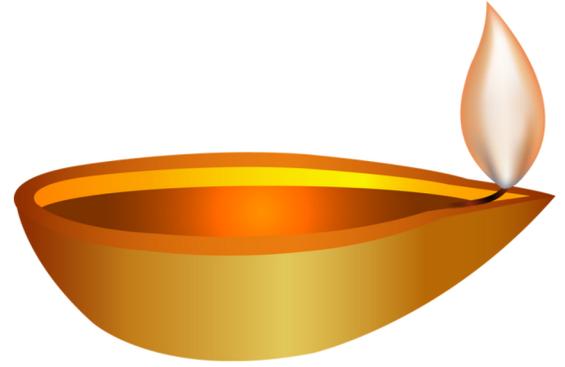


DIWALI



What is Diwali?

Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is one of the joyful and the major Hindu festivals in India that celebrates victory, the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, Dharma over adhamra. The festival represents so many messages to life.



From the Ramayan story Diwali celebrates the return of Lord Rama to his kingdom and is known as the "Festival of Lights".



It's a time of joy, new beginnings Diwali marks the New Year in the Hindu linear calendar where Hindus, Sikhs and Jain communities around the world celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of a new year. This is similar to Chinese New Year, Rosh Hashanah, Losar and the main New Year celebrated by all across the world on the 31st December.





How is Diwali celebrated?

It is celebrated with vibrant decorations, especially lamps and candles, fireworks, delicious sweets, and family gatherings. The use of colour is key and can be seen through all decorations including the colourful patterns made with rangoli colours. Various traditional foods are made during this time to celebrate similar to Christmas that has mince pies and a traditional roast and other faiths Diwali has various varieties including sweets or mithai that are shared and exchanged with families friends and within the community. It is also common to celebrate and attend the temple or Gurdwara to worship the gods and goddess for good luck, prosperity and wealth.

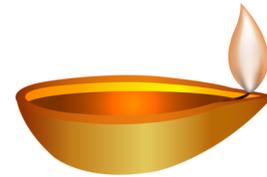


Diwali is celebrated over five days where each days marks marls and represents something key:



- 1.Dhanteras
- 2.Naraka Chaturdashi (Choti Diwali)
- 3.Lakshmi Puja (Diwali)
- 4.Govardhan Puja
- 5.Bhai Dooj

Dancing is a key part of the festival including Bhangra, Bollywood and even stick dancing also known as Dandiya. The story of Ramaya has also been rein acted through dance.



Diwali falls in the Hindu Calendar of October or November





Dhanteras is the **first day** of the five day festival.

The main theme is welcoming wealth and health.

Meaning: "Dhan" means wealth, and "Teras" refers to the 13th day of the lunar fortnight.

Significance: Marks the beginning of Diwali and is dedicated to Lord Dhanvantari, the divine physician, and Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

Traditions:

- o People clean and decorate their homes before the first day begins.
- o It's considered very lucky to buy gold, silver, or kitchen utensils on this day.
- o In some households, lamp-lighting for Yama (god of death) is done to protect family members from untimely death.

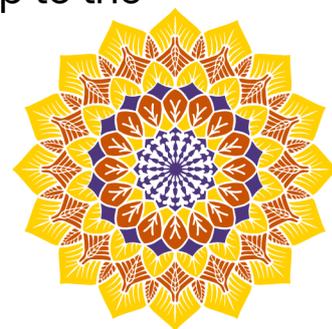


Naraka Chaturdashi (Choti Diwali) falls on the **second day** and marks victory over evil.

Significance: Celebrates the victory of Lord Krishna (or Kali, in some traditions) over the demon Narakasura, who had imprisoned 16,000 women and terrorized the world.

·Traditions:

- People take oil baths early in the morning to purify themselves.
- Homes are decorated with rangoli, diyas, and lanterns.
- Also called Choti Diwali ("Little Diwali"), it's like a warm-up to the main event.
- Firecrackers are often lit in the evening.



Diwali marks the end of the Ramayan Story where Rama defeat Ravana the demon who was terroirising India.

In Short the story of Diwali

The name "Diwali" means "row of lights," and it symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and good over evil.

The festival lasts for five days, with the third day being the main celebration.

Diwali marks the return of Lord Rama to his kingdom after a 14-year exile

During his exile he defeated the demon king Ravana.

To celebrate his return, people lit oil lamps (diyas) to guide him home, and this tradition continues today as homes, temples, and streets are decorated with lights and candles.



The Story of the Ramayan through the key parts

The Birth of Rama

King Dasharatha ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya. He had three wives but no children. After performing a sacred ritual, he was blessed with four sons: Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna – with Rama being the eldest and most virtuous.



Sita's Swayamvar

In the kingdom of Mithila, King Janaka held a swayamvar (ceremony to choose a groom) for his daughter Sita. He challenged suitors to lift and string a divine bow of Lord Shiva. Only Rama could lift and break the bow, and he married Sita. His brothers also married Sita's cousins.

Rama's Exile

Dasharatha decided to crown Rama as the next king. But Queen Kaikeyi, influenced by jealousy, demanded that her son Bharata be crowned and Rama be exiled for 14 years. Bound by his word, Dasharatha agreed. Rama left for the forest with Sita and Lakshmana, living a life of simplicity and devotion.





The Forest Years

During their exile, they faced many adventures and battles. They encountered demons, sages, and made allies with forest dwellers. One demoness, Shurpanakha, tried to harm Sita, and Lakshmana cut off her nose. This angered her brother – the demon king Ravana.



Sita's Abduction

Ravana tricked Rama and Lakshmana by sending a golden deer. While they were away, he kidnapped Sita and flew her to his kingdom, Lanka. Sita refused to stay in his palace and waited for Rama in a garden called Ashok Vatika.

The Monkey Army and Hanuman

Rama and Lakshmana teamed up with the Vanaras (monkey warriors), including the mighty and devoted Hanuman. Hanuman leapt across the ocean to find Sita and gave her Rama's ring, assuring her rescue.



Bridge to Lanka

The monkeys built a massive bridge of stones (called Ram Setu) across the ocean. Rama's army marched to Lanka and fought a fierce battle.



Battle with Ravana

After a long war, Rama defeated Ravana and rescued Sita.

Good triumphed over evil. Sita proved her purity through a trial by fire (Agni Pariksha), and Rama accepted her with honor.



Return to Ayodhya

After 14 years, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana returned to Ayodhya. The people lit diyas (lamps) to welcome them, which is celebrated today as Diwali. Rama was crowned king, and his reign (called Rama Rajya) was known for peace, justice, and prosperity.



The return of Rama is the end of the story 'Ramayana'

The Message of the Ramayan:

- Duty (Dharma) over desire
- Truth, loyalty, and righteousness
- Respect for parents and elders
- The power of devotion and courage





Lakshmi Puja is the Main Diwali Day. The main theme is the festival of lights and a religious ritual devoted to Goddess Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

Significance

This is the main Diwali day, celebrated for Goddess Lakshmi, who is believed to visit homes and bless people with prosperity and happiness.



Other stories tied to the day

Return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile.

Krishna defeating Narakasura (in some traditions).



Traditions



Homes are brightly lit with candles and diyas, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness.



Lakshmi Puja is performed in the evening with prayers to Lakshmi, Ganesha (for wisdom), and Kuber (god of wealth).



People wear new clothes, share sweets and light firecrackers.

Businesses often begin new financial accounts on this day.





Govardhan Puja is the **fourth day** and honors nature and Lord Krishna

Significance

Celebrates Lord Krishna lifting Govardhan Hill to protect villagers from the wrath of Indra, the rain god.

Symbolism

Teaches humility and respect for nature's gifts.



Traditions:

In temples and homes, a mountain of food (Annakut) is offered to Krishna as thanks.

In some regions, people make small hillocks of cow dung symbolizing Govardhan and decorate them with flowers and food offerings.





Bhai Dooj

is the **fifth and final day** and celebrates sibling love.

Significance

Celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters, similar to Raksha Bandhan but with different customs.

Traditions

- Sisters perform aarti (ritual) for their brothers, apply a tilak
- on their foreheads, and pray for their long life.
- Brothers, in return, give gifts and vow to protect their sisters.
- Families gather and share festive food.



Legend

Based on the story of Yama (god of death) visiting his sister Yamuna, who welcomed him with aarti and a meal.





The story of Yama and Yamuna – Origins of Bhai Dooj

A long time ago, in the heavenly realms, lived Yamraj, the god of death, who ruled the afterlife and judged souls. He was powerful, strict, and respected – but very busy with his divine duties.



His sister, Yamuna, a kind and loving river goddess, missed him dearly. She often invited him to visit her, wishing to spend time with her brother, but Yama, caught up in his work, kept delaying his visit.

One day, after many requests, Yama finally decided to visit Yamuna. When he arrived, she was overjoyed! She welcomed him with great love – performing aarti, putting a tilak on his forehead, and preparing his favourite dishes. It was a day of joy, laughter, and sibling bonding.

Moved by her affection, Yama offered her a boon. Yamuna asked that every year on this day, all brothers who visit their sisters and receive a tilak and meal be blessed with long life and happiness. Yama granted the wish, and from that day, the tradition of Bhai Dooj (or Bhau Beej) began – a celebration of the special bond between brothers and sisters.





The Significance of Colour during Diwali

Colour plays an important part in Hindu festivals.

Each colour represents something and symbolises a significance in cosmic energy.

Yellow

Symbolises Wisdom & Knowledge

- Associated with learning, joy, and brightness.
- Symbolizes the light of knowledge that removes darkness.
- Often seen in marigold flowers and diya flames.

Red

Symbolises Energy, Prosperity & Auspiciousness

- A very sacred and powerful color in Hindu culture.
- Represents marriage, fertility, wealth, and Shakti (power).
- Used in rangoli, clothing, sindoor, and decorations.

Green

Growth & New Beginnings

- Symbolizes nature, renewal, and harmony.
- Invites prosperity and good health into the home.
- Common in festive foods and clothing.

Blue

Divine Energy & Stability

- The color of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama.
- Represents spiritual depth, calmness, and trust.
- Often used subtly in decor or lanterns.





Purple

Luxury & Peace

- A royal and spiritual color.
- Brings a sense of mystery, creativity, and devotion.
- Adds elegance to rangoli designs and Diwali outfits.

Orange

Purity & Sacredness

- Represents spiritual fire, courage, and sacrifice.
- Commonly seen in temple flags and holy attire.

White

Purity & Peace

- Symbolizes cleanliness, simplicity, and truth.
- Often used in diya bases, flower garlands, and background decorations.

Rangoli Colors

In rangoli (decorative floor art), all these colors come together to:

Welcome Goddess Lakshmi
Bring joy and positivity into the home

Express artistic and cultural creativity

