



## UPACARA TUJUH BULANAN

*Upacara tujuh bulanan* is quite similar to the baby shower in the western culture. It is a Javanese tradition held in the seventh month of the first pregnancy. This ceremony is conducted on the seventh, seventeenth or twenty seventh before the full moon of the Javanese calendar.

The Javanese believe that this ceremony symbolises that education starts early, even before the baby is born. The mother-to-be is bathed with holy water and different kinds of flowers. It is hoped that the baby will be born safely and healthily.

The ceremony usually takes place on either side of the house facing the sunrise. There has to be an odd number of people to bathe the mother-to-be: 5, 7 or 9 people. After bathing, the mother-to-be wears a sarong that wraps around her body seven times. This then is followed by cutting the yellow rice, eating fruit salad, etc.

One distinctive feature of this ceremony is a coconut with a carved figure of Mahabharata characters. This coconut is then broken open by the father-to-be.

Although this ceremony is rooted back from the Hindu tradition, people now put in Islamic values to this by doing the prayers and using religious symbols in this ceremony.