

# Traditions

Mid-Autumn festivals held in honour of the full moon and to give thanks for a good harvest are celebrated in China and throughout Asia. Traditions vary from country to country and region to region, with some familiar themes.

## Lanterns

Lanterns are an important part of the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, particularly in the South of China. Hanging, carrying or floating lanterns on water creates an attractive and festive atmosphere. In Vietnam, children take part in lantern parades during the Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations.

## Food and Drink

Mooncakes are eaten in many Asian countries around this time of year. In Japan, 'tsukimi dango' are eaten: small, white, moon-shaped dumplings. Liquor made of newly harvested rice is served at Korean family dinners during the 'Chuseok' Mid-Autumn Festival.

## Dancing and Games

The Fire Dragon Dance is a popular spectacle in Hong Kong and lion dances take place in other countries such as Malaysia or Singapore. Games form a large part of the celebrations in some regions such as in Xiamen in China where a popular gambling game is played.

## Giving Gifts and Giving Thanks

Many people travel back to their hometowns at this time of year to celebrate family unity and to give thanks. Gifts are often given to relatives, friends and business contacts.

Making offerings or prayers is part of the festival in many areas. In Cambodia people eat Ak Ambok, a rice dish, at midnight and pray at the temple. The moon is often associated with fertility and marriage and so in the past people played matchmaking games; singles prayed about future romantic partners and couples made offerings for a happy and fertile marriage.

