

# DO YOU KNOW

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## WHERE TO STAY



# Taboos

**A** taboo is a strong social prohibition against words, objects, actions and discussions offensive to a group, culture, or society.

Breaking a taboo is usually considered objectionable or abhorrent. Some taboo activities or customs are prohibited by law and transgressions may lead to severe penalties. However in Sabah most taboos found within the Kadazandusun community may merely result in embarrassment, shame and the perpetrator to be considered rude.

As all Malaysian inhabitants, the Kadazandusuns are particular about the do's and don'ts in their household.

This is more so if the family is traditional and still has strong cultural values.

There are several simple dos and don'ts that should be observed, as much as possible, by people from other communities.

Always take off your shoes or slippers before you enter the house. This is to show respect to the owner of the house. The house is the owner's sanctuary and as such you should show deference to his feeling.

And it is commonsense that your shoes will bring in the dirt and mud from outside and cause additional cleaning chores to the host later.

In most people's homes the host will sit on the floor and entertain his guests. If you need to pass him, do not stride pass.

Bow a little and excuse yourself by saying, "I pass you".

If you are visiting a person's house, don't stride up the stairs and knock. That is considered rude.

You should stand outside and cough loudly, several times. And then you should call out, "Is anybody home?" or "Are you home?"

This is to ensure that the host can get ready to welcome you without being jolted from whatever it is he is doing.

These are minor manners that should be observed but they themselves are not taboos in the actual sense of the word.

One of the most practised norms and taboo should it be broken is to ensure that all cats are kept away from a corpse.

Cats are believed to be a familiar to mediums or shamans, and are good conduits for spirits. When a cat jumps over the corpse, chances are the spirit will transfer to the corpse and it will rise up. The corpse will be inhabited by the spirit and can cause grievous harm to onlookers. There are several stories about this happening.

People attending a wake for the dead are also not allowed to eat slippery food, especially fried.

For whatever the people eat while the dead lay in state will be carried over by the dead to the netherworld. If slippery fried food is eaten, the dead man's soul will have a tough slippery journey towards the 'Aki Nabalu' portal to the netherworld.

Do not answer if your name is called less than three times. As children, we are told this again and again as it is taboo to answer if your name is called only once.

If it is called only once, it means that a spirit is calling you and if you answer you have automatically answered to a call for you to follow it.

Usually you will get ill for no reason. Deaths have even occurred from such incident.

Do not imitate strange sounds or calls especially if you are in the jungle or in an unfamiliar place.

Some of such calls may be just birds or animals but there are some calls that are eerily like people calling or screaming. Do not imitate such noise as the perpetrator, usually a jungle spirit inhabiting an animal's body, may think you are one of them and come near to you. If they see that you are just imitating them, they will be offended and cause you to get sick and sometimes, to die.

There are several other taboos rooted in the Kadazandusun community. Since there are 40 tribes under this umbrella, there are other more interesting taboos imbued in the other groups, mine being Bundulivan.

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Fax: 60 088 251122

Tang Dynasty Hotel  
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Megah D'Aru Hotel  
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## Weekly TAMU (Open Market) in Sabah

■ Tamus are held in almost every town/district in Sabah. Most local traders gather to buy, sell or barter their farm produce, handicrafts, traditional ware, musical instruments, etc.

**SUNDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Kota Belud, Tuaran, Putatan, Papar, Babagon, Tambunan, Tenom, Membakut, Kota Marudu, Sikuati, Gaya Street Fair (Kota Kinabalu)

**MONDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Tandek

**TUESDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Kiulu

**WEDNESDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Pinggan-pinggan, Tamparuli & Kudat

**THURSDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Donggongan, Telipok, Tenghilan, Pekan Nabalu, Sipitang, Tambunan, Keningau

**FRIDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Donggongan, Sunsuron, Weston, Mesapol, Kanibangan

**SATURDAY 6am - 2pm**  
Kinarut, Beaufort, Sindumin, Matunggong, Pekan Pitas

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