Singapore COSTUMES

In multi-ethnic Singapore, the varieties of vibrant traditional costumes we see reflect the unique heritage and cultures here. Below are some examples of costumes worn by the ethnic groups in Singapore, useful for identifying what you may want to wear during Racial Harmony Day!

Indian
Sari

The sari is the traditional garb worn by the Indian women in Singapore. It is a long piece of unstitched cloth wrapped around a woman's body, and is tucked in at waist level with the remaining cloth being draped over the shoulder.

Malay
Baju Kurong

The baju kurong is the official attire of the Malay community in Singapore. It is a loose-fitting outfit that covers the wearer's body.

For women, the baju kurong is long-sleeved and is paired with a wide sarong that reaches the ankles.

Dhoti Kurta

This combination of top (kurta) and bottom (dhoti) is usually worn by Indian men in formal occasions. Skilfully wrapped around the waist and legs, the dhoti consists of a rectangular piece of cloth, whereas the kurta is a loose-garment top.

As for the men, it is usually worn over a pair of loose trousers (occasionally a sarong), with an optional headgear like the songkok.

Chinese
Cheongsam

Usually worn during Chinese New Year and Chinese weddings in Singapore, the cheongsam is flattering to the body, with a variety of lengths, colours and designs.

It features a cylindrical collar, side slits and an asymmetrical opening in the front that stretches from the collar down to the side.

Peranakan
Nonya

The kebaya is a traditional costume worn by Peranakan women. It consists of a translucent and fitting top worn over an undershirt, and paired with a batik-designed sarong as the bottom.

It reflects the mix of Chinese and Malay/Indonesian heritage with its combination of Malay dress form and intricate oriental-inspired embroidery.

References
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