

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)

HARI RAYA PUASA: HARI RAYA IN SINGAPORE

HARI RAYA PUASA ISSUE 5

MAY 2022

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

Hari Raya Puasa, also known as Hari Raya Aidilfitri or Eid-Al-Fitr, marks the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.¹ In the lead-up to Hari Raya Puasa, light-ups and bazaars around **Geylang Serai** and **Kampong Gelam** are part of Singapore's annual calendar of festivities.²



Geylang Serai light up - Photo Credit: yeowatzup / Wikimedia

The bazaars traditionally include rows of stalls selling clothes, gifts, accessories and a variety of food such as *beef rendang* (beef stew cooked with spices), *ketupat* (rice cakes wrapped in coconut leaves) and *kueh* (traditional desserts).³ In 2022, lights and arches can be found along roads such as Changi Road, Geylang Road and Sims Avenue, displaying festive decorations and symbols such as floral designs and oil lamps.⁴

In Singapore, various festive symbols mark the Hari Raya Puasa celebrations:

- **Ketupat** (rice cake wrapped with coconut leaves) are a key part of celebrations and weaving the coconut leaves was a common family activity. Today, it is less common for families to weave ketupat at home due to the skill and mastery required.⁵



Ketupat - Photo Credit: Mufid Majnun / Unsplash

- **Green packets** containing money, or *duit raya*, are given by working adults to children and elderly people as a gift.⁶
- **Oil lamps** were once homemade and lit as part of the festivities but today, families more commonly use modern decorative lights to light up their homes.⁷

¹ "Hari Raya Puasa". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/hari-raya-puasa>

² Ng Keng Gene. "Ramadan bazaars, Hari Raya light-ups to return in Kampong Glam and Geylang Serai". The Straits Times. March 15, 2022. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/community/ramadan-bazaars-hari-raya-light-ups-to-return-at-kampong-glam-and-geylang-serai>

³ "Festivals in Singapore". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/festivals-in-singapore/festivals-in-singapore>

⁴ Jessie Lim. "Geylang Serai glitters with lights for Hari Raya as bazaar returns after 2-year hiatus". The Straits Times. March 25, 2022. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/community/geylang-serai-glitters-with-lights-for-hari-raya-as-bazaar-returns-after-2-year-hiatus>

⁵ "Weaving Ketupat". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/weaving-ketupat>

⁶ "Ramadan Together". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/Ramadan-Together>

⁷ Mazelan Anuar and Heirwin Mohd Nasir and Sharon Koh. "Hari Raya Puasa". Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed March 8, 2022. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_919_2004-12-20.html

HARI RAYA PUASA: HARI RAYA IN SINGAPORE

HARI RAYA PUASA ISSUE 5

MAY 2022

Hari Raya Puasa falls on the first day of the 10th month of the Islamic calendar.⁸ It is not a fixed date and varies each year. This results in Hari Raya Puasa occasionally coinciding with other major cultural holidays in Singapore and gives rise to a unique tradition.

Kongsi Raya, also known as Gongxi Raya, combines the term *kongsi* (which means 'share' in Malay but also sounds similar to *gongxi* - the Lunar New Year greeting in Mandarin meaning 'congratulations') and *raya* (the Malay word for 'celebration').⁹ The term was coined when Hari Raya Puasa and Lunar New Year coincided in the same week from 1996 to 1998.¹⁰ As the two celebrations only meet every 33 years, Kongsi Raya will only occur again in 2029.¹¹



Hari Raya Puasa decorations along Geylang Road – Choo Yut Shing / Flickr

Deepa Raya was similarly coined when Hari Raya Puasa fell within three days of Deepavali from 2004 to 2006.¹² Deepavali, also known as Diwali or the 'Festival of Lights', celebrates the victory of good over evil.¹³



Hari Raya Puasa treats at Kampong Gelam – User:Sengkang / Wikimedia



Clothing sold at the Geylang Serai bazaar – Choo Yut Shing / Flickr

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2023, where we cover Hari Raya Puasa celebrations across the region.

⁸ "Hari Raya Puasa." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 10, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/hari-raya-puasa>

⁹ "Everything is Illuminated". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/Everything-Is-Illuminated>

¹⁰ Mazelan Anuar and Heirwin Mohd Nasir and Sharon Koh. "Hari Raya Puasa". Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed March 8, 2022. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_919_2004-12-20.html

¹¹ "Everything is Illuminated". Roots.gov.sg. Accessed March 23, 2022. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/Everything-Is-Illuminated>

¹² Mazelan Anuar and Heirwin Mohd Nasir and Sharon Koh. "Hari Raya Puasa". Infopedia. National Library Board. Accessed March 8, 2022. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_919_2004-12-20.html

¹³ Singapore Tourism Board. "Deepavali." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed March 9, 2022. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/cultural-festivals/deepavali/>

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

NATIONAL DAY ISSUE 4

AUGUST 2021

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>

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL: ABOUT BEING TOGETHER

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL ISSUE 4

SEPTEMBER 2021

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.

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: Shih Rong Yong/Flickr



Photo Credit: Martin Adams/Unsplash

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

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL ISSUE 4

SEPTEMBER 2021

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

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.

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

DEEPAVALI ISSUE 4

NOVEMBER 2021

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: Thamizhparithi 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.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

ISSUE 2
•
DECEMBER 2021

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

Nations such as Singapore are founded on the migration of people and the converging of cultures, traditions, and ways of life. As we approach International Migrants Day 2021, we explore three familiar locations in Singapore, and how the migration of people has played a key role in making Singapore the vibrant city-state it is today.



Photo credit: Boule/Shutterstock

Singapore was set up as a free port in the early 19th century.¹ As the port flourished, Singapore's population grew exponentially, with different migrant communities arriving to make Singapore their home.²

In an attempt to enforce order, the British implemented the 'Raffles Town Plan', creating separate 'enclaves' for the various migrant communities, such as the Europeans, Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Bugis.³ Under the plan, present-day **Chinatown** was allocated to the Chinese community, and the Malay, Arab and Bugis communities were assigned **Kampong Gelam**.⁴ The Indian community eventually moved to a point north of the river to an area now known as **Little India**.⁵

Do you know...

Although on paper, these communities were segregated to live in separate areas, these divides were not fully observed.⁶ This is evident, for example, in the construction of various places of worship in a single area – Singapore has the only Chinatown in the world with a Buddhist temple, mosque and Hindu temple all on the same street.⁷



Sri Mariamman Hindu Temple in Chinatown
Photo credit: sunsetman/Shutterstock

¹ Tan, Joanna. "Port of Singapore." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed September 29, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2018-04-20_085007.html

² "Becoming a Cosmopolitan Port City." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/becoming-a-cosmopolitan-port-city/becoming-a-cosmopolitan-port-city>

³ "Plan of the Town of Singapore", also known as the "Jackson Plan", Singapore, 1828, lithograph." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/the-singapore-story-through-60-objects/colonial/jackson-plan/story>

⁴ Singapore Tourism Board. "Kampong Gelam." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/see-do-singapore/places-to-see/kampong-gelam/>

⁵ "Becoming a Cosmopolitan Port City." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/becoming-a-cosmopolitan-port-city/becoming-a-cosmopolitan-port-city>

⁶ "Plan of the Town of Singapore", also known as the "Jackson Plan", Singapore, 1828, lithograph." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/stories-landing/stories/the-singapore-story-through-60-objects/colonial/jackson-plan/story>

⁷ Singapore Tourism Board. "Chinatown." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed September 29, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/see-do-singapore/places-to-see/chinatown/>

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2021



Colourful facade in Little India - Photo credit: Luciano Mortula/Shutterstock

The area now known as **Little India** was mostly home to Europeans in the 1840s as the racecourse built in the area served as their social gathering point.⁸ Over time, the area became known for cattle trading conducted by Indian migrant workers, eventually resulting in a congregation of various goods and services for the growing Indian community.⁹



Sultan Mosque in Kampong Gelam - Photo credit: Sean Hsu/Shutterstock

Historically an area designated to the Muslim community, the street names around **Kampong Gelam** (also known as **Kampong Glam**) reflect areas within the Muslim world such as 'Kandahar Street' and 'Muscat Street'.¹⁰ Various Muslim migrant communities in turn established their own smaller 'kampongs' (or 'villages' in Malay) within the area, such as Kampong Bugis, Kampong Java and Kampong Malacca.¹¹



Buddha Tooth Relic Temple in Chinatown
Photo credit: Fedor Selivanov/Shutterstock

Chinatown grew rapidly from the mid-19th century with an increase in residential and trade activity. It was originally subdivided by the various Chinese migrant communities, each belonging to a province or dialect group.¹² Each major group such as the Cantonese, Hokkien and Teochew communities had their own streets and centres of activity.¹³

Although these areas continue to be associated with their designated communities, today they exist as vibrant neighbourhoods enjoyed by all; a reminder that present-day Singapore is founded on the migration of people and the converging of cultures.

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2022, where we cover other topics related to International Migrants Day.

⁸ Singapore Tourism Board. "Little India." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed September 29, 2021. www.visitsingapore.com/see-do-singapore/places-to-see/little-india/

⁹ Ong, Christopher. "Little India." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed September 29, 2021.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1456_2009-02-11.html

¹⁰ Cornelius-Takahama, Vernon. "Kampong Glam." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed September 29, 2021.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_249_2004-12-16.html

¹¹ Cornelius-Takahama, Vernon. "Kampong Glam."

¹² Cornelius-Takahama, Vernon. "Chinatown." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed September 29, 2021.

https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_734_2005-01-24.html

¹³ Cornelius-Takahama, Vernon. "Chinatown."

LUNAR NEW YEAR

CELEBRATIONS & DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE REGION

LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 5

FEBRUARY 2022

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

Lunar New Year, also referred to as the Spring Festival, is an important celebration across the region and is known as 'Chunjie' in China, 'Tet' in Vietnam, 'Seollal' or 'Seol-nal' in Korea, and 'Losar' in Tibet.¹ The season is commonly marked by spring cleaning, joyous family celebrations, and religious and ancestral ceremonies.² While many similarities exist across the region, there are also differences in the way the festive season is celebrated.



Lo Hei - Photo Credit: Jan/flickr

In Singapore and Malaysia, *yusheng* is a popular Lunar New Year dish of raw fish, vegetables and condiments. While the literal translation of *yusheng* is 'raw fish', its homophones in Mandarin signify abundance and growth and connote well wishes for prosperity and a long life.³ A common sight during Lunar New Year in is the communal tossing of *yusheng*, an act of togetherness referred to as *lo hei*.⁴



Singapore's iconic River Hongbao Lunar New Year event
Photo Credit: Wunna Phyo/Flickr

In Singapore, the River Hongbao has been an iconic Lunar New Year event since 1987.⁵ The display includes cultural elements such as giant lanterns and performances and was held at Gardens by the Bay for the first time in 2021.



Firecrackers - Photo Credit: Victoria Pickering/Flickr

In China, firecrackers were traditionally aimed at keeping evil spirits away. Called *baozhu* or 'bamboo explosions' in Mandarin, firecrackers were originally made of bamboo stems.⁶ Eventually, firecrackers grew to be associated with festive occasions and became a key component of Lunar New Year celebrations.⁷ According to legend, a frightful monster known as *Nian* (which means 'year' in Mandarin) could be kept away with the sounds and fire of the *baozhu*.⁸

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Lunar New Year." Encyclopaedia Britannica, December 1, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lunar-New-Year>

² Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Lunar New Year."

³ National Heritage Board. "Yusheng and Lo Hei." Roots.gov.sg. Accessed December 18, 2021. <https://www.roots.gov.sg/ich-landing/ich/yusheng-and-lo-hei>

⁴ National Heritage Board. "Yusheng and Lo Hei."

⁵ Singapore Tourism Board. "River Hongbao." VisitSingapore.com. Accessed December 18, 2021. <https://www.visitsingapore.com/festivals-events-singapore/annual-highlights/river-hongbao/>.

⁶ Vasu, Suchitthra. "Firecrackers." Singapore Infopedia, National Library Board Singapore, 11 Jan. 2005. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_749_2005-01-11.html

⁷ Vasu, Suchitthra. "Firecrackers."

⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Lunar New Year." Encyclopaedia Britannica, December 1, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lunar-New-Year>

LUNAR NEW YEAR

CELEBRATIONS & DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE REGION

LUNAR NEW YEAR ISSUE 5

FEBRUARY 2022



Lion dance - Photo Credit: Gary Tou/Unsplash

The origins of the lion dance date back more than 1500 years, and the lion costume is believed to have been designed by villagers to help drive away the beast *Nian* on the eve of Lunar New Year.⁹ The performances are typically accompanied by drums, cymbals and gongs and are thought to bring good fortune.¹⁰

In Vietnam, the dance is also referred to as a 'unicorn dance'. With the 'body of an antelope, the feet of a horse and the tail of a buffalo', the unicorn is a symbol of 'intelligence and goodness' and is believed to bring 'peace, happiness and prosperity'.¹¹



Charye (ancestral rite table)
Photo Credit: Dylan Park/Wikimedia

In Korea, *charye* is a tea offering ceremony held at the start of the lunar calendar to honour one's ancestors.¹² Although there are regional differences in the way the ceremony is conducted, it commonly involves a *charye* table with an array of food and drink including rice cake soup, fruit, tea or alcohol.¹³ After the tea offering ceremony, families also visit their ancestors' graves to pay their respects.¹⁴

Look out for our U.n.I Bites in 2023, where we cover other aspects of Lunar New Year.

⁹ Vasu, Suchitthra. "Lion Dance." Infopedia. National Library Board Singapore. Accessed December 18, 2021. https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_57_2004-12-27.html

¹⁰ Vasu, Suchitthra. "Lion Dance."

¹¹ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. "Lion dance welcomes Lunar New Year." National Times, January 28, 2017. <http://nationaltimes.vn/articleDetail.aspx?articleid=3106&sitepageid=632>

¹² Kim, Myungja. "Lunar New Year." Encyclopaedia of Korean Folk Culture, National Folk Museum of Korea. Accessed December 18, 2021. <https://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/4243>

¹³ Kim Eun-young and Lee Jihae. "Ancestral rite tables for Seollal retain sincerity despite differences in setting." Korea.net, January 16, 2020. <https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Culture/view?articleId=181697>

¹⁴ Kim, Myungja. "Lunar New Year." Encyclopaedia of Korean Folk Culture, National Folk Museum of Korea. Accessed December 18, 2021. <https://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/4243>.