



Lent Medz Bahk

The forty-day period of preparation called *Medz Bahk* (Lent) starts seven weeks before Easter on the Monday after *Poon Paregentan* (Carnival/Mardi Gras) and ends on *Dzaggazart* (Palm Sunday).

A period of sacrifice and good deeds

Because *Medz Bahk* is such a long and solemn period, the Sunday before it begins is called *Poon Paregentan*. It is a special day to have fun, act silly and eat favourite foods.

The next day is the start of *Medz Bahk*, a forty-day period of preparation, sacrifice, forgiveness and good deeds.

During *Medz Bahk* it is customary to give up certain things that we particularly enjoy, either for the entire forty days or on certain days within the forty-day period. Some give up eating animal products (meat, butter, milk, eggs, cheese, etc.) while others give up desserts, soft drinks or activities they like.

It is believed that sacrifice helps one become less selfish and greedy, however, it is very important to remember that sacrifice without performing kind deeds makes the observation of *Medz Bahk* less meaningful.



Did you know that other major religions also have fasting periods for similar purposes?

During this special forty-day period, we remember the wrongs we have done in the past year so that we can ask for forgiveness, knowing that God has unconditional love for all His children and that He will forgive all who ask.

We also reflect on all God's gifts, like our talents and abilities, and how we might use them for the benefit of others, making an effort to do good deeds and improve ourselves.

During *Medz Bahk* the church altar remains closed, Divine Liturgy is said behind a closed curtain, Holy Communion is not offered and weddings are not performed.

The middle point of this period is *Mitchink*, when special *Bahk* meals that don't contain any meat or dairy are served.

Make a list of things you can give up for Lent.



Make a list of good deeds that you can perform.

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During this period some children plant seeds to watch them grow in time for Easter.



If you want to try this, you will need:

- A shallow bowl
- A wad of cotton to cover the bottom of the bowl
- A handful of lentils or wheat

Sprinkle the seeds on the cotton wad.

Keep the cotton moist, but not soaking, and watch your seeds grow into plants.