



Kampong Gelam Festival brings a free heritage weekend to Sultan Gate on 12-13 September

Description

Kampong Gelam is having a weekend all to itself. The Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) presents the inaugural **Kampong Gelam Festival** on 12 and 13 September 2026, a two-day, heritage-rich celebration that traces the district's journey from its royal beginnings and trading past to its present life as one of Singapore's most characterful cultural and creative quarters.

Themed *Through the Eras*, the festival gathers performances, workshops, guided tours and community showcases across the precinct. Best of all, admission is free, with only a handful of activities ticketed, so it is an easy one to fold into a weekend wander around Sultan Gate, Baghdad Street and Bussorah Street.



Local music veteran Art Fazil headlines the comeback performances. Image: Sultangate Music Collectives, via Malay Heritage Centre

Comeback performances and living heritage

Music is at the heart of the programme. Local veterans Art Fazil and J. Mizan headline the comeback performances, with J. Mizan, a 1970s EMI recording star, marking an exclusive return to the stage. Expect the kind of set that draws both longtime fans and curious newcomers who have only ever heard the records.

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1970s EMI recording star J. Mizan makes an exclusive return. Image: Sultangate Music Collectives, via Malay Heritage Centre

Storytelling runs deep too. Immersive theatrical segments include dramatised retellings of Kampong Gelam folklore and a Bangsawan performance tracing Sang Nila Utama, Singapuraâ??s first king, bringing the precinctâ??s oldest legends to life for a modern audience.



Dramatised storytelling and Bangsawan trace Singapura's earliest chapters. Image:
Asian Operatic Museum, via Malay Heritage Centre

Trails, tours and the world's first Asian operatic museum

History buffs are well served. The Kampong Gelam Eras Trail leads visitors through the district's layered past, while a 45-minute museum tour takes in what organisers describe as the world's first Asian operatic museum. Community showcases and heritage booths spotlight the many communities woven into the area's story, among them the Orang Kallang, Bawean, Banjar, Batak, Bugis, Javanese, Minang and Arab communities.

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The Kampong Gelam Eras Trail winds through the precinctâ??s royal and trading past.
Image: Friends of the Museum, via Malay Heritage Centre

Hands-on workshops for all ages

If you would rather take part than watch, the workshop line-up ranges from a rebana drumming circle to an oud masterclass, offering a tactile way into the traditions on display. Younger visitors and families will find plenty to keep busy across the day.

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Hands-on workshops include a rebana drumming circle and an oud masterclass. Image: Genbano, via Malay Heritage Centre

Getting there and what you need to know

The festival runs from 10:00am to 10:00pm on both days. The main venue is Sultan Gate Park (85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501), with satellite locations at the Malay Heritage Centre, Baghdad Street and Serambi (45 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198492). Registration for selected activities is open at go.gov.sg/kgf2026.



Percussion and community showcases fill the precinct across both days. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

With free entry, a packed two-day schedule and a setting as atmospheric as Kampong Gelam, this is one of the more rewarding heritage outings on the September calendar.

Kampong Gelam Festival 2026 runs 12-13 September 2026, 10:00am to 10:00pm, at Sultan Gate Park and satellite venues across Kampong Gelam. Admission is free, with some ticketed activities.

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