

Traditional Malay Weddings

Malay weddings are grand affairs where the couple are given the Royalty treatment.

In the different Muslim communities, their wedding traditions varies, but there are some similarities based on faith.



<http://www.pwtc.com.my/c/malay-wedding/>



<http://durianzrepublic.wordpress.com/2011/10/19/9-okt-2011-malay-wedding-photoshoot/>



<http://aisyahjoharblogs.blogspot.com/2011/05/walimatul-urus-antara-sunnah-dan-adat.html>



<http://weekendsinmalaysia.blogspot.com/2011/01/week-4-malay-wedding.html>

The Weddings are usually spread out over several days, starting with the *Spying event*, the *Engagement process*, *Henna-staining ceremony*, followed by the *Solemnisation ceremony* and ending with the actual wedding day

Traditional Malay Weddings – Spying Custom (Adat Merisik)



“Spying Custom” – Asking ceremony (*Adat Merisik*)

Traditional Malay wedding follows the *Adat Merisik* (“Spying custom” / Asking Ceremony) for arranging marriages.

For the ceremony, the man’s family will engage one or more representatives (*wakil*) to visit the woman’s family. In the past, this is a “Spying” visit, where the visitors would investigate the woman’s suitability for the man’s future wife.

These days, it is a formality for the families to know one another, and to fix a day for the engagement.

Traditional Malay Weddings - Engagement Ceremony (Adat Bertunang)

Engagement Ceremony (*Adat Bertunang / Meminang*)

As soon the marriage is agreed, the representatives will once again visit the woman's family to discuss the wedding plans. The discussions includes the date and time for the *meminang* ceremony, the amount of money from the man's side for the expenses (*wang belanja*), and the details for the gift items (*hantaran*).



The main gift tray (*dulang*) is handed in odd numbers. The minimum is usually 5 trays. And the Bride's family will reciprocate the Groom's *hantaran* in excess number of the *dulang* given. ie. if the Groom delivers 5 *dulang*, the Bride's family will reciprocate by sending 7 *dulang*.

The *hantaran* comprises of the *tepak sirih* (betel leaf container) or the *sirih junjung* (betel nut leaves and accompaniments with beautiful flowers), the engagement ring, and other gifts such as

scented flowers (*bunga rampai*), a fruit basket, traditional cakes, a complete set of traditional dress made in silk or cotton, with gold or silver threads (*songket*), a pair of shoes, among others. In modern times, even mobile phones are included !

Traditionally, if the Bride's older sister is still single, a gift of some value is given to the older sister too, for asking for the hand of the younger sister (*MeLangkah Bendul*)

These gifts could be prepared by a family member or a wedding planner or the *Mak Andam* - Traditionally, the *Mak Andam* is an old lady, who is also the makeup artist. In the olden days, among the minorities, they were associated with black magic rituals (though not all are evil).

Rituals and chanting session were done by the *Mak Andam* before the Bride, so that others could be enchanted by her beauty.

On the wedding day, the *Mak Andam*, accompanied by the Bride's family, will also deny the Groom's access to the bride, until an "Entrance fee" is paid. (*This is much practised in modern Chinese wedding day too*)

Malay poetic rhymes (*Pantun*) are also recited, and it is often practised among the more cultured Malay families.

The ceremony is complete with Groom's mother putting on the engagement ring to the Bride's finger, with close relatives watching the event.

Traditional Malay Weddings - Henna staining ceremony (Berinai)

Henna staining ceremony (*Berinai*)

The ceremony is similar to traditional Indian weddings (Mehndi ceremony).

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During this Henna staining Ceremony, yellowish oil, extracted from henna leaves is applied on the fingertips of the couple by friends and relatives. It announces their forthcoming unity.

The *Inai* is a Malay word for henna, a plant used as dye for the *Berinaï* ceremony. “Ber” in Bahasa Malay means “wear”, thus *Berinaï* means “to wear” or “to put on” henna as a form of temporary skin decoration for the ceremony.

Traditionally, the ceremony is divided into three stages.

- ***Berinaï Curi*** is the ceremony where close woman relatives applies the henna to the Bride
- ***Berinaï Kecil*** is the ceremony where relatives, friends and neighbours apply the henna to the Bride
- ***Berinaï Besar*** is the ceremony where special guests of the couple apply henna to the Bride and Groom

On this day, the costume changes process (*tukar pakaian*) takes place. The Bride shows off her costume collections, changing five to six times throughout the day, as a sign of good luck.

Traditional Malay Weddings – The Wedding Contract ceremony (Akad Nikah)

The Wedding Contract ceremony (*Akad Nikah*)

Religious solemnisation of the marriage takes place on the wedding eve. It is an important event, which can take place in a mosque, the Department of Islamic Affairs, or the Bride's home.

Traditionally, it is held by the *Kadi*, a religious official of the *Syariat* (*Shariat*) Court. Now, the *Tok Kadi* is a religious man, who performs the solemnisation ceremony. Prior to the actual solemnisation, the *Tok Kadi* will usually give a short talk about the virtues and blessings of the marriage, and to remind the Bride and Groom, their respective duties and responsibilities

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The final part of the ceremony takes place with the *Tok Kadi*, the Groom, and *Wali* (representation of the Bride seeking marriage, a guardian or usually the Bride's father), and two male witnesses.

The *Tok Kadi* will hold the right hand of the Groom with his right hand, and asks the groom:

“Do you, [Groom's Full Name], *accept the marriage of* [Bride's Full Name] *with mas kahwin of* [Marriage Gold or token- which is usually a small amount of money] ?”

The Groom is expected to reply in a loud and clear manner:

“I *accept the marriage of* [Bride's Full Name] *with mas kahwin of* [Marriage gold, amount of money] .”

A small sum of money (*Mas Kahwin* or *Mahar*, which means *Marriage Gold*) seals the wedding contract after the wedding is accepted.

The *Mas Kahwin* is a symbol of the Groom's commitment to his Bride. The amount depends on the context of the time. It belongs to the Bride, and it should not be spent or used, unless in emergency times of needs.

The *Tok Kadi* will then ask the two male witnesses for their confirmation if the acceptance is loud and clear. Once it is confirmed, he pronounces the *Akad* as *Sah* (valid) and the Bride and Groom are married.

The groom then reads out loud a special clause in the marriage contract that stipulates that if he fails to provide financial support or fails to go home to his wife for a period of four months (six months in certain regions) or if he causes physical injury on her, she has the right to go to any Islamic court and ask for a divorce.

Traditionally, the Bride would wait in a room and only come out to sign the marriage certificate.

Recently, the Bride can be present while the ceremony takes place. But the basic setup remains the same – the *Tok Tadi*, the bridegroom, the *wali*, as well as two male witnesses in attendance. She would seat on a special pillow on the carpeted floor. The *Tok Kadi* first asks the Bride's confirmation if she agrees to her father marrying her off to the Groom. Only then does the actual marriage ceremony take place.

This is followed by a prayer, the Groom then puts a ring on his Bride's finger. After that, the Groom will be allowed to touch the

Bride's hands as it is now rightful and legal for the man to touch the woman who has become his wife.

Traditional Malay Weddings - The Wedding Ceremony (Bersanding)

The Wedding Ceremony (*Bersanding*)

The actual wedding day is the *Bersanding*. This literally means the "sitting together of the bride and bridegroom on the bridal couch, which resembles a throne (*pelamin*)".

Two *pelamins* are required - one in the bride's house and the other in the bridegroom's.

As the *Bersanding* ceremony customarily takes place in the afternoon, the bridegroom entertains guests at his own house in the morning.

At the agreed time, he is escorted in a procession with a male music group (*hadrah* or *kompang* band) to his Bride's house.

On arrival, he has to pay the "entrance fee" to the Bride's family before he enters each door leading to the *pelamin* to take his place besides his bride.

An *astakona*, a multi-tiered pedestalled tray, is also placed in front of the *pelamin*. Each tier contains a mound of cooked yellow rice studded all over with red-dyed eggs. This tray will later be presented to the *emak pengantin* (a close friend or relative chosen to be the matron of honour for the marriage) as an act of appreciation for her help during the ceremonies.

The Groom then sits with the Bride on the *pelamin* and the relatives will sprinkle petals and rice (which symbolises fertility) on the couple.

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After this, the couple returns to the Groom's house in a procession. They are normally accompanied by the *hadrah* band, with men beating a rhythm on their timbrels and reading verses from the *Koran*.

The music proclaims their marriage to the world. At the Groom's house, the *Bersanding* ceremony is repeated for the benefit of the Groom's relatives. This is followed by feasting and merry-making, called the *kenduri*. The wedding celebrations come to an end when the bridal pair returns home to the Bride's house to pay respects to her family.

Refference

http://singaporeanlifestyle.com/weddings/traditional-malay-weddings/http://www.jkkn.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161%3Aperkahwinan-tradisional-masyarakat-melayu&catid=67%3Aadat-perkahwinan&Itemid=84&lang=en

