

3 Ways to Celebrate the Qingming Festival From Quarantine



by Erin Dumke 1 year ago

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Good news on the coronavirus front! China has emerged from a country-wide quarantine. Students are going back to school and businesses and factories are opening up again. Even Wuhan, the center of the COVID-19 outbreak, has started to reopen, [with a selection of people being green-lit to travel domestically](#). This has come just in time: the Qingming Festival is on April 4th this year.

After [missing this year's Lunar New Year](#) due to travel restrictions, Chinese people are looking forward to observing the Qingming holiday with their families. Tourism is expected to rise as people are feeling more comfortable to travel, equipped with masks of course!

The Qingming Festival, also called "Tomb Sweeping Day," is a week centered around April 4th or 5th. On Qingming Festival, Chinese families visit the gravesite of a deceased loved one. They clean the tombstone, leaving flowers and food, burning incense, and saying prayers for the ancestors no longer with them.

However, many other countries are still under lock-down. The Malaysian government has [urged people to stay home](#) to celebrate the festival. In America, many states—including California and New York, with the largest Chinese-American populations in the country—are under mandatory stay-at-home orders. If you cannot get out for this Qingming Festival, here are three ways you can observe the holiday from your house.

1 Attend a “Cloud Tomb Sweeping” service.



Companies are offering online services for families to say prayers and light virtual candles for their ancestors. The Civil Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong province has launched a service on its official WeChat platform. The internet service provider Fu Shou Yuan International has also created a platform that has been visited by over 87,000 people since it went online last week. Cemeteries are also directing their staff to perform tomb sweeping duties on site. There are also phone apps that will light a candle for you, or you can use a candle of your own if you have some in the house.

2 Use a memorial tablet.



If your family has a memorial tablet or an ancestral altar, use this in place of a tombstone to burn incense and leave food at. If you don't have an altar, you can still honor a deceased loved one by making their favorite meal. The day before Qingming, some people also honor their ancestors by [only eating cold food](#).

3 Fly a kite.



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The Qingming festival is also a time to celebrate the arrival of spring. After Chinese families visit the cemetery, they might have a picnic, fly kites, or plant a tree. Flying kites is the perfect social distancing activity; you can stand far away from other people but still get out of the house. Also, if you have been meaning to clear away the weeds in your garden, this would be the day to do it. At least give some attention to that neglected succulent on the windowsill!



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