

## Rudinara, A Malaysian Cultural Experience

Come aboard our Magic Carpet Journals to learn about Malaysian culture, as a group of Canadians visit Rudinara, the handmade house built by master craftsman Ibrahim Adam.  
*Via Magic Carpet Journals. Story and Photos by M. Maxine George*





Rudinera, the hand built house by master craftsman Ibrahim Adam.

On this day our itinerary read that we were to have a “cultural experience.” Assuming it would be something in the city, I was surprised when the bus left the city and we were being taken out into the country. Our guide, Isvaren, had not been given specific instructions for finding our destination, but had been told that it would be easy to find as Rudinara is so well known. The time was well spent as the ride gave us the opportunity to see the countryside outside of Kuala Lumpur. Eventually, after traveling many wrong roads, the bus came to a halt at the right lane. Here we were met by a short, slight man, with silvery blonde hair and friendly blue eyes peering out from behind his spectacles. We were introduced to Dato’ Dr. Haji.Rudin Salinger, our host for the day. He led us up the path to his home on a knoll amongst rubber trees and other plants native to Malaysia.







Dato' Rudin Salinger explains how to open a coconut.

Dr. Haji. Salinger was pleased to be able to tell us that his home was hand built by local craftsmen. Even the lumber was produced from three native hardwood trees called Chengal, specially cut, for the purpose, from the ancient rainforest. Dato' Rudin researched the methods used by ancient craftsmen and tried to utilize those methods here at Rudinara. Amazing as it may seem,



no nails were used in the main structure of the house. There is carving over each door, with the exception of the front door and the entrance to the first level. The carving was all done by Haji Wan Su Othman, a designated National Craver, or his son Hj. Wan Mustafa Wan Su. It took six and a half years to complete this house. As a result, Rudinara is a unique and special home, preserving the culture of the area. In 1998 it was winner of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, as one of seven special places throughout the world.



Rudin demonstrates how to tap a rubber tree

Rudin, as we came to know him, told us that he was born in Canada, quite by happenstance. His French parents, happened to be in Canada where his father's engineering job took them at the time. Rudin's own career as a professor, took him to Malaysia during the 1950's. There he met his future wife, Munira, a Malaysian lady. Upon marriage Rudin became a Muslim and wholeheartedly began to learn about the Malaysian culture. Now he is a well-respected authority on the culture of his adopted country.

Under Rudin's tutelage we learned how to open a coconut, extract its milk with a kapitan and simpal, then to shave the meat of the coconut on a traditional kukur kelapa. Then we were given the opportunity to try the technique ourselves . We made puffed rice





and used a stone grinder, known as a kisar, to make rice flour. It was interesting to learn how these and other ancient practical tools, that we were also shown and experimented with, were used.



It is customary to wash your feet before entering the house.

Following this we were taken to an outdoor cooking area, with a roof and open sides. Here our host explained how he prepared

our lunch. We saw pots of food simmering over an open fire. We were shown how to make a lacy bread, known as roti jala on a traditional, outdoor wood stove. We were all given the opportunity to pour out some of the lacy bread, onto a hot pan, to cook for our lunch. While the meal continued to cook over the outside fires, we were taken back to the patio. Before entering his home, we all took off our shoes and then washed our feet with water ladled out of a crockery urn. We followed our host up the winding stairs to the next level of the house, then out onto the deck, known as the Anjung. Our lunch was to be served out there. After a refreshing fruit drink, numerous serving bowls were laid out onto large, woven bamboo mats. There was a tasty assortment of food. Rudin explained that it is customary to eat the meal without utensils. He explained how we were to curve our fingers towards ourselves, then use our thumbs as pushers to get the food into our mouths. There were bowls for hand washing. We sat cross-legged on the mat and soon were all into the spirit of the meal. Some of the food was quite highly spiced. I only took small portions of those, but found that there were other choices, with milder spice, more agreeable to my palate.







Lunch at Rudinara.

After eating, we were taken outside for a tour of the garden. Rudin demonstrated how to tap a rubber tree and told us about other flora and fauna native to this country. We learned that no trees were felled on this property, except where the house actually stands. In addition to fruit and rubber trees, there were sixty assorted native plants on the property, including cinnamon, cloves and breadfruit. Some of the plants and trees have medicinal properties or are used in traditional cooking. Coming back onto the patio, we were given a demonstration of the art of batik and soon some Canadians were putting their artistic talents to work.



Yvonne experiments with traditional cooking methods.

Later we again entered the house and sat around the large, round, dining table, while Rudin showed us some of the antiques and artifacts that he has collected during his life in Malaysia. He explained how these things were used. It was an informal experience and we joined in with questions, which he readily answered. What a marvelous way to learn about Malaysian





culture, in a Malaysian home, with such a knowledgeable tutor. The surprise though had been that our host was born in Canada! The knowledge gained, during our time at Rudinara, gave us an insight into the people and the traditions of this fascinating country. Our afternoon had gone quickly and we now had to get back on the road, as we were late for our next appointment.

Story and pictures by M. Maxine George

**For further information or bookings contact:**

Tourism Malaysia (Canada)  
830 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2K4  
Phone: 1-888-689-6872 Fax: 011 603 746 5637

**Malaysia Airlines**

Reservations: 1-800-552-9264

Dato Dr. Haji Rudin Salinger Tel: +60-3-8925 2700 Fax: +60-3-8925 2769 E-mail: hirudin@pd.jaring.my

Last Updated March 1, 2021 by Matthew George – Webmaster

[Return to Malaysia](#)

[← Next: The Batu Caves of Malaysia](#)

[Previous Story →](#)

**translate to your language:**

-  AR
-  ZH-CN
-  NL
-  EN
-  FR
-  DE
-  IW
-  HI
-  JA
- 
-  MS
-  NO
-  PT
-  PA
-  ES
-  CY

**find your next travel destination:**





© 2022 MAGIC CARPET JOURNALS LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

