too.	Tamari is often made with little or no wheat, but check the label.
Oyster sauce	Shellfish (oyster, a mollusc). Often wheat.	Not vegetarian. Vegetarian "oyster" sauce is made from mushrooms and usually has soy and wheat.
Fish sauce	Fish, usually anchovy.	Not vegetarian. Often in dipping sauces and marinades.
Hoisin sauce	Soy and usually wheat. Often sesame.	Usually plant based, but a few brands add oyster extract.
Sesame oil	Sesame.	A few drops go into many dumpling fillings, dressings and noodles.
XO sauce	Shellfish (dried scallops and shrimp). Often fish.	Usually contains cured ham, often pork. Not halal, not vegetarian.
Shaoxing wine	Usually wheat (in the starter).	Contains alcohol, a halal concern. Cooking versions also add salt.
Dumplings, wonton wrappers	Wheat. Wonton wrappers often egg.	Fillings often have pork or shrimp, plus soy sauce and sesame oil. Ask.
Spring rolls	Wheat wrappers. Fillings vary.	Can contain pork or shrimp. Often fried in shared oil.
Turnip cake	Often shellfish (dried shrimp).	Often contains Chinese sausage, usually pork. Not halal, not vegetarian.
Nian gao (rice cake)	Often egg when pan fried in batter. Baked versions often egg and milk.	Glutinous rice has no gluten despite the name. Other ingredients vary: read the label.
Candy trays and sweets	Often peanuts and sesame. Sometimes tree nuts and milk.	Peanut candy, sesame brittle and sesame balls are common. Wrapped sweets carry a label: read it.
Pastries and cookies	Usually wheat. Often egg and milk.	Some flaky pastries are made with lard: not halal, not vegetarian.

Before you eat

- MSG is not an allergen. It is a seasoning. Some people choose to avoid it.
- In the US, mollusc shellfish (oyster, scallop, clam) does not have to be named in the Contains line. Read the ingredients.
- Eating at a party or restaurant? Ask what is in the sauces. If no one is sure, skip it.

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