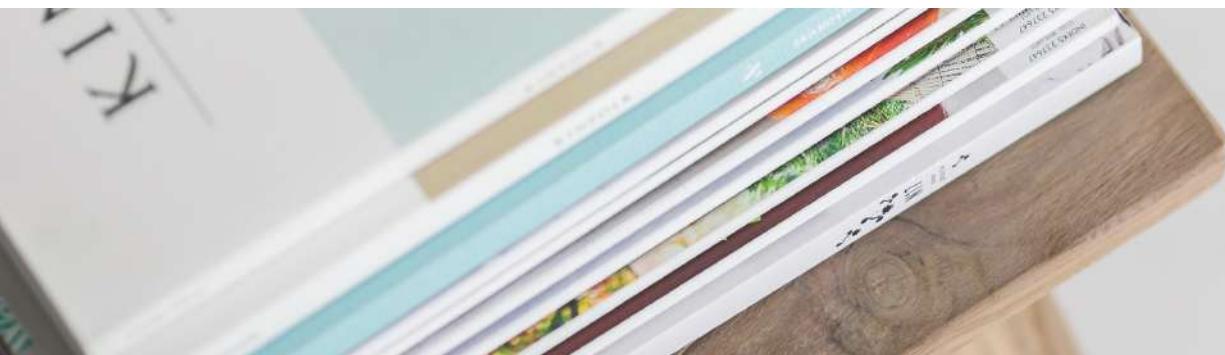


U.n.I Bites

A compilation by the Inclusion & Integration Unit



Lunar New Year

Hari Raya Puasa

National Day

Mid-Autumn Festival

Deepavali

International Migrants Day
(Special Edition)

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

MID-AUTUMN FESITVAL ISSUE 4

SEPTEMBER 2021

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: Shiu 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

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



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

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL ISSUE 4
•
SEPTEMBER 2021

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.

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

NATIONAL DAY ISSUE 4

•
AUGUST 2021



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

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

NATIONAL DAY ISSUE 4 • AUGUST 2021



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

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.

HARI RAYA PUASA ISSUE 4
•
MAY 2021

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://ereresources.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://ereresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1767_2011-02-11.html

⁵ Muthia Nurmuflida, Gervasius H. Wangrimen, Risty Reinalta, 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://ereresources.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

HARI RAYA PUASA ISSUE 4

MAY 2021



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 filing 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-ondeh or Klepon." Michelin Guide. Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://guide.michelin.com/sg/en/article/dining-in/recipe-for-ondeh-ondeh-or-klepon>

LUNAR NEW YEAR: NEW YEAR FOODS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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 choi (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

LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 4

•
FEBRUARY 2021



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://ereresources.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 Beitler, 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."

LUNAR NEW YEAR: NEW YEAR FOODS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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.

LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 4
•
FEBRUARY 2021



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

•
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](#).

DEEPAVALI: ACTUAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

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



Photo Credit: [Udayaditya Barua](#)

Thanksgiving prayers and pujas

Deepavali, also known as the 'Festival of Lights', is celebrated in Singapore and around the world. For many Hindu families, performing prayers and *pujas* (prayer rituals) before the deity Lakshmi is an important part of the celebrations. As the goddess of prosperity, fertility and good fortune,¹ farming families traditionally gave thanks for the harvest, while merchants sought blessings for the financial year ahead.² The morning of Deepavali involves thanksgiving prayers and *pujas* conducted at the family shrine, where young family members receive blessings from their elders.³

Visiting temples, family and friends

After performing prayers and *pujas* at home, families visit the temple to join communal offerings and prayers. Temple prayers are led by a priest and food is often provided.⁴ At dusk, family and friends gather and light *diya* (oil lamps) to brighten windows and doorways.⁵

DEEPAVALI ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2020

Did you know...



Photo credit: [Isuann L.](#)

Lighting oil lamps (*diya*) is a traditional activity that gives the 'Festival of Lights' its name.⁵

In South India, it is believed the demon king Naraka, who is likened to darkness, was defeated by Lord Krishna to bring brightness to people's lives. In Northern India, firecrackers and oil lamps celebrate Lord Rama of Ayuthya's victory against demon Ravana.⁶ Lights displayed during Deepavali celebrate these mythical victories and signify that only light can counter darkness.⁷

At night, when it is time to visit and welcome family and friends, oil lamps are lit to invite fortune and the goddess Lakshmi into people's homes.⁸

¹ Heiligman, Deborah, and Vasudha Narayanan. *Celebrate Diwali: with Sweets, Lights and Fireworks*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008.

² Kinsley, David R. *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008.

³ Ho, Stephanie. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. October 13, 2014. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=deepavali.

⁴ Hong, Xinying. "Deepavali 2015: Religious Rites and Rituals at a South Indian Hindu Temple in Singapore." Yahoo! News. November 5, 2015. <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/deepavali-2015-religious-rites-rituals-035007827.html>.

⁵ "Happy Diwali". National Geographic Education Resource Library. Accessed 11 September 2020. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/happy-diwali/>

⁶ Ho, Stephanie. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. October 13, 2014. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=deepavali.

⁷ "Happy Diwali". National Geographic Education Resource Library. Accessed 11 September 2020. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/happy-diwali/>

⁸ Ho, Stephanie. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. October 13, 2014. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=deepavali.

DEEPAVALI: ACTUAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

Rangoli is a form of floor design used to decorate doorways and welcome deities during Deepavali.⁹

Colourful patterns are created on the ground using rice, flour, flower petals, powder or coloured sand to symbolise prosperity and prevent evil from entering the household.¹⁰ The bright and intricate rangoli designs make use of symmetry and continuous lines as any gaps or break in the patterns are believed to allow evil spirits to enter.¹¹

The decorative patterns play an important role in welcoming guests during the festive season¹² and the designs are traditionally passed down from each generation, often by female family members.¹³



Photo credit: [McKay Savage](#)

DEEPAVALI ISSUE 3
•
NOVEMBER 2020

Did you know...



Photo Credit: [Christin Hume](#)

Taking an oil bath very early in the morning is a traditional practice by many Hindus during Deepavali. Three drops of oil are placed on the forehead before the morning bath, and the ritual is believed to be as significant as taking a bath in India's sacred Ganges river.¹⁴

Rangoli designs are also an act of charity and are traditionally made of edible items to feed insects and birds.¹⁵ A new rangoli design may therefore be redrawn daily during the festive season to keep the patterns bright and prominent.¹⁶

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2021, where we cover the types of food that are part of the Deepavali celebrations.

⁹ "Deepavali". Visit Singapore, Singapore Tourism Board. Accessed 11 September 2020. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/cultural-festivals/deepavali/>.

¹⁰ M, Renuka. "Kolam." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. May 21, 2002. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_605_2004-12-23.html?s=rangoli.

¹¹ "Rangoli." Roots.sg, National Heritage Board. Accessed June 13, 2020. <https://www.roots.sg/learn/resources/ich/rangoli>.

¹² "Rangoli, a Colourful Tradition to Usher in Deepavali." The Straits Times. November 10, 2015. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/rangoli-a-colourful-tradition-to-usher-in-deepavali>

¹³ "Rangoli." Roots.sg, National Heritage Board. Accessed June 13, 2020. <https://www.roots.sg/learn/resources/ich/rangoli>.

¹⁴ Ho, Stephanie. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. October 13, 2014. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=deepavali.

¹⁵ Ho, Stephanie. "Deepavali." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. October 13, 2014. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_559_2005-01-04.html?s=deepavali.

¹⁶ "Rangoli." Roots.sg, National Heritage Board. Accessed June 13, 2020. <https://www.roots.sg/learn/resources/ich/rangoli>.