

**UTC Document Submission: MOONCAKE EMOJI**

To: UTC

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**Abstract:**

We are proposing the addition of the MOONCAKE (“月饼”) emoji. Not only is MOONCAKE one of the most famous desserts amongst the Chinese communities, it is an iconic celebration of Mid-Autumn Festival, the second most important Chinese holiday, one which brings together families and friends together every year to celebrate the moon at its fullest. ([source](#)) While it is centered in China, the MOONCAKE has been brought to other Asian countries as a result of the Chinese diaspora.

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**Background:**

The MOONCAKE or “月饼” is a traditional Chinese pastry that is enjoyed during the annual Mid-Autumn festival (中秋节) by many around the world. The name “mooncake” comes from this festival, as families gather to celebrate this lunar festival and observe the full moon. MOONCAKES are also an iconic Chinese dessert with a rich history dating back thousands of years.

MOONCAKES are baked into round shapes, but varies in sizes and the different ingredients based on different regions’ interpretation. It is traditionally made with a thin crust, thick sweet filling from lotus seed paste, and contains two yolks from salted duck eggs. The round duck egg yolks represents the full moon. The top layer of the mooncake is also decorated to have good luck characters or includes symbols of the moon festival imprinted on them.

([source](#))



*Picture 1: Traditional mooncake with lotus seed filling and salted duck egg yolk*

The Mid-Autumn festival represents the second most important holiday in China after the Lunar New Year. The annual festival is held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month on the lunar calendar. ([source](#)) The origins of this festival dates back to Shang Dynasty (1600 – 1046 BCE) where farmers celebrate the harvest of the crops and give thanks to the Mountain Gods. ([source](#)) The MOONCAKE became the offering as the public worshiped the moon during every autumn's lunar. There are also various legends and folktales associated with the origins of moon cakes that have circulated. ([source](#))

Another importance is the shape of the moon and mooncake. In Chinese, reunion “[团圆](#)” contains the word “round circle” which symbolizes the family circle, as well as unity and completeness in Chinese culture. Thus, the round mooncake is not only a delicacy and dessert enjoyed, but it emphasizes the special importance that Chinese people attach to family reunion. ([source](#))



*Picture 3: Mooncakes in Vietnam*

Even though this important tradition originated from China, different countries around the world also celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival and have reinvented

and adapted their versions of the mooncake. In Vietnam, mooncakes are called Bánh Trung Thu (translates as "Mid-Autumn cake") and are sold year-round. In Vietnam the Mid-Autumn Festival is the country's second most important holiday after the Vietnamese New Year. ([source](#))



*Picture 4. The Peninsula mooncake that is commonly exchanged in Asia today*

As modernization of China has revolutionized how the tradition is celebrated today, the festival's traditions have remained rooted in the gathering of family and the eating and sharing mooncakes. Today, the mooncake has become a popular gift to be exchanged during the month of the annual Mid-Autumn Festival between friends and employees.

#### Factors for Inclusion:

##### **A. Compatibility:**

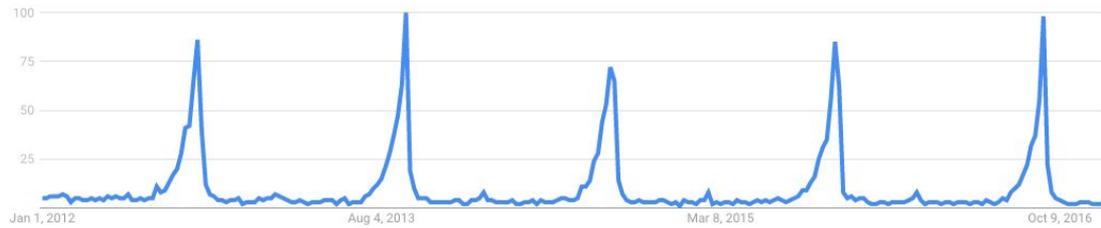
There are currently no existing mooncake emojis in any major vendor platforms.

##### **B. Expected Usage Level:**

###### i) Frequency:

We expect high frequency level of this emoji as shown below:

- Similar to other big holidays, Mid-Autumn festival is celebrated every single year according to the lunar calendar. Although the public holiday and festival itself is a few days, people begin eating and gifting mooncakes the weeks leading up to the festival (around one month total)
- As of 12/28/2016, there are currently 416,564 "#mooncake" related Instagrams posts and similar amount of post for "#midautumn"
- Google trends show the annual peak in which mid autumn festival takes place



*Picture 5. Google trend on Mid-Autumn Festival*

- Today, the Chinese population represents the world's largest population. In China alone the population is almost 1.4 billion, with 50 million Chinese by ethnicity living overseas. Which also makes Chinese the largest ethnicity by population. Around the world, the Chinese community has built Chinatowns and other Chinese entities to keep the traditions celebrated by so many Chinese around the world.

#### ii) Multiple Usages:

A MOONCAKE emoji can be interpreted in a number of ways

- This emoji can represent the annual Mid-Autumn festivals.
- This emoji can convey traditional Chinese desserts.
- This emoji can represent families reunited and family unity.

#### **C. Image Distinctiveness:**

The MOONCAKE is an icon of the Chinese identity, as Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the most important holidays Chinese ethnicities around the world observe. The design features the traditional round pastry with an egg yolk inside, which is seen from a quarter sliced.

The MOONCAKE emoji currently does not resemble any other emojis, and is visually distinctive.

#### **D. Completeness:**

Currently, the dessert emoji selection does not include any iconic Chinese desserts, while it has a lot of western and Japanese desserts. Thus the MOONCAKE emoji would be a great addition to the existing food and drinks emojis to better reflect the dessert choices enjoyed by people around the world.

#### **E. Frequently Requested:**



As seen in the above screenshots, there has been a number of requests on Twitter to have MOONCAKE emoji during the month of Mid-Autumn festival every year. People are frustrated they are not able able to communicate this festival without the mooncake emoji.

Factors for Exclusion:

#### **F. Overly Specific:**

While the MOONCAKE emoji represents a traditional Chinese lunar holiday, full moon festivals are celebrated in different countries with their own versions of this round pastry. The emoji is a symbol and representation of the annual festivals that is popular around the world.

#### **G. Open-Ended:**

The addition of the mooncake emoji will bring this iconic dessert and Chinese tradition, adding diversity to the number of international holidays and cuisine to Unicode. The MOONCAKE also holds a special meaning to the hundreds of millions of Chinese that cherish the tradition of family reunions.

#### **H. Already Representable**

Currently, there is no image of the MOONCAKE, though there are emoji for MOON and CAKE. However these these emoji, even in combination, do not convey the tradition behind Mid-Autumn festival as well as mooncake.

## **I. Unsuitability?**

Our proposal of a MOONCAKE emoji is suitable for encoding as character. It does not contain any references to deities, logos, and specific people, historical or living.

## **J. Transient:**

The Mid-Autumn festival and MOONCAKE has a long history in China and other countries that celebrate it annually, dating back thousands of years. In China, more than 200,000 metric tons of mooncakes are produced annually, with sales exceeding \$2 billion. ([source](#))

## **Note**

In addition to the mooncake emoji, we have recommended the addition of two other chinese-related emojis (the RED ENVELOPE and FIRECRACKER emoji)

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About the submitters:

Facemoji Keyboard ([linjiahong@baidu.com](mailto:linjiahong@baidu.com)) is a global keyboard mobile app under Baidu's Global Business Unit, together with it's international Simeji Keyboard has over 20 million download from around the world. Baidu is the largest Chinese Search Engine in China and the first Chinese company included in the NASDAQ 100 Index.

Jennifer 8. Lee ([jenny@jennifer8lee.com](mailto:jenny@jennifer8lee.com)) is a founder of Emojination, whose motto is "emoji by the people, for the people." She is also an organizer of Emojicon, a conference that celebrates emoji that will take place in November 4-6 in San Francisco.