Let’s Celebrate — Rituals And Festive Events

Rituals and festive events in George Town are the heart of community life. They constitute beliefs and practices, bringing people from near and far to partake in the celebrations together. The George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site presents a diverse range of rituals and festive events, such as the commemoration of historical events, birth celebrations, wedding ceremonies, funeral rites and large-scale celebrations to honour deities. These multicultural traditions reflect the harmonious coexistence of the different ethnic and social groups, cultures, and religions, contributing to the vibrancy and life in George Town.

The collective and active participation of the multicultural community in these cultural activities allows us to foster strong bonds and establish extensive rapport with one another. In turn, it creates a sense of belonging, togetherness and the identity of George Town.

George Town Heritage Celebrations 2019 highlights the rich diversity and beauty of our community rituals and festive events. Celebration-goers will have the opportunity to experience elements of rituals and festive events over three days through our carefully curated interactive workshops, performances and site visits.

We have also introduced a community-based inventorying project earlier this year to equip our participating communities with hands-on skills to identify and document cultural heritage elements. The output of the inventorying process are shared in this year’s Celebrations to raise public awareness on cultural heritage safeguarding efforts, and encourage collective support to ensure the transmission of cultural heritage to the next generation.

We hope that through these activities, the values and significance of rituals and festive events will be shared with more people, particularly to the youth. More importantly, let’s appreciate the peace and harmony that we have in George Town by respecting and valuing our similarities amidst the diversity.

Join us to safeguard our cultural heritage together, and Let’s Celebrate!

Dr. Ang Ming Chee
Executive Producer
George Town Heritage Celebrations 2019

KATA PENGANTAR

Meraikan Amalan, Upacara Dan Perayaan


Dengan tema Amalan, Upacara dan Perayaan, kami berharap agar para pengunjung Perayaan Warisan tahun ini berpeluang untuk merasai dan mendalami sendiri amalan, upacara dan perayaan melalui penganjuran bengkel-bengkel interaktif, persembahan dan lawatan tapak.

Pada awal tahun ini juga, George Town World Heritage Incorporated telah memulakan projek “Inventori Warisan Kebudayaan Tidak Ketara Berdasarkan kepada Komuniti di George Town” untuk melengkappkan fasilitator tempatan dengan kemahiran dalam melaksanakan inventori dan memberi peluang kepada komuniti untuk mengenal pasti dan memahami warisan kebudayaan tidak ketara di George Town yang bertumpu kepada amalan, upacara dan perayaan bagi tujuan pemeliharaan. Sebahagian daripada hasil proses inventori tersebut akan dikongsi dalam sambutan Perayaan Warisan pada tahun ini dengan tujuan untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dan memupuk kerjasama orang ramai dalam usaha memelihara warisan budaya.

Pasukan saya berterima kasih di atas sokongan dan penyertaan aktif daripada masyarakat George Town semasa perancangan dan pengajianan perayaan ini. Sambutan meriah dan sokongan sedemikian telah membawa kepada kita memupuk ikatan persaudaraan dan mewujudkan hubungan kerjasama yang erat di antara satu sama lain. Ia juga mewujudkan rasa jati diri, perpaduan dan mencerminkan identiti George Town.

Marilah kita menghargai keamanan dan keharmonian yang telah terjalin di George Town dan meraihnya bersama amalan, upacara dan perayaan di George Town di bulan Julai ini.

Dr. Ang Ming Chee
Penerbit Eksekutif
Perayaan Warisan George Town 2019
儀式與節慶

儀式與節慶是喬治市社區生活的核心，它構成社群信仰與習俗，並凝聚遠近社群，彼此同歡共慶。

喬治市世界遺產區擁有多姿多彩的儀式與節慶，其中包括歷史事件紀念日、誕生慶祝、婚慶、殯葬儀式以及規模龐大的宗教和神祇慶典。這些多元化傳統充分體現了各族裔、社群、文化、宗教在喬治市的和諧共存，也使今天的喬治市依然充滿活力與生命力。

多元文化社區積極參與併分享彼此文化活動，能培養出屬於我們的文化紐帶，創造出對彼此文化更廣泛的滲透與聯繫。這將使人們加強對喬治市的認同和歸屬感，和睦共處。

2019年喬治市入選慶典將突出在地社區多姿多彩、美麗而富饒的多元文化慶典與儀式。參與慶典的民衆將通過三天全心策劃的互動工作坊、各色演出和古跡巡禮，體驗儀式和節慶的豐富元素。

今年年初，喬治市世界遺產機構也開始推行“喬治市非物質文化遺產社區普查計劃：儀式與節慶”，為參與的社區成員提供培訓，以讓他們親自鑑定與記錄自身文化遺產。社區普查計劃的部分成果也在此次慶典中與民衆分享，以提高維護文化遺產意識，鼓勵社區集體參與，使文化遺產代代傳承。

通過這類活動，我們希望與更多人，尤其是青少年群體分享儀式和節慶的價值與意義。更重要的是，我們能夠學習互相尊重和珍惜異己共存的社會文化，更加珍惜喬治市所擁有的和諧氛圍。

讓我們一起守護文化遺產，大家來同歡共慶吧！

洪敏芝博士
執行總監
2019年喬治市入選慶典
In life, we are surrounded by Rituals and Festive Events.

Ritual can be understood as an action performed as a common practice. It can be a result of religious beliefs, or societal ideas and expectations.

Festive Event or Festival is commonly known as an event celebrated by a community centring on a shared theme or unique characteristics, and usually conducted to fulfill a particular communal purpose.

Some rituals help to mark the different stages of our lives, such as celebrations for newborn babies, the coming of age, and marriage. With the help of special gestures, clothing, food, words, songs, dances, and objects, we receive acknowledgment from our community, as well as blessings from our peers, the elders, and those younger than us.

There are also rituals and festivals that mark the passing of the seasons, in particular events in the agricultural calendar. Although most of us live in an urban context today, many still practise and celebrate these events that often take place at special times and places, of which a community is reminded of their worldview and history.

Often, and in particular for George Town, rituals and festivals are open to all members of society and conducted as a key part of public life. For example, we celebrate the New Year, the beginning of Spring, and the end of harvest of different cultural, ethnic and religious groups with an open heart and welcoming arms. Malaysia has many rituals and festive events, and we are among the countries with the most public holidays on the national calendar. Through the preparation of these rituals and festivals, we learn to work with each other, and be unified despite our differences.

We hope that this year’s theme will help you in understanding a bit more of the rituals and festivals that George Town has to offer. Our rituals and festivals may differ from one another, but we truly share the motivations and appreciation of these special moments in life.

Theme

Rituals And Festive Events

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In Malay weddings, the groom arrives to fetch his bride with a kompang (traditional musical instrument) entourage. The kompang drumming begins the moment the groom steps off his vehicle until he arrives at the entrance of the bride's house. This would notify everyone of his arrival. Along the way, the kompang members usually sing verses praising Prophet Muhammad and wedding songs.

The ceremony then continues with Semarak, a silat performance. Two persons will fight with fans made of peacock feathers, to mimic peacocks during courting. It requires a songket (handwoven fabric) with peacock motif for the ‘battle’. After that, a prayer is said before the bride is brought out to meet her groom.

The newlywed couple then proceeds to sit on the pelamin (bridal couch) for the wedding ceremony. The parents would begin the “adat merenjis” in which a mixture of rose water and bunga rampai is sprinkled on the couple to symbolise cleansing. Throughout the wedding, the kompang entourage will play wedding songs.

The groom would make a grand entrance with his kompang troupe, bunga manggar carriers, friends and relatives. To have some fun, we at the bride’s side would try to prevent him from reaching the bride. This often requires him having to give a present (money) in order to get through.

Noor Jannah binti Abd Rashid, Age: 63

Semoga kekal abadi sehingga ke anak cucu.

May the newlywed couple be blessed with a long-lasting marriage for many generations. What other blessings can you say to the couple at the pelamin?
The night before the wedding, Maruthani Iravu is conducted, usually taking place before the Isyak or Maghrib prayers. It is an Indian Muslim ceremony to beautify the bride who would be sitting on the pelamin (bridal couch).

The ceremony begins with a prayer for the bride before the sprinkling of rose water and bunga rampai. Then, the ladies will take turns to place the inai paste and jasmine flowers into the betel leaf held by the bride. An odd set number of the bride’s elderly and married female relatives are chosen to perform this ceremony. Thus, the bride must always tilt her head down as a sign of respect to them.

The guests will enjoy a feast prepared by the bride’s family before proceeding to complete the ceremony. The inai placed in the betel leaf is now applied onto the bride’s fingers, palms and toes, thus beautifying the bride for her wedding.

Inai

Inai leaves are used as a colour dye for skin or hair. They are usually grounded into a paste before being used to add glow to the skin or hair.

The longer the colour stays, the more glow fills the wedding. As the Muslim community prohibits the use of nail polish, inai is used as a beautifying tool to keep the husbands attracted to their bride.

Hajah Julaiha Begum binti Haji Mohd Sultan, Age: 67

Ya Allah, intha manapen chirum serrapummaga vazha iru karan doa seigrom.

Dear Allah, bless her that she may live happily with her husband and children in a happy, married life. Do you know when these words of blessing are said during Maruthani Iravu?
The first day of first grade in school is a milestone worth celebrating. The Germans call this day “Einschulung” in which the family celebrates the child officially embarking on his or her primary education when they turn six.

On this day, the child wakes up early to go to school. There are no actual classes for the children but they will receive an introduction to the school. They will also be given a Schultüte - a cone-shaped bag filled with treats, toys and stationery - prepared by their parents. They will then stand in front of the school and have their photos taken with their Schultüte.

This marks the beginning of a new chapter in the child’s education journey.

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Schultüte

Schultüte is a cone-shaped bag filled with treats, toys and stationery made by the parents for the child. It is usually filled with things that the child likes or that reflects his or her personality traits.

Although ready-made Schultüte is available in stores, nowadays there is a revived interest in handmade things. Some parents make them when their kids are in kindergarten, just before they enter primary school. My friend and I made Schultüte together for my two children for their first day to school after asking them for a theme.

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Wir wünschen dir alles Gute zum ersten Schultag.

Wishing you all the best as you start school.

Can you say ‘All the best’ in German?

Eva Rothmeier, Age: 38

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Getting married on the right date is important. Thus, a ceremony known as Nitchayatartam is carried out at the bride’s house to pick an auspicious date for the wedding.

On this day, the groom with his family and relatives will present five or more (odd number) round-shaped stainless steel Varisai trays consisting of pottu, rose water, betel leaves, nuts, coconuts, flower garlands, fruits, laddu, nei urundai, sweets and saree.

The bride’s side will welcome them and receive the trays before sitting down to decide on the wedding date with the help of a priest/coordinator. Those involved in this process cannot be widows/widowers.

After that, the bride puts on the saree and flower garlands given by the groom while he performs some prayers. After the prayers are done, the bride and groom exchange rings. Then everyone enjoys a mostly-vegetarian feast.

Nei Urundai

Nei Urundai is an Indian traditional sweet used to represent a blessing of sweetness to the newlywed couple.

As sweet items are compulsory in any auspicious occasion to symbolise the sweetness in life, Nei Urundai must be in a perfect ball without cracks.

Poomani A/P Kalamagham, Age: 56

Pathinaarum petru peruvvalu vazhga.

Wishing you 16 elements of wealth of life. What are the 16 elements of wealth in this string of blessing?
Hinamatsuri falls on the third of March, also the beginning of the peach festival, as the blossoming of peach trees usually begins in March. These blossoms are traditionally believed to ward off malevolent spirits.

During the Heian period (794 – 1185), an annual festival was held to pray to the gods for good health and good fortune. As part of the festival, straw dolls seated on paper boats were floated out to the sea.

These dolls represented their human makers to bring along any misfortune out to sea. Today, only a few shrines hold the Doll Floating Festival as most people choose to celebrate with Hina dolls at home.

Families would decorate their house with Hina dolls and celebrate the day with Shirozake (non-alcoholic white wine), Hina Arare (colourful rice crackers) and Hishimochi (diamond-shaped multi-coloured rice cakes).

Hina Dolls

In Japan, girls are traditionally given Hina doll sets, which they keep for life. The Hina dolls are usually displayed on a Hinadan (seven-tier stand with red carpet), with 15 sets of dolls.

The dolls function as dummies which take away evil spirits. By displaying the dolls once a year, the parents wish their daughters good health and longevity. It is said that the girls have to put away the dolls right after the Hina Festival or she will not be married until an old age.

Hirano Hiroko, Age: 71

うれしいひなまつり

Ureshii Hinamatsuri.

Wishing you good luck in life. Do you know how Japanese girls greet each other during Hinamatsuri?
Duo Zhei means the first birthday of a person. It is one of the most important and joyous celebrations of one’s life for making it through the first year.

On the day itself, there will be prayers to the ancestors at the altar. Fruits and a whole chicken (with unfolded legs) will be offered as an offering.

After the prayers, the one-year-old sits at the threshold of the main door to eat the chicken legs. The unfolded legs are believed to bring a smooth life journey to the child’s future.

After that, a game of “First Grab” takes place. Several objects are placed around the child and the first object he or she grabs reflects her future career path. It also signifies the beginning of the child’s journey in life.

First Grab
Traditionally, the “First Grab” ceremony functions as a prediction for the baby’s future, and with it comes good wishes and prosperity. The objects are placed with auspicious connotations.

“Of course, the “First Grab” is not to be taken literally. Rather, it is a form of blessing that we would want to surround the baby with, and well wishes. The age of one is when a baby takes his or her first step, so we hope that it would be a good start.”

Saw Soh Lan, Age: 70

Jeng Tho Ho Ho.

Wishing you a bright future. Do you know what needs to be said after the baby grabs their first object?
Sangeet is the Sanskrit word for “singing together”. A long time ago, only female attendees from both sides of the family could take part in this celebration. Today, the men are allowed to join in as well and relish the happiness and joy surrounding the couple. A Rangoli pattern is also created to signify welcome and good well-being.

It used to be a 10-day celebration of singing and dancing before the wedding day. However, it is now celebrated two or three days before the Mehndi ceremony. Some families even combine Sangeet and Mehndi nights together to fit all the wedding events into one week.

Sangeet is normally held at the bride’s home or at a separate banquet hall as the bride’s family would need to welcome the groom’s family by singing Suhaag (a traditional folk song). It is followed by singing by the elder female family members with songs focusing on the bride. The dance floor is then open to commemorate the other celebrations after the Sangeet.

Rangoli is an art form created on the floor with coloured rice, dry flour, coloured sand or flower petals. It is more than just a decoration; it is a holy ritual to bring good luck.

One of the most popular and auspicious rangoli patterns is the peacock, which is associated with the deity Lakshmi. It represents benevolence, patience, kindness, compassion and good luck. In weddings, we usually draw two peacocks to form a heart shape in the middle.

Dipika Sanjaykumar, Age: 50

Collect stamp at community station

Navdampati Ne Subheksha

Only the best wishes for the newlyweds! Let’s learn how to wish the bride and groom all the best at Gujarati weddings!
In Peranakan culture, mothers enter the pantang period (confinement) of 30 days after giving birth to a child. After which, a ceremony called Mua Guek is performed to announce the end of the pantang period and celebrate the arrival of the newborn baby.

In the past, after thanksgiving prayers to ancestors on the day, the father would bring the newborn baby to visit the homes of his relatives. He would bring along a wooden basket called Sia Nah. It was usually filled with food items such as Ang Koo Kueh (red tortoise cake), red eggs, pickled ginger slices, turmeric glutinous rice, curry chicken and empty plates to place portions of the food. These foods signify bliss and abundance.

The relatives would then return the favour by giving ang pau (red packet containing money), mee sua (longevity noodles), raw eggs, sugar, wintermelon, ang zo (jujube or red dates) or peanuts. Some might even give gold to the baby. All these are placed in the Sia Nah as a blessing to the newborn child. For this ceremony, the father can also opt to invite all the relatives to their home.

If the baby is a boy, an even number of Ang Koo Kueh will be given to the relatives. If the baby is a girl, an odd number of the kueh will be given instead. The word ‘koo’ means turtle, symbolising long life.

Ang Koo Kueh

The shape and form of an Ang Koo Kueh depend on the gender of the newborn. For a boy, the dumpling would be round-shaped and elongated like a razor clam. For a girl, it would be flat with a turtle pattern.

Lily Wong Chiew Lee, Age: 57

If the baby is a boy, an even number of Ang Koo Kueh will be given to the relatives. If the baby is a girl, an odd number of the kueh will be given instead. The word ‘koo’ means turtle, symbolising long life.

Th’ng Hoay Siew

Wishing you a long life. What is the significance of Ang Koo Kueh in the Peranakan Mua Guek celebration?
An important thing that the Hainanese do when a newborn is 30 days old is shaving the baby's lanugo (fetal hair). The baby will not be brought to the temple unless they have undergone the shaving process first.

Before presenting the baby to the temple deities, the family first pays homage to the ancestors at the altar at home. This is to inform the ancestors of a new member in the family and to ask for blessings for the child. An array of food is presented at the altar including a whole boiled chicken, pork, lettuce, celery, spring onion, pastries, fruits, betel nuts and the compulsory Hainanese delicacies Art Bhua and Yit Bhua (different types of sticky rice cake).

There are also red eggs prepared by the grandmothers to signify good growth, and marking it as a happy occasion.

 Relatives will slip ang pau (red packet containing money) into the baby’s clothes or give the child gold bangles for prosperity. The maternal grandmother will also make a set of red clothes for the baby to wear on Mua Gue day.

Art Bhua is a plain sticky rice cake coated with desiccated coconut offered to ancestors during Mua Gue. It is normally served to the guests along with roasted pork and Yit Bhua, stuffed sticky rice cake.

“Art Bhua is round in shape to signify reunion. It is also a sweet delicacy to represent sweetness in life.”

Tan Chiew Lan, Age: 78 & Tan Chiew Kin, Age: 61

保佑子孙平安顺利

Pui jyou gia tun, pueh wua tun li.

Wishing you a prosperous and safe life. What other Hainanese wishes can you say to a newborn baby during Mua Gue?
Sadangu Kazhithal is conducted after a Chettiar girl’s first menstruation ends. For the next 16 days, she will be fed with nutritious food to make her womb strong.

On the 16th day, the girl is given a bath before she dresses up in new clothes to stand on a thadukku (small mat) placed in a kolam design. Neem leaves are placed on her head, shoulders, wrists and feet. A steel ladle is used to strike off these leaves three times. The process is repeated three times using Keppai bread to replace the leaves.

After this ritual, food items including Keppai bread are circled around the girl’s head before they are taken out of the house, which is the purification process. Three other items - a lamp, jar and brass pot filled with water - are circled around her head again.

These are kept in the house. To ward off evil, the girl takes a shower and dresses up again. This time, aarathi (ritual of worship with light) is circled around her head before it is being thrown out of the house.

Keppai bread is a millet seed pancake made especially for Sadangu Kazhithal. It is used to absorb impurity and chase away evil spirits.

Only women are allowed to be involved in Sadangu Kazhithal. The girl is blessed by all the elders and receives gifts to celebrate the completion of the ceremony, followed by a celebration feast with family and relatives. The men will only join in the feast but they are the ones paying for the ceremony.

Dr. Punithavathi Narayanan, Age: 70

Wishing you good things and a prosperous life. What nutritious food should a girl eat upon reaching puberty?

Seerum sirappumaaka vaazhka.
One of the ceremonies performed at a Telugu wedding is Pellilo Jillakarra Bellam - aligning the couple’s wavelength for an unbreakable bond. It begins with the groom performing some rituals on his own before he sits down. A cloth is held up to prevent the bride and groom from seeing each other as she comes to take her place beside him.

Sitting together, the groom’s family will prepare the Jillakarra Bellam, a blend of cumin and jaggery (cane sugar) placed on a betel leaf. The couple will apply the Jillakarra Bellam on each other’s heads before the cloth is removed. In the past, this would be the first time for the couple to meet each other.

It is believed that Jillakarra Bellam emits positive energy when the couple faces each other. It signifies an unbreakable bond between them through bitter and sweet times.

After this ceremony, they will proceed to tie the knot in another ceremony. The wedding ends with a feast of vegetarian food and traditional sweets and delicacies such as Gongora.

Gongora is a traditional delicacy made from Gongora, also known as Roselle leaves. It is well loved by the community and is often consumed with rice.

The couple serves Gongora at their wedding to show appreciation for their guests who turn up to give blessings to their marriage.

Nokkal Amma, Age: 71

Muddu puvvulu arru kayallu sallaga undalli.

Wishing you a double portion of all that you wish for. Can you find out the name of the ceremony in which they tie the knot?
When a Hakka baby turns one month old, the parents will invite relatives and friends to their house for the Man Nyiet ceremony. The ceremony begins with thanksgiving for the child and asking the ancestors for blessings at the altar. Pork trotters with vinegar, Ang Koo Kueh (red tortoise cake) and Zhi Pa (glutinous rice cake) are among the traditional offerings presented to the ancestors. At the end of it, everyone eats together.

Before the guests leave, each of them are given Ang Koo Kueh and red eggs. In return, they will give the baby an ang pau (red packet containing money) as a blessing. The baby will be dressed in new clothes and leaves the house for the first time.

The parents will usually bring the baby to a crowded place with the hope that they would not be shy but sociable instead when grown up. The family must return home by nightfall.

Zhi Pa
Made of glutinous rice flour, Zhi Pa is one of the must-have delicacies during the Man Nyiet ceremony. It is presented to the ancestors at the altar for the blessing of fast growth and safety of the baby.

A good Zhi Pa must be chewy, and yet not too sticky. It symbolises unity and the sharing of joy and happiness.

Annie Goh, Age: 49

平平安安
快快大
Phing phing on on, kiak kiak thai.

Be safe and sound, and may you grow tall and strong. What other Hakka wishes do you know for a newborn?
Tirumana Valima Viruntu
Indian Muslim Solemnisation Ceremony
Masjid Kapitan Keling Qaryah Committee and
Indian Muslim Community Organization Malaysia

Tirumana Valima Viruntu is the solemnisation ceremony in which the groom will perform the akad nikah (solemnisation of marriage) ceremony in front of the Tok Kadi (marriage officiant) and family members at the mosque prayer hall. He will sign a marriage certificate, which is passed to the bride seated in the side chamber for her agreement before it is returned to the Tok Kadi. She then joins the groom in the prayer hall.

The groom hands over the mas kahwin (dowry) to the bride before placing a ring on her finger. They then perform the “batal air sembahyang” (breaking of ablution) ritual and officially become husband and wife.

After Tirumana Valima Viruntu, the groom has to stay at the bride’s house for three days. On the third day, his family comes over to bring the couple home. Both families will play games to get to know each other better. One of these games includes the Pallanguli.

Pallanguli
Pallanguli is a traditional game played by the couple at the bride’s house on the third day after the Tirumana Valima Viruntu ceremony. It signifies the building of the newlyweds’ relationship, and relatives will be present to offer guidance and suggestions.

“Back in the olden days, we used biji asam (tamarind seeds) or shells as seeds in Pallanguli. Today, we use marbles or coins instead.”

— Hajah Sajitha Beevi binti Haji Samsudin, Age: 60

Irumanam sernthu oru manam aaga paiaandu vazha vazthukirom.

Two hearts become one. May you live a long life together. Do you know how to pronounce the word ‘love’ in Tamil?
The night or two before a Sikh wedding day, a ceremony known as Gaun Batonna is held. Gaun means “song” or “to sing”. Hence, it is also known as Sangeet Night or the Musical Night. This ceremony is solely conducted to relish the happiness and joy surrounding the couple.

Gaun Batonna is held at the bride’s house but the groom and his family are also invited to attend. Before the party begins, female members of the family will sing Suhaag, a traditional folk song about marriage. Then, the bride’s side will perform Giddha, an energetic dance performed during happy occasions.

After that, the guests are invited to sing and dance together on a large common dance floor. The singing and dancing are a social bonding to connect the two families together, as well as to the bride and groom.

Giddha

Giddha is a vibrant and inviting dance performance that involves the clapping of hands and dancing of feet. It is believed that those involved in Giddha are dancing to have some fun and making themselves happy.

“Those who are singers, they cannot stay quiet, and those who are dancers, they cannot keep still. So come, I will sing, and you dance. I sing, you dance. Hold my hands and dance.”

This is what we usually sing to get people to join in the party.

Simarjeet Kaur Dhillon, Age: 50

“Vadhayi hovey Vadhayi, Sarey Mail nu Vadhayi. Aa Jo Ni Aa Jo, Aa si vi Nachiye teh saree ya nu Nachiye.

Come, girls, come, let’s dance. We will make everyone dance. Let’s learn this line which has the power to make everyone dance!
Something magical happens when you turn 15 as a Teochew - you are celebrated as an individual who is ready to step into adulthood. A ritual known as Cug Hue Hng, which literally means “leaving the garden” where a child plays, is conducted.

Cug Hue Hng happens on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month and everyone who turns 15 will be celebrated. According to Teochew belief, 15 is a marriageable age. Prayers and offerings are therefore offered to the bed guardian deities. The offerings include San Kak Kue, a triangular pouch-shaped dumpling as heartfelt wishes to the person entering adulthood.

The fillings for San Kak Kue differ and each dumpling carries a different meaning such as thriftiness (preserved vegetable), stature and strength (bean sprouts), bright future (beancurd), and longevity and bliss (peanuts).

San Kak Kue
San Kak Kue, as the name indicates, is a triangular dumpling shaped like a money pouch to signify good life and fortune. It brings blessings and good wishes to the person who now has responsibilities as a grown-up.

Besides San Kak Kue, we also offer the bed guardian deities other offerings. There must be three types of meat (fish, chicken and pork), pomegranate flowers and one whole preserved vegetable.

“Take care of yourself and be responsible. Think twice before you act. Be inspired and dedicated to achieve your goal. What other advice do you think parents would give to their 15-year-old child?”

Datin Ng Wei San, Age: 72

Zo nang ai u zeh yim sim, Seng nang lieu oi hue zie gu ze gi, Zo se ai se zoin sio ao, Ai u zing cu sim.

Take care of yourself and be responsible. Think twice before you act. Be inspired and dedicated to achieve your goal. What other advice do you think parents would give to their 15-year-old child?
Back in the olden days, the Malayali bride and groom cannot meet each other for a few days before the wedding. This is when the bride gets anxious as she prepares for their big day. To cheer her up, a special night of dance and songs is organised, known as Mailanchi Raavu.

For the Malayali Muslims on Mailanchi Raavu night, the single ladies from the bride’s side (family and friends) will perform the Oppana, a song and dance performance for the bride to cheer her up.

While the bride is enjoying the performance, the girls who are experts in beauty care would pamper her with manicure and pedicure sessions. This is followed by the traditional Mehndi design drawing on the bride’s hands and feet.

As the Mailanchi Raavu occurs a few days before the wedding, the Mehndi design will be more prominent on the skin on the wedding day.

Oppana

Oppana is a special Malayali Muslim dance to cheer up the bride consisting of 5 to 7 single ladies. They would dance around the bride to make her forget her anxiety and longing for her husband-to-be.

“It’s really like a bachelorette party where there’s music and dancing - all these so that the bride can just relax, be pampered and be loved before her big day.”

Datin Dr Padmaja Dass, Age: 75

May you have 16 children and live a long, healthy life. Find out the meaning behind ‘16 children’ in the Malayali wish to the newlywed couple.

Pathinaru pettu aayur aazogyathode vazhalte.
Majlis Cukur Jambul is a hair shaving ceremony conducted by the Malay community seven days after a baby is born. It may be postponed if the baby's umbilical cord has not yet dropped off. Family, friends and neighbours are invited to participate in this tradition.

During the ceremony, everyone gets to shave off the hair from the baby's head. When everyone has had their turn, the Mak Bidan (midwife) will shave off the remaining hair. White and coloured rice powder will then be applied onto the baby's face.

The baby will be given a bath in water soaked with kaffir lime leaves and sintok roots before being applied with bedak sejuk (cooling rice powder). Wrapped in a batik cloth, the baby is placed in a cradle and the Marhaban (Islamic caroling) is performed, with the recital of prayers and praises for Prophet Muhammad. A feast is held at the end of the ceremony in which bunga telur (egg flower) is given to the guests.

Bunga Telur

For the Malays, bunga telur is an integral part of significant occasions such as Majlis Cukur Jambul, birthdays and weddings. Literally translated to “egg flower”, it symbolises fertility.

The common way is to make the flower with crêpe paper and ribbons. Because we are from Balik Pulau, we get creative and experiment with local materials such as upih pinang (palm frond). The result is a local interpretation of an old practice. We are very happy with it.

Minah Ismail, Age: 71

After shaving, the baby’s hair is placed in a coconut (or bowl) containing water. Do you know what happens to the hair after the celebration?
A Siamese wedding is usually held in the morning before 12pm, involving several ceremonies such as Rod Nam Sang (the shell ceremony).

During the Rod Nam Sang ceremony, the bride and groom adorned with intricate phuang malai (flower garland) will be seated or kneeling next to each other, with the bride on the left. The guests will take turns to bless the couple with priority given to the elders first.

The guests will pour sacred water into the cupped hands of the couple using a Poi Sang shell, a rare item previously used only by the royal family. The water slipping through the couples’ hands will drip into a bowl of flowers.

Only married couples are permitted to participate in Rod Nam Sang. It is customary for the person, while pouring the water, to wish the couple well and give advice on having a good life together.

Phuang Malai
Phuang Malai is a flower garland used to bless people during Thai celebrations - birthdays, weddings, Songkran festival, etc. In Thai, the word phuang means “string” and malai means “garland”.

Phuang Malai has to be made fresh in the morning when the flowers still hold the morning dew for its fragrance. The completed garland is then wrapped with banana leaves to retain its moisture until the wedding day.

May the both of you grow old together, care for each other and be in love forever. Can you say this lovely wish smoothly to a newlywed Thai couple?
A Hokkien wedding day typically begins before the sun rises. The groom will pray to the deities and his ancestors before bowing to his parents. Then he will leave the house with 12 oranges and a red packet for his mother-in-law. Upon reaching the bride’s home, the driver will honk the car horn to announce the groom’s arrival. The bride’s youngest brother will open the car door for the groom with two oranges in exchange for a red packet of blessings. These days, the groom and his entourage would need to play games and pass through challenges before he is allowed to meet the bride.

Throughout the wedding day, the sàng kè rm (mistress of ceremonies) will guide the couple through various rituals, in which she will recite auspicious poems to bless the couple and their families.

When he reaches the bride’s bedroom, her parents will be there to give her away. A tea ceremony then takes place with the bride’s family. Later in the evening, the newlyweds will throw a wedding banquet to announce their marriage and celebrate.

Kau in ê si kù

Kau in ê si kù is a series of Hokkien poems recited by the sàng kè rm (mistress of ceremonies) throughout the wedding ceremony.

“Our role as sàng kè rm is to assist the host family, ensuring the wedding ceremony is smooth and happy. We must be alert at all times because a wedding is a big occasion, we have to take care of everyone’s feelings. A lot of people prefer to use kau in ê si kù as it helps to bring cheer to the atmosphere.”

As a couple, we wish the both of you prosperity and a long-lasting marriage as you grow old together. Learn some Hokkien wishes to bless the newlyweds!
The morning begins with a church service in which the couple exchange vows and rings, and the priest announces them as husband and wife. Family and friends would be there to witness this significant moment.

Traditionally, the party would begin right after the church service. Guests are invited to enjoy a spread of traditional Eurasian delicacies with a free flow of drinks accompanied by a live band performance. The centrepiece would usually be a multi-tiered wedding cake with royal icing coating prepared by the bride’s family. In the past, the top tier would be kept for a year to signify a long-lasting marriage.

After that, the couple opens the dance floor with a graceful waltz. The crowd then joins the dancing with different dance moves and merry-making until the late evening.

Before leaving, the bride would toss her flower bouquet to the single ladies. It is believed that whoever catches it will be the next woman to get married. Finally, the guests send off the couple with a “just married” signage and a string of cans attached to the back of the car.

Music is in our blood and usually one can easily find a musician or two in the family or among neighbours. I learned rock ‘n’ roll when I was five from my father.

I really hope to see the revival of the Eurasian wedding tradition, where music and dance are an indispensable part of it.

Colleen Read, Age: 75

Ronald Aeria, Age: 67

Rock ‘n’ roll started off in the United States and eventually reached the shores of Malaya in the mid-1950s. The simple, fun moves were popular and much enjoyed by the Eurasians during weddings.

Good luck and good health. May God bless you.

Wishing the newlyweds a long-lasting marriage with good health and wealth till their golden years. How else can you wish the newlyweds in a Eurasian wedding?
Ngon Cuong is the bed setting ceremony performed by Cantonese families before the wedding. On an auspicious date chosen by the groom, he would have a new bed set up. When it is ready, his parents or a blissfully married couple make up the bed with new bedsheets. This signifies a happy married life. They will also wrap copper (fate) coins with red paper and put them beneath the legs of the bed.

After all that is done, a round tray is placed on the bed. On the tray are dried longan, dried lychees, pop rice, puffed rice cakes and mandarin oranges, all these presented in a certain manner to signify unity and good fortune.

The ceremony ends with the pasting of the auspicious phrase Kei Lon Dou Ci (traditionally in the form of woodblock print or calligraphy writing) on the upper part of the pillar-style bed frame, above the entrance of the bedroom and above the main door of the house. The bedroom door will then be closed until the wedding day.

The Kei Lon Dou Ci is used to bless the newlyweds with children while chasing evil spirits away from them.
Maiyaan is normally conducted independently at the bride’s and groom’s houses. It begins with the application of turmeric and oil to the bride’s and groom’s hands and feet using a brush made of grass. This ritual begins with the elders, followed by the younger ones. The main purpose behind Maiyaan is to beautify the couple as turmeric acts as a skin purifier, giving them glowing skin on their wedding day.

After that, the couple washes off the mixture before sitting in the hall again. The children and the bride and groom will feed each other with sweets such as laddu and barfi.

The couple’s mothers will then perform the blessing using the same mixture. They will leave three handprints on the entrance to bless the house with good things. The handprints will be left to fade off in the days to come. The Sangeet Bhangra will then take place in which the guests will have dinner and dance the night away.

Sangeet Bhangra

Sangeet Bhangra basically means music and dance. The guests will be dancing and teasing family members to join in. While singing, people will start to form groups (male and female separately) before joining in with more singing and dancing.

The idea of dancing is to energise the occasion and have fun.

Hardeep Singh, Age: 55

Most importantly, it brings people together and fosters a bond among everyone present.

Santok Singh, Age: 56

Vadhaiyan

Congratulations! What other wishes could you say to the bride and groom when you are applying the turmeric and oil mixture on them?
## Performances

**Main Stage**

**Armenian Park**

**SATURDAY 6 JULY**

**6.30 — 10.30 PM**

### The performances bring together dances, music and storytelling from rituals and festivities as a showcase of George Town’s rich cultural diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>artist/organisation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.30 PM</td>
<td>Gamelan</td>
<td>by Wak Long Music and Art Centre</td>
<td>Traditionally reserved for Malay royal occasions, this contemporary gamelan performance has evolved to include classic Thai and Chinese songs. Key instruments within the ensemble are percussive, including metallophones and drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.45 PM</td>
<td>Carnatic Music “Kavadi Sindhu”</td>
<td>by Temple of Fine Arts Penang</td>
<td>Played and sung during Thaipusam to motivate kavadi-carrying devotees along their pilgrimage route, Kavadi Sindhu is performed in the Carnatic style, a vocal-focused system of music from Southern India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 PM</td>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>by Louds Percussion Team</td>
<td>Believed to chase away bad fortune and usher in good luck, drum performances are a staple at Chinese weddings, business openings and other festivities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 PM</td>
<td>Dikir Barat</td>
<td>by Dikir Barat Suara Mutiara</td>
<td>Back-up singers sit on the floor cross-legged, led by a leader coming up with witty, sometimes satirical lyrics about everyday life, as well as social and political issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Mak Yong “Dewa Muda” by Makyong Seri Bayu Indera Rupa

Listed by UNESCO as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Mak Yong is a traditional Malay performance involving dance, music, drama and comedy.

### Kavadi Attam by Temple of Fine Arts Penang

The kavadi, decorated with peacock feathers, symbolises Lord Murugan’s vehicle. This dance incorporates the bird’s movements as devotees dance along their Thaipusam pilgrimage route.

### Hakka Pixiu Dance by Penang Hakka Association

Performed during harvest season, the dance features a Pixiu (imaginary beast in Chinese mythology) and farmer hats. It is accompanied by Yangge music, songs farmers sing to help them cope with the hardship of working the land.

### Choir by Penang Philharmonic Chamber Choir

A medley of a capella choral music celebrating the cycle of life, taking you through childhood, coming of age, falling in love and lastly, death.

### Duet Across The Stream by Teochew Puppet and Opera House

Teochew Opera fuses singing, acting and martial arts. Characters in the play muse about the 24 Solar Terms, a guide formulated to help with farming and other cultural aspects of life.

### Shimokita Ondo by Kikyo Hana Group

Shimokita Ondo is a happy dance to appreciate life performed during Bon Odori and also a Japanese Buddhist custom honouring visiting ancestors from “the other side”.

### Awang Batil by Nine Flix Resources

Ramli Mahmud is the last penglipur lara (storyteller) able to fully embody the narration and customs of the Awang Batil story. He received the National Living Heritage (Tokoh Warisan Orang Hidup Warisan Kebangsaan) award in 2015.
Performances

**Dance Floor**
Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling
7.00 — 11.00 PM

- **Hanagasa Ondo** by Kikyo Hana Group
  Performed during the Yamagata Hanagasa Festival, Hanagasa Ondo is a Japanese folk song accompanied by spirited drumming with dancers in flower decorated straw hats.

- **Raas Garba** by Gujarati Samaj Penang
  According to legend, the Raas Garba originated from the dance of women who were given protection by Lord Krishna. It is a dance of joy and devotion performed at almost all Gujarati festivities.

- **Hakka Pixiu Dance** by Penang Hakka Association
  The Pixiu (imaginary beast in Chinese mythology) maintains household wellness and eats gold, silver and jewels but cannot expel it! This harvest dance symbolises the gaining and retaining of wealth.

- **Giddha and Bhangra** by Seema Dhillon Punjabi Dance Group
  Giddha is an energetic folk dance with rhythmic clapping performed by women during festivities. Bhangra dancers kick, leap and bend their bodies to the syncopated beats of the dhol drum.

- **Rock ‘n’ Roll** by Penang Eurasian Association
  Rock ‘n’ roll emerged in the ’50s and teens shimmied with partners to fast beats, borrowing from the Lindy Hop’s sporty moves. Today, it remains a favourite dance at Eurasian wedding parties.

- **Tarian Buluh** by Wak Long Music and Art Centre
  A ceremonial dance of the Murut tribe from Sabah, Tarian Buluh involves dancers skillfully jumping across bamboo poles that direct the footwork and rhythm of this performance.

Site Excursions

The historical communities of George Town proudly present to you their histories, spaces, celebrations, parties, performances and food! Don’t miss out on these rare tours for an exclusive audience.

Note: To join the site excursions, register here: [event.howei.com/gthc2019](http://event.howei.com/gthc2019). The fees are RM30 (MyKad/MyKid) and RM50 (Standard) per site. Please dress appropriately when visiting places of worship.

- **State Chinese (Penang) Association**
  6 July (Saturday)
  9.00am – 11.00am
  13 Jalan Perak
  Been to a Peranakan wedding before? Know any dance moves for the party? Tip: It’s the Joget dance. Ever tried dishes from a Tok Panjang feast? Sample them here. Also come get dressed in Baba and Nyonya outfits for added fun!

- **Nattukottai Nagarathar Heritage Society**
  6 July (Saturday)
  12.00pm – 2.00pm
  124 Lebuh Penang
  Don’t miss this rare opportunity to take a peek inside a vintage, living Chettiar office. Witness a ceremony done to bless the starting of a new account at the beginning of every financial year. Enjoy traditional snacks and tea.

- **Kapitan Keling Mosque**
  7 July (Sunday)
  10.00am – 12.00pm
  14 Lebuh Buckingham
  Tour the stately mosque and learn about the Akad Nikah, the Indian Muslim solemnisation ceremony. Taste the simple, yet distinctive festive snacks provided during this occasion.
Penang Eurasian Association
7 July (Sunday)
1.00pm - 3.00pm
107-A Jalan Kelawai

Experience a typical Eurasian wedding party complete with a live band performance of golden oldies and rock ‘n’ roll dancing. Cap it off with traditional Eurasian fare like Mulligatawny soup and sugee cake.

Gujarati Samaj Penang
7 July (Sunday)
4.00pm - 6.00pm
41 Jalan Green Hall

Let the Gujarati community share with you their traditional wedding customs. Learn the Raas dance and enjoy a true Gujarati meal.

Wadda Gurdwara Sahib Penang
8 July (Monday)
10.00am - 12.00pm
87 Jalan Gurdwara

Go on a tour of the gurdwara (place of worship for Sikhs) and witness a Dastar Bandhi in which a Sikh boy receives his first turban. Try your hand at turban tying and partake in a vegetarian meal.

Nam Hooi Wooi Koon
8 July (Monday)
4.00pm - 6.00pm
463 Lebuh Chulia

Learn about the rich history of the association’s building. Witness a Cantonese opera and enjoy some Nam Hooi snacks while you’re at it.

Acknowledgements
- Chung Hwa Confucian High School
- DISTED College
- Eden Handicap Service Centre
- Equator College
- Han Chiang University College of Communication
- INTI International College Penang
- KDU Penang University College
- LemmeLearn
- Penang Deaf Association
- SEGi College Penang
- St. Nicholas’ Home, Penang
- TLM Event Sdn Bhd

Volunteers, both individuals and groups, whose time and hard work have contributed to the success of George Town Heritage Celebrations 2019.

Local community members, the heart of the Celebrations, whose support and understanding were crucial to the success of this event.

The staff of George Town World Heritage Incorporated, whose effort and dedication prove that teamwork is the ultimate key to success.
Community Workshops

1. Majlis Menyambut Pengantin
   Malay Wedding
2. Maruthani Iravu
   Indian Muslim Pre-wedding Ceremony
3. Einschulung
   German First Day of School
4. Nitchayatartam
   Hindu Pre-wedding Ceremony
5. Hinamatsuri
   Japanese "Girl’s Day" Celebration
6. Duo Zhei
   Hakka Baby’s First Birthday
7. Sangeet
   Gujarati Pre-wedding Ceremony
8. Mua Guek
   Panaman Baby’s Full Moon Celebration
9. Mua Gue
   Malaysian Baby’s Full Moon Celebration
10. Sadangu Kazhithal
    Chettiar Puberty Ceremony
11. Pellilo Jilakkarra Bellam
    Telugu Wedding
12. Man Nyiet
    Hokkia Baby’s Full Moon Celebration
13. Tirumana Valima Viruntu
    Indian Muslim Solemnisation Ceremony
14. Gaun Batonna
    Punjabi Pre-wedding Ceremony
15. Cug Hue Hng
    Teochew Coming-of-age Ceremony
16. Mailanchi Raavu
    Muslim Malayali Pre-wedding Ceremony
17. Majlis Cukur Jambul
    Malay Baby Hair Shaving Ceremony
18. Rod Nam Sang
    Sareha Wedding
19. Ké Tahuá
    Hakka Wedding
20. Wedding Reception
    Eurasian Wedding
21. Ngon Cuong
    Cantonese Pre-wedding Ceremony
22. Malyaann
    Sikh Pre-wedding Ceremony

Legend

Main Stage
Dance Floor
Water Station
Public Toilet
OKU Toilet

Information Kiosk
First Aid
Ambulance
Grab Pick-Up/Drop-Off Point
LinkBike Station