

Chap Go Mei Zumba



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2019 (c)

This is a series of images captured at a Chap Goh Mei ceremony held in Penang, Malaysia in February 2019. The fifteenth and final day of Chinese New Year is a day known as Chap Goh Mei. In the Hokkien dialect, Chap Goh Mei simply means "the 15th night of the Chinese New Year".

Chap Goh Mei is also known as the Chinese Valentines Day. Traditionally, family members will sit down to a big meal together. Offerings and prayers are also offered on a grand scale on this particular night. Oranges, with messages tucked inside, are thrown and then retrieved from the water, as a way of pairing up eligible couples.

This Chap Goh Mei ceremony that I witnessed was held at a fancy waterside shopping center in Penang. The evening started in a rather unconventional manner, with an hour-long Zumba class.

The Zumba-lesson participants are a wonderfully diverse mixture of sizes, shapes and ethnic groups. Some are dressed for exercise, while others are dressed in their party best. Shaking one's limbs seemed to be the perfect way to ward off bad spirits and to start the New Year's right.





















































































