

U.n.l Bites

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit



Lunar New Year

Hari Raya Puasa

National Day

Mid-Autumn Festival

Deepavali

International Migrants Day
(Special Edition)

DEEPAVALI: FOOD OF THE FESTIVAL

DEEPAVALI ISSUE 4

•
NOVEMBER 2021

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit,
Student Affairs Office



Food for Deepavali - Image Credit: Kabita Darlami/Unsplash

Deepavali, or Diwali, is an important festival in the Indian subcontinent and is also widely celebrated in Singapore.¹ Known as the 'Festival of Lights', Deepavali celebrates the victory of good over evil and is marked by beautiful lights and illuminations, as well as colourful decorations.² Food is also a key focus, with a delicious array of food shared among friends and family.³

Adhirasam is a deep-fried pastry, similar to a donut and made of rice flour.⁴ It also contains jaggery, a natural sweetener made of sugarcane, palm or coconut.⁵ Spices such as nutmeg and cardamom powder may be added before it is shaped into discs and fried.⁶



Adhirasam - Image credit: Shyamalamuralinath/Shutterstock

Kheer is another classic delicacy for Deepavali.⁷ This is a sweet creamy rice pudding, with cardamom and almonds.



Kheer - Image Credit: Dipanjan Nath/Wikimedia

Gulab jamun are dough balls kneaded with powdered milk and butter and deep-fried until golden brown. They are then soaked in a syrup made of sugar, water and saffron.⁸



Gulab jamun - Image Credit: The City of Toronto/Flickr

¹ "Deepavali." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/deepavali>

² Singapore Tourism Board. "Deepavali." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/cultural-festivals/deepavali/>

³ TNN. "20 Best Traditional Diwali Recipes." The Times of India. November 14, 2020. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/food-news/20-best-traditional-diwali-recipes/articleshow/66473975.cms>

⁴ "Deepavali." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/deepavali>

⁵ "Types of Jaggery, It's Uses and Health Benefits." Times of India. August 24, 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/food-news/types-of-jaggery-its-uses-and-healthbenefits/photostory/77719073.cms?picid=77719175>

⁶ Chitra Deepa Anantharam. "The Reign of Adhirasam." The Hindu. November 10, 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/food/as-families-reunite-in-villages-as-a-result-of-the-pandemic-the-focus-shifts-from-the-city-to-a-quiet-rural-deepavali/article33066431.ece>

⁷ Betty Hallock. "Diwali: To celebrate the Hindu Festival of Lights, make kheer." Los Angeles Times. November 4, 2013. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/food/dailydish/la-dd-diwali-to-celebrate-festival-of-lights-make-kheer-20131104-story.html>

⁸ Daksha Mistry. "Gulab Jamun Recipe." BBC Food (BBC). Accessed September 7, 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/gulabjambu_81245

DEEPAVALI: FOOD OF THE FESTIVAL

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Murukku are a staple for Deepavali and considered more than just a simple snack. As the saying goes, "if there is no murukku, there is no Deepavali".⁹ For some families, making murukku at home is an important part of passing down a time-honoured tradition to the younger generation.¹⁰ The savoury and crunchy murukku continues to be loved by many across Singapore.¹¹



Murukku - Image Credit: Thamizhpparithi Maari/Wikimedia Commons

Samosas are delicious small triangular pastries filled with potatoes, peas, and spices such as fennel seeds, cumin seeds, coriander powder and garam masala.¹² Ingredients and spices differ by region, but samosas are usually eaten hot with chutney.¹³



Samosa - Image Credit: Kabir Cheema/Unsplash

Do you know...

Abstinence from Meat

During Deepavali, some non-vegetarian Hindus will abstain from meat.¹⁴ Some adhere to a vegetarian diet on the day of Deepavali while others may abstain from meat for a longer period. Regardless of the duration, consuming vegetarian food is a common practice for many who celebrate Deepavali.¹⁵



Mixed Veg Bonda (Indian vegetarian snack)
Image Credit: Reshu Drolia/Unsplash

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover the differences in Deepavali celebrations across regions.

⁹ Nadia Chevroulet. "Keeping Deepavali Tradition Alive - the Crunchy Way." The Straits Times. October 29, 2016, Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/keeping-deepavali-tradition-alive-the-crunchy-way>

¹⁰ Nadia Chevroulet. "Keeping Deepavali Tradition Alive - the Crunchy Way."

¹¹ Nadia Chevroulet. "Keeping Deepavali Tradition Alive - the Crunchy Way."

¹² Amrita Thakkar. "10 Diwali Foods to Try Under the Lights This Year". Taste of Home. February 9, 2021. Accessed September 20, 2021.

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/diwali-food/>

¹³ Amrita Thakkar. "10 Diwali Foods to Try Under the Lights This Year".

¹⁴ Stephanie Ho. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed September 20, 2021.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=Lighting-Singapore

¹⁵ Kamarzaman, N. A., & Bakar, I. A. "Hindu festivals in Malaysia and their food as unity tools: A qualitative study". International Journal of Allied Health Sciences, 4, 3, (2021), 1150-1161.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL: ABOUT BEING TOGETHER

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit, Student Affairs Office

The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Mooncake Festival¹, originally signified the end of the season's harvest². While today's celebrations may no longer mark the autumn harvest, the festival continues to be a special time marked by the gathering of family and friends.

Celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, the moon is thought to be at its fullest and brightest during this time of year.³ Families and friends meet to enjoy the moon, often with brightly coloured lanterns traditionally made of thin paper⁴.

Those unable to travel home would recite verses and poetry to express feelings of longing for relatives in their hometowns.



Photo Credit: Martin Adams/[Unsplash](#)

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Do you know...

The moon is believed to symbolise reunion, and the Mid-Autumn Festival is also known as the 'Reunion festival'.⁵



Photo Credit: Benjamin Ho/[Flickr](#)

The round shape of the ubiquitous mooncakes enjoyed during the Mid-Autumn Festival are thought to signify the full moon and unity within the family.⁶



Photo Credit: Shiuh Rong Yong/[Flickr](#)

¹ Tan, Bonny. [Mid-autumn Festival \(Zhong Qiu Jie\) | Infopedia \(nlb.gov.sg\)](#). National Library Board. Accessed August 12, 2021.

² Singapore Tourism Board. [Mid-Autumn Festival: Mooncakes & Lanterns - Visit Singapore Official Site](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

³ Chng, Pinky & Tan, William. [Mooncakes, lanterns and legends: Your guide to the Mid-Autumn Festival in Singapore, Lifestyle News - AsiaOne](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

⁴ Chng, Pinky & Tan, William. [Mooncakes, lanterns and legends: Your guide to the Mid-Autumn Festival in Singapore, Lifestyle News - AsiaOne](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

⁵ Tan, Bonny. [Mid-autumn Festival \(Zhong Qiu Jie\) | Infopedia \(nlb.gov.sg\)](#). National Library Board. Accessed August 12, 2021.

⁶ National Heritage Board. [Mid-Autumn Festival \(roots.gov.sg\)](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL: ABOUT BEING TOGETHER

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The Mid-Autumn Festival is also believed to be a special time for couples. Amongst the many legends associated with the festival, a well-known tale is that of Chang E, a queen who drank an 'elixir of life' to prevent the potion from falling into the wrong hands. Upon drinking the elixir, Chang E rose to the moon as the Moon Goddess.⁷

Traditionally, the Mid-Autumn Festival is thought to be a favourable date for weddings as the Moon Goddess is said to ensure a happy marriage.⁸

Do you know...

A mural in Singapore's Chinatown by local artist Yip Yew Chong¹² depicts a nostalgic scene from the Mid-Autumn Festival, including images of mooncakes and lanterns.



Mid-Autumn Festival by Yip Yew Chong
Photo Credit: Choo Yut Sinng/[Flickr](#)

In addition to savouring mooncakes and lighting lanterns, some of the traditional activities enjoyed with family and friends during the Mid-Autumn Festival include 'moon viewing' (*shangyue*) moonlit walks, and performances such as Chinese dance, Chinese opera and puppetry.¹³

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations in Singapore & the region.



Yue Lao - Photo Credit: Shesmax/[Wikimedia](#)

Others may pray to Yue Lao (月老), 'the old man under the moon', a deity of marriage.⁹ Tying a red string around Yue Lao is believed to increase one's likelihood of 'tying the knot'.¹⁰ Yue Lao is thought to tie the red string between couples who are destined to be together.¹¹

⁷ Tan, Bonny. [Mid-autumn Festival \(Zhong Qiu Jie\) | Infopedia \(nlb.gov.sg\)](#). National Library Board. Accessed August 12, 2021.

⁸ [Mooncakes and lanterns take centre stage, Singapore News & Top Stories - The Straits Times](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

⁹ Chng, Pinky & Tan, William. [Mooncakes, lanterns and legends: Your guide to the Mid-Autumn Festival in Singapore, Lifestyle News - AsiaOne](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

¹⁰ Lee, Natasha. [Singapore's own temple of love, Singapore News & Top Stories - The Straits Times](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

¹¹ Lee, Natasha. [Singapore's own temple of love, Singapore News & Top Stories - The Straits Times](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

¹² Singapore Tourism Board. [Unique street art trail in Chinatown - Visit Singapore Official Site](#). Accessed August 12, 2021.

¹³ Tan, Bonny. [Mid-autumn Festival \(Zhong Qiu Jie\) | Infopedia \(nlb.gov.sg\)](#). National Library Board. Accessed August 12, 2021.

NATIONAL DAY: NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit, Student Affairs Office



National Day Parade – Photo Credit: Choo Yut Shin/Flickr

Singapore's first National Day Parade (NDP) was held on 9 August 1966 at the historical Padang, after Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965. The annual parades continued to take place at the Padang throughout the 1960s.¹

The theme of the first NDP was "National Pride and Confidence in the Future".² The parade commenced at 9am and involved a 21-gun salute and a march-past of 23,000 people, from military units to students to lion and dragon dancers.³

Despite the rain that began to fall mid-morning, spirits were not dampened, and the military units were greeted by cheering crowds as they continued marching through Chinatown towards Tanjong Pagar.⁴

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National Day Parade 1968 – Photo Credit: Lama Jey Tsong Kapa/Wikimedia

Did you know...

NDPs throughout the 1960s took place in the morning and the first evening parade was held in 1973.⁵



National Day Fireworks – Photo Credit: Se7enw00d/Wikimedia

In addition to the parade, the first National Day celebrations also included two firework displays: one at 4pm at the Padang, and the other at Fort Canning Rise at night.⁶

¹ "50 Years and Counting: Tracing the History of the National Day Parade." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed Jun 7, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/50-years-and-counting/story>

² "Singapore's first National Day celebrations." Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed June 5, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_524_2004-12-29.html

³ "Singapore's first National Day celebrations."

⁴ "National Day Parade 1966: 10 things about the inaugural parade." Straits Times. Accessed June 6, 2021. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/national-day-parade-1966-10-things-about-the-inaugural-parade>

⁵ "National Day Parade 1966: 10 things about the inaugural parade."

⁶ "Singapore's first National Day celebrations." Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed June 5, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_524_2004-12-29.html

NATIONAL DAY: NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

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As Singapore prospered, NDPs became occasions to celebrate progress and look towards the future⁷, incorporating land, air and sea performances. The first State Flag Fly-past took place in 1970 and the 1990 NDP showcased Singapore's defense on water for the first time.⁸



State Flag Flypast – Photo Credit: Chinyeenemo/Wikimedia

Since 1975, NDPs have taken place at the Padang, the National Stadium, the Float @ Marina Bay and, in some years, have also been decentralized and taken place at multiple locations across Singapore.⁹

The National Stadium in Kallang was the site of 18 NDPs between 1976 and 2006 until it closed for redevelopment.¹⁰ The stadium re-opened in 2014 and is the world's largest free-standing dome.¹¹ The 2016 NDP took place at the new stadium.¹²



The Float @ Marina Bay – Photo Credit: Shankar S./Flickr

The Float @ Marina Bay is one of the most prominent NDP venues. It is the 'world's first and largest floating stage'¹³ and has been used as an NDP venue 10 times since 2007¹⁴.



National Stadium – Photo Credit: Otterslot/Wikimedia

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover other aspects of Singapore's National Day.

⁷ d' Silva, Judith. "Commentary: NDP a uniquely Singapore phenomenon." Channel News Asia. June 20, 2020.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/national-day-parade-ndp-singapore-covid-19-coronavirus-2020-12839522>

⁸ "50 Years and Counting: Tracing the History of the National Day Parade." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed Jun 7, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/50-years-and-counting/story>

⁹ "Singapore's first National Day celebrations." Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed June 5, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_524_2004-12-29.html

¹⁰ Tan, Seo Yean. "National Stadium." Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed June 29, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1441_2009-02-09.html

¹¹ Lim, Tin Seng. "Singapore Sports Hub." Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed June 29, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2015-10-26_160204.html

¹² Yeo Sam Jo. "NDP 2016: Kallang Wave roars through National Stadium as Singapore celebrates 51st birthday." Straits Times. August 10, 2016.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/ndp-2016-kallang-wave-roars-through-national-stadium-as-singapore-celebrates-51st-birthday>

¹³ Lim, Fiona, Jamie Han, and Justin Zhuang. "Marina Bay." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore, June 20, 2016.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2016-06-21_160714.html

¹⁴ "NDP 2021 may be held at the Float @ Marina Bay 'if situation allows': Ng Eng Hen." Channel News Asia. August 28, 2020.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/ndp-2021-the-float-marina-bay-ng-eng-hen-13062566>

HARI RAYA PUASA: FOOD AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

HARI RAYA PUASA ISSUE 4

MAY 2021

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit, Student Affairs Office

Hari Raya Puasa, also known as Hari Raya Aidilfitri or the festival of Eid, is celebrated at the end of Ramadan.¹ In Malay, *Hari Raya* means 'big (or grand) day of rejoicing', while *Puasa* means 'fasting'.² The festival is celebrated with a variety of dishes and treats.

Beef rendang is a stew cooked with spices and coconut milk.³ The meat is tender and soft and has complex flavours from the spices used in the cooking process.

Rendang is a celebratory dish loved throughout Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia and is often served during festive occasions such as weddings.⁴



Beef Rendang - Photo Credit: su-lin/Flickr

The cooking process requires patience, wisdom, and persistence.⁵ The choice of spices and method require wisdom while patience and persistence are needed during the long cooking process.

Did you know...

Rendang derives its name from the Indonesian term *merandang* or *randang*, which means 'slowly'.⁶ The longer the cooking time, the tastier it is as the liquid thickens into a gravy.



Spices - Photo Credit: Ariyani Tedjo / Shutterstock

Rendang is best enjoyed with rice or **ketupat**, a diamond-shaped rice cake wrapped in coconut leaves.⁷ In addition to being a side dish, ketupat pouches are used to decorate homes during Hari Raya Puasa.⁸



Ketupat - Photo Credit: Jpquidores/Wikimedia

¹ Singapore Tourism Board. "Hari Raya Aidilfitri." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/cultural-festivals/hari-raya-aidilfitri/>

² Mazelan Anuar, Heirwin Mohd Nasir and Sharon Koh. "Hari Raya Puasa." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed March 26, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_919_2004-12-20.html

³ Chong, Jayme. "The Food of Hari Raya Puasa." Expat Living. May 5, 2020. <https://expatliving.sg/the-food-of-hari-raya-kuih-muih/>

⁴ Tan, Bonny. "Rendang." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed March 18, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1767_2011-02-11.html

⁵ Muthia Nurmufida, Gervasius H. Wangrimen, Risty Reinatta, and Kevin Leonardi. "Rendang: The Treasure of Minangkabau." *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 4, no. 4 (2017): 232-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jef.2017.10.005>.

⁶ Khoo, Hedy. "3 things to know about rendang, beyond the fact that it's not crispy". The Straits Times. April 5, 2018. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/food/3-things-to-know-about-rendang>

⁷ Tan, Bonny. "Ketupat." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed March 18, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2015-10-26_111827.html

⁸ National Heritage Board. "Weaving Ketupat". Roots. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/weaving-ketupat>

HARI RAYA PUASA: FOOD AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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Putu Piring -Photo Credit: Nasuru/Wikimedia

Putu Piring are circular steamed rice cakes cooked in moulds with *gula melaka* (palm sugar) and covered with freshly grated coconut.⁹ In addition to being a breakfast food¹⁰, it is also eaten during festivities such as Hari Raya Puasa.¹¹

Sayur lodeh is a dish of vegetables (such as cabbage, carrots and long beans) cooked in coconut milk.¹² *Sayur* means 'vegetables' in Malay, while *lodeh* indicates that the ingredients are cooked until soft.¹³ In Singapore and Malaysia, the dish is often cooked with prawn stock, *belacan* (prawn paste) and *hae bee* (dried shrimp) which can be skipped when preparing vegetarian versions.¹⁴



Ondeh Ondeh-Photo Credit: ProjectManhattan/Wikimedia

Ondeh Ondeh, also known as *klepon* in Indonesia, are glutinous rice balls with palm sugar filling coated with grated coconut.¹⁵ The dough is made from glutinous rice flour and pandan leaves which give the dough its green colour.



Sayur lodeh - Photo Credit: ProjectManhattan/Wikimedia

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover other aspects of Hari Raya Puasa in Singapore.

⁹ Tan, Bonny. "Putu Piring." Infopedia. Accessed March 18, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1750_2011-01-05.html

¹⁰ Tan, Bonny. "Putu Piring."

¹¹ Singapore Tourism Board. "Hari raya Aidilfitri." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/cultural-festivals/hari-raya-aidilfitri/>

¹² Tan, Bonny. "Lontong." Infopedia. Accessed March 18, 2021 https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2015-09-28_105540.html?s=Sayur%20Lodeh

¹³ Tan, Bonny. "Lontong."

¹⁴ Tan, Bonny. "Lontong."

¹⁵ Saini, Azimin. "Recipe for Ondeh-ondoh or Klepon." Michelin Guide. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://guide.michelin.com/sg/en/article/dining-in/recipe-for-ondoh-ondoh-or-klepon>

LUNAR NEW YEAR: NEW YEAR FOODS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY 2021

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit,
Student Affairs Office



Photo credit: Szeyuen/Getty Images

Steamboat, also known as hotpot, is often enjoyed on Lunar New Year's Eve. Raw ingredients such as beef, vegetables, meatballs, fish and tofu are cooked in a hotpot full of flavoured soup as family members come together for their reunion dinner.¹



Photo credit: Alpha/Flickr

Fat choy (发菜), or 'hair vegetable' in Cantonese, is a sea moss² that derives its name from its likeness to hair. Its popularity during Lunar New Year is due to its homophone *fat choy* (发财), which is part of the Cantonese new year greeting 'gung hei fat choy' to wish others good fortune.³



Photo credit: ProjectManhattan/Wikimedia Commons

Seeds and Nuts are often served as snacks during Lunar New Year.

Melon Seeds, known as *guazi* (瓜子) in Mandarin, symbolize fertility as the character *Zi* (子) means 'child'. Lotus seeds are similarly considered auspicious as the term in Mandarin (*lianzi*) means 'many sons'.⁴



Peanuts are *huasheng* (花生) or 'flower of life' in Mandarin. They are also known as 'longevity nuts' (长生果) and are thought to symbolise a long life⁵.

¹ "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Singapore." National Heritage Board, Singapore. Accessed December 5, 2020. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/-/media/Roots/ich/ich-booklet/ich-booklet.pdf?la=en>

² Tan, Bonny and Gao, Vicky. "Chinese New Year delicacies." Infopedia, National Library Board Singapore. Accessed December 5, 2020. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_27_2_2009-01-07.html

³ Huang, Echo. "For the Cantonese, Lunar New Year means scouring the black market for an auspicious, delicious bacteria". QUARTZ. January 26, 2017. <https://qz.com/882734/for-the-cantonese-preparing-for-lunar-new-year-means-scouring-the-black-market-for-an-auspicious-delicious-bacteria/>

⁴ Lim Beittler, Mandy. "Why We Eat Pineapple Tarts during CNY and the Meanings behind Other Goodies." Stomp. January 24, 2017. <https://stomp.straitstimes.com/singapore/why-we-eat-pineapple-tarts-during-cny-and-the-meanings-behind-other-goodies>

⁵ Tan, Bonny and Gao, Vicky. "Chinese New Year delicacies."

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LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 4
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FEBRUARY 2021

Bak kwa (also known as *rougan* in Mandarin) is a salty, sweet, dried meat similar to jerky and commonly made of pork. It is believed to have originated from ancient Chinese meat preservation and preparation techniques.⁶

Bak kwa is regarded as an important part of the Lunar New Year celebrations in Singapore and is usually offered to guests during visits or as gifts to relatives and friends. As the new year approaches, long queues are often seen at popular bak kwa outlets.⁷



Photo credit: Alpha/Flickr

Pineapple tarts, rich biscuits with pineapple jam, are loved for their sweetness and because 'pineapple' (*ong lai*) means 'fortune come' in Hokkien.⁸ Pineapple tarts are popular gifts during Lunar New Year as they are believed to bring luck and prosperity for the coming year.



Photo credit: tbSMITH/Flickr

Yusheng, a salad with thin strips of raw fish and a variety of vegetables and sauces, is often served during Lunar New Year. Yu is the homophone for 'fish' and 'rich', while sheng means 'raw' and 'life'.

The ritual of enjoying yusheng often begins with family members coming together at the table to toss the ingredients while voicing auspicious words and phrases.

The two common types of yusheng consumed in Singapore are Cantonese yusheng and Teochew yusheng.⁹

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover Lunar New Year celebrations across the region.

⁶ Makansutra Singapore: The frank & no frills guide to street food & restaurants in Singapore, (Singapore: Makansutra (S) Pte Ltd, 2012), p. 41.

⁷ Guay, Ee Ling and Chee, Veronica. "Bak Kwa." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed December 5, 2020. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1746_2010-12-30.html.

⁸ Tan, Bonny and Gao, Vicky. "Chinese New Year delicacies." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed December 5, 2020. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_27_2_2009-01-07.html

⁹ Tan, Bonny, Narayanan, Rakunathan and Lee Meiyu. "Yusheng." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed December 5, 2020. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_177_2009-01-08.html

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

SPECIAL EDITION

DECEMBER 2020

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit, Student Affairs Office

International Migrants Day

December 18th is International Migrants Day, a day to recognise the role and contributions of migrants around the world.¹ The opportunities and challenges of migration are multifaceted and are [linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) which pledge to 'leave no one behind'.

While there is no universally accepted definition of 'migrant',² the term is used by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to reflect "a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons".³



Did you know...

There were approximately 272 million migrants around the world in 2019, including those moving for work opportunities or to study overseas.⁴



Migrant Workers in Singapore

In Singapore, the term 'migrant' often signifies 'migrant workers' on Work Permits. Work Permit holders include domestic workers, as well as those working in the construction, marine shipyard and process (CMP) sectors⁵ who make significant contributions to the development and maintenance of Singapore's infrastructure.

The Impact of COVID-19

Migrant workers, particularly those in the CMP sectors living in large dormitories, have been thrust into the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic. While daily reports focused on the infection rates within the dormitories, individual stories serve as a reminder that each worker is more than just a number – an individual with their own history, experiences, hopes and dreams.

Learn about the lives of migrant workers in Singapore through the work of NTU students enrolled in Go-Far (Going Overseas for Advanced Reporting), a journalism module of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/students-go-far-with-migrant-workers>

¹ International Migrants Day, UNESCO, accessed 2 Nov 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/events/international-migrants-day>

² Who is a Migrant?, IOM, accessed 2 Nov 2020, <https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>

³ Glossary on Migration, International Organization for Migration, s.v. "migrant," accessed 2 Nov 2020, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

⁴ International Migrants Day, IOM, accessed 2 Nov 2020, <https://www.iom.int/migrantsday>

⁵ Foreign workforce numbers, Ministry of Manpower, accessed 2 Nov 2020, <https://www.mom.gov.sg/documents-and-publications/foreign-workforce-numbers>

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

SPECIAL EDITION

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DECEMBER 2020

Supporting Migrant Workers

The Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) functions as a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to champion fair employment practices and the well-being of migrant workers in Singapore.

We spoke with Vignesh, a migrant worker and a MWC Volunteer Ambassador. Vignesh joined MWC's efforts to support migrant workers during the pandemic by making phone calls to fellow workers in quarantine to check on their wellbeing.

- *What do you miss most about home?*

I miss my family in India as I haven't been home in 4 years. My parents are farmers and I have a brother and a sister. I usually call them once a week on Sundays, but I called them every day during the Circuit Breaker.

- *What do you do to relax after work?*

I relax in my room or spend time with friends, talking and sharing stories. We also discuss topics related to work such as incoming materials, to prepare for the following day.

- *What is your favourite place in Singapore?*

Little India because it reminds me of home, with groups of friends meeting on Sundays to eat together [before COVID-19].

- *What are your future plans?*

When I return to India, I plan to open my own electrical shop providing replacements and mechanical repair services. I have experience in this area, so I hope to use my skills and start my own business.

How can we support MWC's efforts?

We are gathering messages as One NTU, for MWC to share with their network of migrant workers. Click to [submit a message of support](#) for the migrant worker community.

[Click to submit a message of support](#)

Find out how NTU students are embarking on initiatives to engage and support migrant workers!

RESEARCH

Through her internship with Soap Cycling, **Janice** (Year 4, Environmental Earth Systems Science) published a report on migrant workers' access to soap and sanitation facilities. [Read the report here.](#)

INTERNSHIP

Wai Yan (Year 4, Psychology) is a Casework and Social Service [Intern at HealthServe](#), addressing the complex needs of migrant workers. As a second-generation Singaporean, Wai Yan hopes to be a bridge between migrant and local communities.

EDUCATE/ADVOCATE

In addition to interacting with migrant workers through weekly online sessions, the **NTU United Nations Students Association - Humanitarian Wing** organised a talk to raise awareness of the domestic worker community. Read their posts on the [implications of negative stereotypes](#) and the [impacts of COVID-19](#).

VOLUNTEER

A team of **NTU International Students** conducted online English lessons for migrant workers from June to July through the [MAD WISH tutoring programme](#).