



Religions in Malaysia : guide for mutual respect and understanding

Malaysia is a multicultural country where many religions are an important part of the country's culture. People from different religions live together, and their festivals are celebrated with enthusiasm and respect for one another's beliefs. This topic will introduce you to the different religions in Malaysia and some of the significant festivals they observe.

1.0 : Religion and Festivals in Malaysia *(West Malaysia)*

Religion	Festival	Date (2023)	Description
Islam	Hari Raya Aidilfitri	April 19 - 20	Celebrates the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting.
Islam	Hari Raya Haji (Eid al-Adha)	August 10	Commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God.
Buddhism	Wesak Day	May 11	Commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha.
Christianity	Christmas	December 25	Celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.
Christianity	Easter	April 9	Commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Hinduism	Deepavali (Diwali)	October 22	The festival of lights, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness.
Hinduism	Thaipusam	February 8	A Hindu festival with a grand procession and acts of penance.
Sikhism	Vaisakhi	April 13	Marks the formation of the Khalsa community.
Taoism	Taoist Festivals (e.g., Nine Emperor Gods Festival)	Dates vary	Celebrated by Taoists with various rituals and customs.
Taoism	Lantern Festival (Chap Goh Mei)	February 8	Celebrated at the end of Chinese New Year with lantern displays and matchmaking traditions.

(East Malaysia)

Religion	Festival	Date (2023)	Description
Dayak Culture (Sarawak)	Gawai Dayak	May 1 - 2	A harvest festival celebrated by the Dayak people in Sarawak.
Kadazan-Dusun (Sabah)	Pesta Kaamatan	May 30 - 31	A harvest festival celebrated by the Kadazan-Dusun community in Sabah.

Why Mutual Respect Matters ?

Respecting someone else's beliefs is important to promote harmony, understanding, and unity among different groups of people in Malaysia. It helps people of different faiths build strong relationships, accept one another, and live peacefully together.

Learn About Each Other's Faith: Explore different beliefs and practices for better understanding.

Celebrate Festivals Together: Join other communities' religious festivals to show support and embrace diversity.

Avoid Stereotyping: Try not to make assumptions based on religion; respect each person's uniqueness.

Respect Religious Practices: Something that is permitted in one religion or community may not be permissible in others. (For example, Muslims are not allowed to drink alcohol and Hindus are not allowed to eat beef)

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Here are some examples of religious and cultural festivals in Malaysia :



Hari Raya Eid al-Adha

During Aid al-Adha, Muslims perform ritual sacrifices (*korban*), distributing the meat to the less fortunate and sharing it among relatives, neighbors, and the needy.



Hari Raya Aidilfitri



Deepavali

Thaipusam

During, Thaipusam Hindus carry physical symbols of their burdens (*kavadi*), such as milk pots, as offerings.



Wesak Day

During Wesak, Buddhists visit temples, make offerings, and reflect on Buddha's teachings.



Chinese New year



Pesta Kaamatan

Pesta Gawai

Gawai involves cultural rituals, traditional dances, and feasting to honor the spirits and mark the bountiful harvest.





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Here are some examples of how you can respect and show appreciation to other cultures and religions in Malaysia :

1.1 : Appreciation of different cultures and beliefs



You could go to a Muslim neighbour's open house

Try traditional Malay foods like Ketupat. If you plan on bringing your neighbours something, make sure it is Halal



You can participate in Yee Sang during Chinese New Year

New year's greetings are yelled while tossing a kind of salad (Yee Sang) into the air.



If you invite people for a meal, be aware of what they can and cannot eat and drink

Muslims are not allowed to drink alcohol and Hindus are not allowed to eat beef



Make friends of different ethnic backgrounds!

Make an effort to learn their individual cultures and beliefs. You could even learn how to greet them according to their customs.

In Malaysia, religion is a key part of its multicultural identity. By understanding the different religions, respecting each other's beliefs, and actively promoting harmony, we can contribute to a society where everyone can live side by side and appreciate different ways of life. Embrace the opportunity to learn and grow together, creating a more inclusive and harmonious Malaysia for all.