



CELEBRATIONS & RITUALS



CALENDARS

Increased global exchanges are changing the pastimes enjoyed by teenagers across the region. These days, young people spend their free time enjoying a mix of traditional local activities and foreign or "imported" hobbies. Due to this ongoing exchange and sharing of interests, certain pastimes are common to young people in many countries.

- All calendars are based on the natural cycles of the moon and sun. They help society to understand and organise its time.
 - Lunar calendars are based on the passage of the moon around the Earth. The Islamic calendar is an example of this.
 - Solar calendars follow the movement of the Earth around the sun, such as the Christian calendar.
 - Calendar years are often counted from a significant life moment of the central figure of a religion. For example, the Christian, Islamic and Buddhist calendars all begin with important events in the lives of Jesus Christ, the Prophet Mohammed and Buddha respectively.
- Calendars mark national days, anniversaries and official holidays, as well as religious feast days and other celebrations.
- People living in the same neighbourhood may follow different calendars in their daily lives. In Bali, one printed calendar is a complete reference for all the calendars the Balinese use, allowing them to look up dates in the Gregorian, Islamic, Hindu Saka, Chinese, or Balinese Pawukon calendars.



...and you?

"We attend the national day ceremony at school. At this ceremony, we hoist the Red and White, Indonesia's flag."

Banuaji, 13, M, Indonesia

"For Australia Day you might go to the concert outside Parliament House. A lot of people have barbeques - it is the typical Australian thing to do. We might have friends come over to our house and some people dress up in Australian colours [gold and green]."

Sian, 19, F, Australia

WHAT ARE THE MOST
IMPORTANT DATES IN
THE CALENDAR IN
YOUR COMMUNITY?

HOW DO YOU
CELEBRATE THEM?





TOP-KNOT CUTTING VOTING RANTAU

rites of passage

- Rites of passage celebrate a society's culture and values by recognising significant milestones in an individual's life.
- Life stages are marked by different 'rites of passage'. For example,
 - Rantau, practised by the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, Indonesia, is a rite of passage to adulthood. Young Minangkabau men are expected to travel away from home to gain employment and life experience in the world. This often means a journey to the capital city, Jakarta, where the youth will work, sending money back to his family.
 - In Australia and New Zealand many young people mark the beginning of adulthood by taking a trip to different parts of the world after they finish high school or university. As travellers, they are far from the supports of their childhood and must fend for themselves.
 - The Balinese have a tooth-filing ceremony to cleanse physical traces of vices such as lust, greed, drunkenness and envy. Afterwards, teenagers are reintroduced to their parents as responsible adults.
 - People everywhere are not allowed to do certain things such as drive a car, buy alcohol or vote until they reach a certain age. These acts are often seen as important milestones on the path to adulthood.
- Rites of passage can in some circumstances demonstrate wealth and rank, giving prestige to the person and their family.
- In Thai Buddhist tradition, males entering adulthood used to undergo a "top-knot cutting" ceremony on a replica of Mount Kailasa, the home of Shiva. Although the ceremony was the same for all social classes, the replica mountain was not. For princes, a massive ornate Kailasa demonstrated the Royal Family's special role in society.

...and you?

"Finally in Grade 6, I was able to go to the mall by myself! My friends were allowed to go alone as early as Grade 3! I will get my training driver's licence when I turn 16."

Naema, 15, F, Philippines

When I turned 17, I was allowed to start driving. We are also allowed to drink and vote at 18.

Sian, 19, F, Australia

"When I turned 10, I was allowed to take public transportation on my own. At age 13, I was allowed to sleepover at a friend's place and to pierce my ears"

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore

"I was allowed to date at 15 and to drive a car at 17."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

WHAT AGE ARE YOU
ALLOWED TO DO
THESE THINGS?



RELIGION

- Religion is important in many peoples' understanding of the human life-cycle and the way key moments are marked.
 - All religions have rites relating to birth, marriage and death.
 - Due to the influence of local traditions, people of the same religion living in different parts of the region do not necessarily perform rites in identical ways.
 - When someone dies, their family turns to an imam (Islamic prayer leader), a monk (a male Buddhist bound by vows), pastor or priest (Christian clerics) for guidance.
- Singapore's Chinese communities take care to perform correct death rituals. If these are not done properly, some Chinese believe the spirits of the deceased will trouble living family members. Every year, a special month of ceremonies is held in homes, workplaces and Chinese and Buddhist temples to appease the "hungry ghosts".



...and you?

"For Ramadan there is no eating or drinking (not even water) after 4:30am and before 6:00pm. During prayers, I wear very common clothes to symbolise humility and sacrifice. We have a prayer rug and prayer beads. We pray to the direction of Hajj."

Naema, 15, F, Philippines

"Indonesians celebrate Lebaran, the victorious day for Muslims after a month of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan. On this day, Muslims wish each other Eid Mubarak (blessed Lebaran day) and ask for forgiveness for all of our mistakes from our families, friends and even enemies. On this day, we visit the houses of my father's extended family. On Christmas day, we attend gatherings held by my mother's extended family, who have a Catholic background. We say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to them."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

"After attending the 9am Christmas church service, our family has a huge meal with the extended family at someone's house and we all exchange gifts. At Easter after the church service, there is a hunt for chocolate Easter Eggs in the garden."

Molly, 15, F, New Zealand



Birth

"When I was 6 months old, I was baptised. This ceremony introduced me as a member of the Christian (Catholic) Church. The family came to see me sprinkled with holy water, as my parents and godparents promised to raise me in accordance with Christian values."

Molly, 15, F, New Zealand

"In our Muslim-influenced tradition, we have a rite called akikah, in which we cook goat meat. We say thank you to God Almighty for all his blessings."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

"People send messages of congratulations and purchase gifts for the new-born baby. When the baby is one month old, a box containing local Chinese sweets, a piece of roast pork, preserved ginger and a hard-boiled egg dyed red will be given out to close friends and relatives. There will be either a lunch or dinner and people will dress casual smart to attend."

Andrew, 18, M, Malaysia

"We visit the family, play with the baby and give angpow (a red packet with money inside)."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore

WHAT SIMILARITIES ARE THERE IN THE WAYS PEOPLE CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS?

Birthdays

"I go out for a meal with friends/family on my birthday."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore

"We celebrate birthdays with family or friends. Usually there is a cake. We say, 'Happy birthday'."

Naema, 15, Philippines

"We say, 'Happy birthday,' and wish the person having a birthday the best in everything. We throw a birthday party for him or her and also bring a gift. We eat a birthday cake."

Banuaji, 13, M, Indonesia

"'Selamat hari jadi' or 'Happy birthday' will be the most common thing said. Generally we receive gifts from friends and relatives if they know about it. Family members host a birthday 'do', either at home or if it's affordable in a restaurant. A birthday cake is a must. Malaysians usually will dress casually but smart, meaning they are neat and tidy."

Nuraini, 17, F, Malaysia

"There is always cake, no matter what age the person whose birthday is being celebrated. Big birthdays in my family are: five because you start school; 10, double figures! Plus this is the age when we are allowed to get our ears pierced; 13, becoming a teenager also means going to boarding school; 18, you are allowed to drink alcohol and it is also when I will leave home to go to university; and 21 is the traditional age to celebrate adulthood in New Zealand."

Maddy, 16, F, New Zealand



Weddings

"We congratulate the bride and groom. We say prayers asking that the lovely newlyweds will have a good family and beautiful children."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

"Guests wear baju kurung, and say to the bride/groom, 'Selamat pengatin baru, Semoga kekal ke anak cucu' - Congratulations to the newlyweds, may you be blessed with eternal wedding bliss and more generations to come."

Syukri, 15, M, Singapore

"For Indian weddings, people wear a sari or a Punjabi suit. If it's a close relative, I would be tasked to carry one of the trays of gifts during the ceremony. Indian food at weddings usually consists of biryani, mutton curry, pappadums, and vegetarian dishes."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore

CHOOSE A CEREMONY
THAT IS DIFFERENT
TO YOUR CULTURE.

FIND THE SIMILARITIES
AND DIFFERENCES IN
THE WAY YOU CELEBRATE
THE SAME LIFE MOMENT.

Death

"Family funerals are usually traditional Māori tangi. The body is welcomed onto its home marae (traditional meeting place) through the window to the right of the door. This prevents the different sacredness, or tapu, of the dead from mixing with the tapu of the living, who use the door. There is an exchange of speeches then the visitors hongī (press noses) with the tangata whenua (people who belong to the marae). The body lies in an open coffin for three days to give gathered friends and relations an opportunity to make their farewells. On the third day, there is a ceremony to close the coffin before it is carried to the graveyard. After the burial service, the mourners return to the whare kai (food building) for food and drink."

Taimus, 17, M, New Zealand

"We visit the family, give condolences, recite Al-Fatiha, go to the cemetery for burial, and recite more from the Qur'an."

Syukri, 15, M, Singapore

"Hindus cremate the body the next day and the ashes are released in the sea usually at Sembawang beach. After cremation, the family go to the temple for prayers on behalf of the deceased."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore

"When my family hears that a friend or neighbour has lost a relative, we usually send flowers, take home-baking and offer to help around the house if necessary as a way of showing sympathy and respect. (This relieves the bereaved family of some of their chores and allows them to concentrate on the duties and emotions death entails)."

Maddy, 16, F, New Zealand



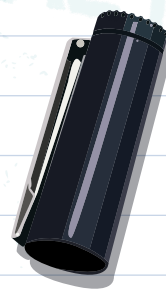
CYCLICAL CELEBRATIONS IN TIMES OF CHANGE

- Many seasonal celebrations, such as asking for a good harvest, began in agricultural societies. As societies industrialised, many people left agricultural work such as farming and took up non-seasonal employment in the cities. This change has diminished the importance of seasonal rites.
- Changes to the natural environment have affected cyclical celebrations for many indigenous communities. For example, Australian aborigines use specific sites for sacred rites, but agriculture and mining have made these harder to access.
- For immigrant communities, rites and cyclical celebrations can be influenced by their new society. For example, special foods may be difficult to find, clothing might be adapted to suit a different climate or the local community might join a celebration even though it is not part of their own tradition.

...and you?

"We have Singaporean neighbours - they are very friendly. We give food/dishes/snacks to neighbours during Muslim, Hindu and Chinese festivals."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore





- As society changes, some rites become outdated. One of the most celebrated rites of passage used to be the transformation of girls into potential mothers. Since many societies no longer see the role of women as primarily concerned with child-bearing, this milestone has lost some of its significance.
- Many rites and celebrations have survived but their meanings have changed to suit the times.
 - For example, the older generation believed the spirits of deceased family members were present at the Indonesian ritual *selamatan* or *kenduri* (meal), while many young people today often see the meal as a way of thanking Allah for the family's good fortune. Regardless of this change, the feast has continued as a strong tradition.
- New rituals appear and become popular.
 - For example, young Australians and New Zealanders increasingly visit a World War One battle site on Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula to remember the sacrifices of previous generations.

...and you?

"I underwent the 'Sadangu' ritual to mark the 'coming of age of a girl'. I'll never make my future daughter go through this tradition! You have to move with the times."

Ranjini, 17, F, Singapore



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CAUSES FOR CELEBRATIONS TO CHANGE OVER TIME?